

Chicopee Register

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COMMUNITY

Chloe Soto departs City of Chicopee after nearly three years

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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CHICOPEE - Communications & Special Projects Manager Chloe Soto is departing the City of Chicopee after nearly three years.

Soto will head for Europe in January to pursue master's programs, with dreams of continuing her work in communities along with more support and serving marginalized and underserved communities.

Monica Torres, the city's Community & Constituent Liaison, will succeed Soto as special projects manager, while the communications role will be filled.

Soto is the first Afro-Latina and first transgender woman to hold the position and, also behind the Mayor's Office Facebook page.

"It's easy to overlook women in general, but especially women of color. It's not about getting pats on the back, but it is about recognizing. I'm the first person of color to occupy space in the Mayor's Office in over 150 years. That's



TURLEY PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

Chloe Soto, communications & special projects manager for the City of Chicopee, is departing for new adventures after nearly three years of service to the city.

never happened and small milestones like that are important, right? Because they show that progress is possible," Soto said. "That anybody with the right attitude is good for the job and who is dedicated is good for the people and is

good for the city and that the minuscule things such as gender don't matter. It's the skill-set that you bring to the table."

Soto shared the opportunity to have this role "has been an incredible gift that Mayor Vieau has given me."

"To also allow me to do side projects and to be able to bring the Latinx experience into Chicopee has been an incredible honor, and I don't think that people are aware of that. About 21,000 people in the

population are Latinx," Soto said.

Soto emphasized she is someone who works for the community, cares about the community and is invested in elevating the community "and not just someone that they see as just a political talking point."

"I am just so honored to have been able to serve in this position," Soto said.

On fundraising, Soto credits the many stakeholders--including local banks--for supporting community events. During her tenure, Soto also ushered in event firsts through the Puerto Rican Heritage Celebration and Hispanic Heritage Celebration and was part of organizing for National Night Out, SPOOKtacular and more.

"Without them, these events wouldn't stay free. My goal, consistently, in this role has always been to make sure that we make each event better than it was last year and increase the amount of people that come to our events," Soto said.

Soto thinks of Chicopee

See **CHLOE SOTO** page 5

COMMUNITY

Resolution approved for Sarah Jane Park improvements



TURLEY PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

The City Council approved a resolution to file and accept grants to support improvements for Sarah Jane Sherman Park in Chicopee.

By Kristin Rivers
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CHICOPEE - City Council approved on Dec. 17 a resolution to file and accept grants for improvements to Sarah Jane Sherman Park.

The grants would come

from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs for the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities program.

Mayor John Vieau explained the improvements

See **CITY COUNCIL** page 5

COMMUNITY

The Kwanzaa Collective brings Kwanzaa Celebration to RiverMills



TURLEY PHOTOS BY AMANDA MUNSON

Tay Pope dances alongside the drummers, performing a traditional Kwanzaa dance.

By Amanda Munson
Correspondent

CHICOPEE - The Kwanzaa Collective, a group consisting of the Dancer Tay Pope, Drummers Kenny Grimes and Trevor Pitts, with a presentation led by Pres-

ident Ayanna Crawford, M.Ed., taught the members of the senior center about Kwanzaa on Dec. 18.

Known as the connection to Africa, Kwanzaa is celebrated on Dec. 26 to Jan. 1 with the main focus on maintaining the cultur-

al connection and keeping traditions alive through generations.

Created by activist Maulana Karenga, Kwanzaa is based on the harvest festival celebrated in various parts of Africa, bringing

See **KWANZAA** page 6



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



Volunteers are pictured bringing in presents from the Walmart toy drive earlier that morning.



Posing for a group photo outside of Lorraine's, this group were happy to provide gifts for teens in need.

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 in a time of need 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.

Lorraine's Soup Kitchen & Pantry provides food, warm company and a place for individuals and families to feel supported and cared for in a time of need. When the pantry was doing its annual toy drive, Caisse felt that the teenagers this year were in need of toys, so she posted on Facebook, which got the attention of Rivest and his powerful connections.

"I am the president of 'Hope for the Holidays.' We do Christmas for Brightside Family and Children, and this year we had an overabundance of toys that we reached out to other organizations who needed help. We like to keep it to low-income families, people who need us the most. Lorraine's was top on the list," Rivest said. "We have been going for 38 years, we added Lorraine's to our fundraising every year for what they do in the community and have been working with them for three years now. We do the motorcycle run, which usually brings anywhere from 400 to 700 motorcycles every year."

Lorraine continues to give back,



Organizer of "Home for the Holidays", Bruce Rivest spearheaded the event, providing more than enough toys for children on Christmas morning.

but when Caisse felt they needed more gifts to give out, she was so thankful for Rivest and his organization for the overwhelming love and response for Lorraine's.

"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.

Caisse added it grew from there.

"After that he started posting daily about it, contacting other motorcycle groups, and it exploded. We have carriages full of stuff, it's so overwhelming and we're so blessed, he is such an amazing person. He always comes through."

With two organizations coming together this holiday season, both are appreciative for what was donated to make a family's holiday season brighter. Commenting on the rising prices and the state of the economy, Rivest felt it was his duty to give back more to the community.

"This year we've seen the economy and its effect, it's been rough for organizations, we usually get two flatbed trucks

full of toys and this year we had one. 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.

When asked about the most important aspect of Christmas for him personally, 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.

To support Brightside's Charity Organization, visit their Facebook page.



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.

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Japanese For Beginners

CHICOPEE - The Chicopee Council on Aging will offer Japanese for Beginners Zoom classes beginning Tuesday, Jan. 14 thru Tuesday, April 1 at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Join Charlie Duquette, USMC/Retired, for this 12-week series on learning basic Japanese. You will need a valid email address and access to Zoom for this

class as it will be virtual and in the comfort of your own home. Class will meet at 4:30 every Tuesday beginning Jan. 14 thru April 1 via Zoom.

A study group will be held at Chicopee Senior Center every Friday at 2 p.m. from Jan. 17 thru April 4. You must provide a valid email address at the time of registration.

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School Committee receives quarterly FY25 budget update

By Kristin Rivers
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CHICOPEE - The School Committee received a quarterly FY25 budget update through a presentation from John Miarecki, director of Budget and Finance, on Dec. 18.

Using a color-coded system breaking down budget tracking and spending trends, Miarecki explained there are many items in green that are “43%, 44% of the way through from the data I pulled on Dec. 11” including rental lease of buildings, insurance, rental lease for equipment and grants.

Grants were the biggest focus for the green section, representing positive status and on track or under budget.

“As an executive team along with the grants office, we’ve been really looking at grants to make sure that we’re expending correctly and especially with salaries,” Miarecki said. “They’re mainly salary-based grants, so we’re spending a lot of money out there and we have to almost cap things so we don’t overexpend and have to bring General Fund money into it, so we’re watching those very closely.”

The yellow items--representing spending potentially underfunded, a potential risk of overspending or a transfer of funds may be needed--listed legal services, instructional equipment, general classroom supplies, maintenance of grounds, utility services and more.

Here, Miarecki said there are encumbrances from the previous year “that are over because we are waiting for the product to come in and we do not pay out until that product has come in.”

“We verify that it’s come in, we receive an invoice and then we pay it. So, that combination really increases--and I’m going to show you in the next slide what I mean by this--increases what we call revised budget,” Miarecki said. “So, when we do this next quarter, we’re going to add that line in there because we did want to make this similar to what you’ve all saw earlier this year to add it in there and that will just make it a little bit more sense for us all.”

Red items--where spending is trending to be over budget, there’s a potential risk of overspending if not monitored closely or immediate action will be needed through a transfer--had other instructional services, transportation services and tuitions to non-public schools listed.

Miarecki emphasized he “wasn’t terribly concerned about these numbers, but these numbers need to be constantly watched,” noting the special education numbers as an example.

“I feel overall as a budget and our bottom line number, we’re in really good shape at the 44% and we’re at 31% for our grants as we’ll continue on in our year for the next 55% of the year--50% of the year--I think we’re in real good shape,” Miarecki said. “We’ll keep that open book and look forward to present to you coming forward with new numbers and an even better idea of where we’re going to finish at the end of the year.”

Ward 6 School Committee Representative Sonny Brooks asked about the legal services line item.

“On legal services, does that include any settlements?” Brooks said.

Miarecki replied, “There should be a settlement line out there with the DESE lines that we pay settlements out of.”

“And just to add to that, that’s our legal compliance officer and any legal services that we may go out with Russ Dupre,” Miarecki said.

Vice Chair and Ward 7 School Committee Representative Donald Lamothe also touched on legal services, asking this.

“Do we expect that number to hit the max sooner than later because now we’re spending more time with negotiations, which is not a normal, annual thing,” Lamothe said.

Miarecki said yes.

“We did try to account for that when we were budgeting. There is available monies in that account,” Miarecki said. “We put for \$100,000 for the year with RPO and there is available funds. I don’t know the exact number off the top of my head to account for some of that.”

“So, that number is taking into consideration that we were expecting to have more spend this year?” Lamothe said.

“Correct,” Miarecki said.

Ward 1 School Committee Representative Deanna Rousseau appreciated the materials Miarecki put together for this.

“It’s bold and challenging to call something red, so I appreciate you being very transparent with that. But, would like to echo that there’s a lot of due diligence going into the monitoring of it, so it’s not necessarily a risk. It’s just something we’re more closely monitoring. So, I appreciate you framing it that way in the same sentiment,” Rousseau said.

Rousseau added the green section is “important for us to kind of acknowledge as we think about our budget next year and what items that we may need to readjust and we have additional monies from to cover the red.”

“So, appreciate the format and the due diligence that the team is putting into this--I’m sure--daily outside of our quarterly presentations,” Rousseau said.

CFD receives Christmas surprise



PHOTO AND CAPTION COURTESY OF CHICOPEE FIRE DEPARTMENT

CHICOPEE – The fire department received a special visit from Heritage, wishing everyone at the department Happy Holidays.

Chicopee Senior Center Volunteer Dishwasher needed

CHICOPEE – The Chicopee Council on Aging at RiverMills Center is looking for a volunteer Dishwasher for our congregate meal site. This volunteer position would be Monday thru Friday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

This position would be assisting with dishwashing for the congregate

meal site after lunch service.

If you are interested in this volunteer opportunity, please contact RiverMills Center’s Volunteer Coordinator Brandon Dumas at 413-534-3698 ext. 130 for additional information or stop by the reception desk to pick up an application.

CFD takes part in motor vehicle training

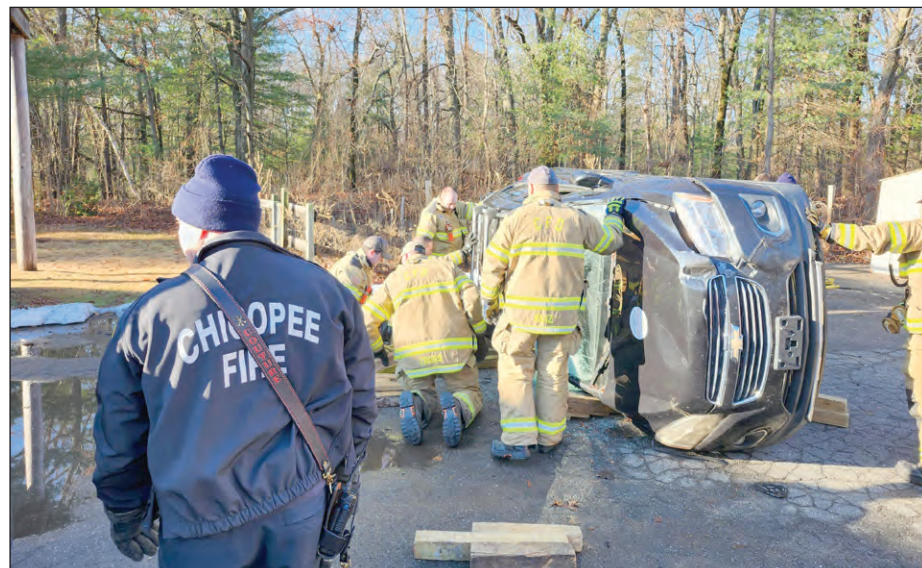
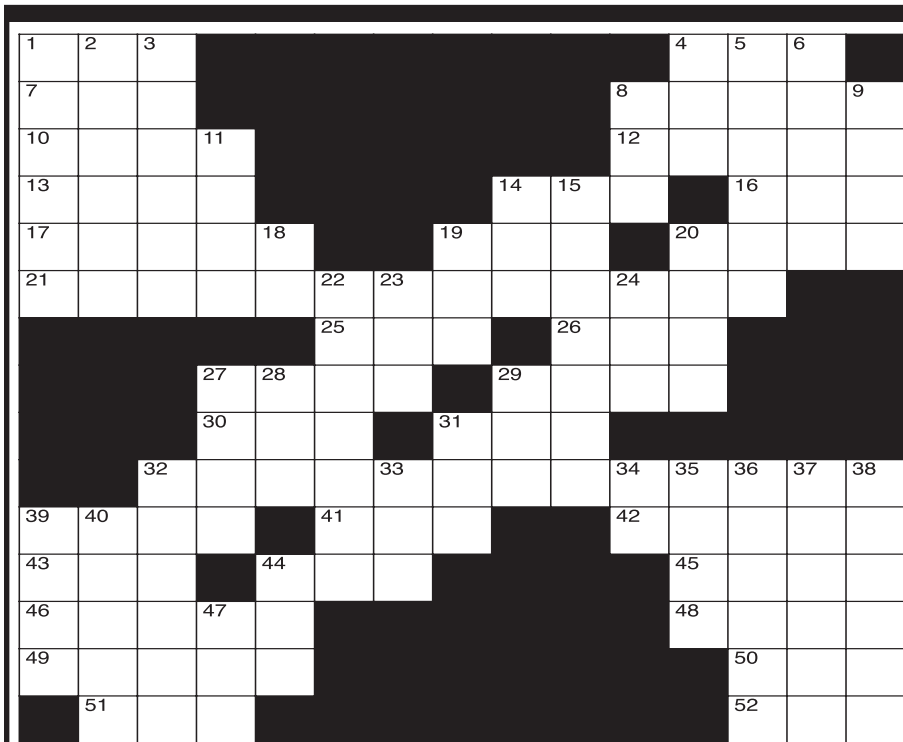


PHOTO AND CAPTION COURTESY OF CHICOPEE FIRE DEPARTMENT

CHICOPEE - This week our members participated in motor vehicle extrication training. Thanks to Hampshire Towing for delivering and removing a vehicle for this important training.



- | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------|---|
| CLUES ACROSS | 29. Touches softly | 52. Witness | 28. Possesses |
| 1. Central processing unit | 30. Mock | | 29. Split pulses |
| 4. Taxi | 31. Red-brown Pacific sea bream | CLUES DOWN | 31. Small amount |
| 7. Body part | | 1. Of cadmium | 32. Flat-bottomed riverboat |
| 8. Papal court | 32. Summer entertainment options | 2. Deliver a sermon | 33. Not good |
| 10. Young women making their public debuts | 39. Protective crust | 3. Inner regions of a shadow | 34. Atomic #31 |
| 12. Metal shackles | 41. Cool! | 4. Aggressive dog | 35. Assist in committing a crime |
| 13. Joseph’s wife | 42. Behave in a way that belittles | 5. Smells | 36. Chauvinists |
| 14. Licensed professional | 43. Denial | 6. Twofold | 37. Get away |
| 16. Partner to cheese | 44. A place to sleep | 8. Former OSS | 38. One of a people who speaks a Semitic language |
| 17. Mild fruits | 45. Electronic counter-countermeasures | 9. Computer language | 39. Civil rights college organization |
| 19. File format | 46. Intestinal pouches | 11. Indian groom | 40. Combustible dark rocks |
| 20. Province of Indonesia | 48. SE Asia family of languages | 14. Automobile | 44. Grocery container |
| 21. Beloved grilled foods | 49. Sound | 15. Hairstyle | 47. Central nervous system |
| 25. Bar bill | 50. Select | 18. Atomic #76 | |
| 26. Don’t know when yet | 51. Give the impression of dishonesty | 19. Guy (slang) | |
| 27. Whale ship captain | | 20. Ladies’ undergarments | |
| | | 22. Furniture with open shelves | |
| | | 23. Back-arc basin | |
| | | 24. Partner to flow | |
| | | 27. A type of horse | |

GUEST COLUMN



Kissing balls for a new porch

It's really funny that sometimes I have to consult my own columns to remember how to do something.

You see, now that the front porch is done, there is a new area to decorate, an area well-suited for kissing balls! My daughter and I were at the local garden center and there were so many beauties for sale.

Of course it would break my budget to buy one to go in the middle of each pair of columns, so it looks like I'll be making them myself.

The first thing you will need is a styrofoam ball. One that is six inches in diameter would make a good size kissing ball.

Then gather a coat hanger and some wire cutters. Snip away the hook and straighten out the rest. Insert it through the middle of the ball and bend one end as a hanger.

About 18 inches will be showing; it will look better if you choose a gold colored hanger. If not, you can always cover it later.

Getting the piece of wire into the dead center can be difficult, so use a long wooden pick to pre-make the hole. After that insertion will be easy.

Having a selection of greens on hand will make a pretty kissing ball. Scavenge the landscape for holly, yew, white pine, juniper and the like. Now it is time to insert clumps of greenery into the ball.

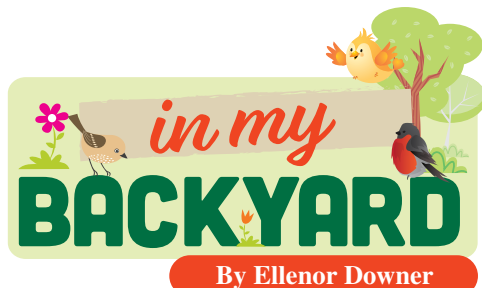
Styrofoam is very durable – great for holding all of these stems, but much more difficult to work with than floral foam. For that reason, all but the most rigid stems need to be put on wooden picks before they can be stuck into the ball.

Make small bunches of greenery about four inches long, holding their stems next to the pick and wrapping the attached wire to it. One by one insert these bunches into the styrofoam.

It is best to work randomly around the ball – setting the dimensions if you will, rather than starting in one place and working out. Being that it is round, it will be hard to put it down while working on it.

After a while you'll get into the swing of things by wiring a few bunches of greens, putting them in, wiring a few more and so forth.

See **GARDEN** page 8



Snowy owls have already been spotted in Massachusetts this year.

They come from the tundra area of Canada into the United States during the winter. Usually, the snowy owls that head to this area are immature. This irruptive behavior may or may not be coordinated with the lemming cycle, one of their primary foods especially during their breeding cycle.

The snowy owl is about 24 inches long and primarily white, yellow eyes and variable amounts of black spots and barring. Immatures are darker than adults and females darker than males.

Snowy owls frequently hunt during the day. Their diet is mainly rodents, Arctic and snowshoe hares, fish, birds including waterfowl and carrion.

They nest on the tundra in a shallow depression on a mound on top or on a gravel mound. They line the nest with feathers and bits of moss. The female lays three to ten white eggs. When prey is abundant the clutch size is larger. They make barking noises during breeding, but are quiet in winter.

They inhabit the open tundra and when they move south, they inhabit airports, beach-



Snowy owl

es, marshes and open fields.

Many years ago, a snowy owl appeared in Oakham during the winter. I was lucky to see it perched on a fence post near an open field in the daytime. People came from all over to see this rare visitor. Logan Airport is a popular winter stop over.

Bald eagle sighting

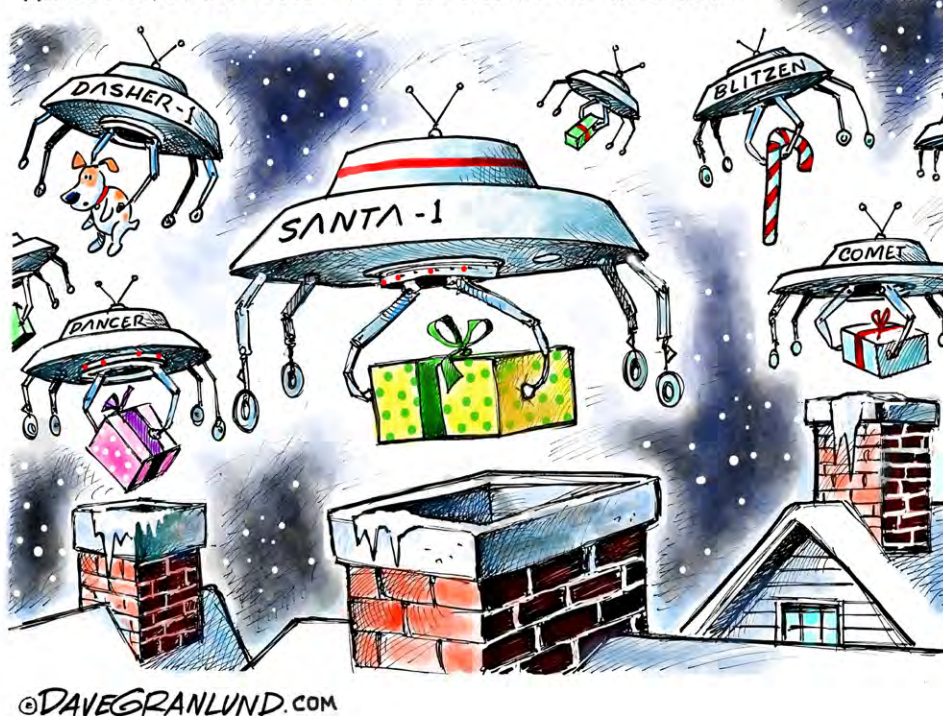
On Dec. 2 I received an email from a Brimfield resident. He said, "I've been checking the local ponds but not a lot happening. However, I have seen a bald eagle or two at the pond on New Reed Street four time in the last two weeks and another birder I met there reported seeing eagles there that I missed. On one visit two adult bald eagles were sitting in the same dead tree about fifteen feet apart."

Christmas Bird Count

He plans to participate in the Allen's Bird Count Christmas Bird Count on Saturday,

See **BACKYARD** page 10

ABOUT THE DRONE ACTIVITY IN THE EVENING SKIES...



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GUEST COLUMN

Am I entitled to more Social Security from my ex-husbands?



Dear Rusty:

I am 76 years old and a retired high school counselor/teacher. I was married to my first husband from 1968 until 1981. He is still living and he remarried two more times and, I believe, he is currently divorced. He is 77 years old. His income was always much higher than mine. I was married to my second husband from May 1989 until we divorced in April 2017. My second husband died in June 2023. What I wonder is if I am entitled to receive Social Security benefits based upon the income of either of my ex-husbands?

Signed: Twice Divorced Spouse

Dear Twice Divorced:

Divorced spouses are entitled to the same benefits as a current spouse if their marriage lasted at least 10 years which, in both cases, yours did. The other caveat is whether your own SS retirement benefit is less than you are entitled to from either of your ex-husbands. If your own SS retirement benefit is less, then you will get an incremental amount on top of your own SS retirement to bring your total monthly benefit up to your spousal or surviving spouse) entitlement.

Since your first husband is still living, it is likely that your best financial option is to claim a surviving ex-spouse benefit from your deceased second husband. The reason is that survivor benefits from husband # 2 are based on his actual benefit at his death, whereas benefits from a living ex-spouse, husband #1, are based upon his full retirement amount. In other words, it is likely that 100% of deceased hus-

band #2's benefit at his death is more than 50% of living husband #1's current benefit at his Full Retirement Age.

It is, of course, possible that 50% of your first husband's FRA entitlement is more than 100% of your second husband's benefit at death, in which case your ex-spouse benefit from your first husband could be more. The only way to sort this out is to contact Social Security at -.800-772-1213 to make an appointment to apply for surviving ex-spouse benefits from your deceased second husband. Explain that your first ex-husband is still living and that you are unsure of what your benefits are as your first husband's ex-spouse.

Social Security will be able to determine from their records, which one provides you with a higher benefit amount, provide each husband's Social Security number when you

See **SECURITY** page 6

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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Chicopee approves Real Time Information Center to improve Safety

CHICOPEE - Mayor John Vieau, with the support of Chicopee Police Chief Patrick Major and with the approval of the City Council are implementing a Real Time Information Center to enhance safety in the community. Police Chief Partick Major explained, "A real-time information center is a powerful public safety platform." It is a centralized technology-driven unit within the police department designed to provide real-time information and analytics to support patrol officers, police operations and investigations. The Information Center takes in information from various sources, including stationary cameras, cameras in police vehicles, mapping data, automatic license plate recognition, alert sources and alarm systems, and dispatch centers.

Analysts then distribute the most useful information to officers to aid with incident response. Also, the data and information sources improve investigations. Officers are empowered to review all the digital evidence resources in the department's systems, helping them solve crimes quickly.

Supports Crime reduction

A Real Time Information Center, ("RTIC"), creates opportunities for public

safety teams to use intelligence and automation, allowing them to work smarter and faster. This leads to faster responses and more in-depth investigations. There's also an opportunity to identify crime hotspots, trending patterns, and process improvements. All of this can help deter bad actors and reduce offenses across communities.

Streamlines incident response

When an incident occurs, everything from 911 calls and dispatch information to live video, and various sensor data stream onto video walls and monitors for all RTIC operators to see. This helps to quickly understand what's happening and effectively deploy resources to mitigate the situation. Overall, there's less guesswork and greater automation, helping to improve response efficiency.

Speeds up investigations

RTIC can save hours on investigative work while increasing case resolution rates, helping to improve response efficiency. Having a central repository for collecting, managing, and storing city data makes it easier than ever to compile evidence during and after incidents. Moreover, a digital evidence management system can help to maintain data integrity and

privacy when sharing information.

Improved officer safety

Having an RTIC means public safety operators can provide data-driven virtual assistance to in-field officers. This allows responding officers to understand what's happening, and better prepare for the situation. Operators can also monitor nearby cameras to ensure everything goes smoothly. This virtual support helps keep officers out of harm's way during everyday incidents or large city events.

Enhance city-wide collaboration

Within an RTIC, police and public safety teams share the same view of what's happening across the city. They can also forge partnerships with private businesses and residents, requesting access to public-facing cameras during investigations. Connecting to video cameras and other IoT sensors from city agencies helps broaden their view even further. This data can also lead to additional insights that can enhance everything from disaster recovery to sustainability initiatives.

The use of the tools and features available in Real Time Information Centers has shown in studies to have reduced crime in cities using them, improved investigation outcomes, and led to more accurate con-

victions. There are over 150 Real time crime centers in the United States and that number is growing as Police Departments implement the capabilities and advantages of these centers in providing safety to the public.

The staff for the RTIC will be made up of a Technology Systems Engineer, an Analyst Supervisor, and an Analyst funded by the City. An additional Analyst will be provided by the Hampden County Sheriff's Office. Additional services requested include a system to provide immediate translation services through the body camera, automated draft report writing based upon the data and information collected, "real-time" access to Police Policies and Procedures, and other enhancements to provide officers more time to police in the community and less time spent on report writing and office work. City Council President Frank Laflamme stated, "The City Council supports the improved public safety these tools will provide Chicopee."

"The addition of these tools will improve our ability to keep our community safe. The enhancements will provide more effective and efficient use of our Police resources through predictive enforcement," stated Mayor Vieau.

PowerBack Rehab Screening

CHICOPEE - The Chicopee Council on Aging will offer a PT/OT Screening Clinic on Friday, Jan. 10 at 10:30 a.m. at Chicopee Council on Aging's RiverMills Center, 5 West Main St.

Physical and Occupational Thera-

pists from PowerBack Rehab will be at RiverMills Center for a free screening clinic for balance, strength, ADL and pain issues. Space is limited. You must register in advance at RiverMills Center.

CHLOE SOTO from page 1

as "that horse coming from behind in that race and nobody sees them coming," with a lot more positive to be found.

"We don't have the problems of our surrounding communities, or at least we don't have them as bad," Soto said. "And Chicopee really does make an effort to make sure that our police are well-equipped, that as soon as something happens that we're addressing it as quickly as possible. I think people don't see what happens behind the scenes, so they assume that nothing's being done when nothing could be further from the truth."

After reflecting on the many lessons she's learned from humility and giving grace to listening empathetically, Soto shared she's also proud of enhancing connections and communication between the Mayor's Office and city departments, bringing more visibility to Chicopee and crossing divides.

"The takeaway for me, from here, from this office, has been to sharpen my people skills. To be able to have a better amount of empathy for situations that I don't even understand and to be able to bring people to understanding," Soto said.

Soto wants the community to know how grateful she is to have served them, encouraging everyone to welcome more businesses to Chicopee and continue embracing its many diverse cultures.

"I love the shift where we're now being more inclusive to all our different cultures and recognizing that Chicopee is a beautiful melting pot of so many wonderful cultures and that we should lean in and embrace that. Because it's a wonderful community and it's a beautiful, beautiful city," Soto said.

Her advice for Torres was to nurture herself and give herself grace.

"Many people will critique you, but what you say to yourself in your mind is really what affects you. So, for Monica, is always keep the self-talk positive. Know that you can do anything you put your mind to because you're an amazing human being and she's going to do amazing things here too," Soto said. "So, the advice is never underestimate yourself, give yourself grace and just keep pushing, praying and moving forward because whatever you think is not in you, it really is. It's there."

Soto had this message for her boss, Mayor John Vieau.

"I am so grateful to him in so many ways that he'll never even know what he has done for me. I don't think he recognizes the enormity of it yet. Keep an eye on me," Soto said. "I don't think he recognizes the enormity of what he's done for me, for my life, for my career. I leave here with a beautiful CV, with so many doors that will open for me because of him. I am so grateful to have worked for someone so humble and so kind and so generous and so invested in his community. It hurts my heart when people have this misconception of who he is, because he's really an amazing human being and his heart is, literally, in the right place."

Also, these parting words.

"I say, continue to be your most authentic, wonderful self. Continue to serve at your highest capacity, continue to allow that light that God has put in you to shine forward to the people that you work for," Soto said. "Because while many do not see it, I see it and many of us also see it and we are proud and we love you. You are doing a great job, sir, and my hat is off to you, and I am honored and feel privileged to have worked for him and I can go on and on and on. But I'm just going to leave it at that. He's a great man and he will do great things for the city if he's allowed to."

CITY COUNCIL from page 1

would include improved infrastructure, upgraded accessibility walkways, inclusive play areas and improved playing fields and the EEA "is offering reimbursable grants to cities and towns to support the preservation and restoration of urban parks" through the grant program.

The cost for the renovations and remediation of PCP contaminations would be \$1,948,403 and appropriated to the DPW Park Special Account for Sarah Jane Sherman Park improvements, with the amount coming from available funds in the Stabilization Fund.

The Parks and Recreation Department would administer the grant funds.

"So, as you can see from the background information, we have this opportunity to receive a grant in the amount of half a million dollars," Vieau said. "The Parks Commission approved the request in October and what we're asking is for the city to appropriate the entire amount like I had mentioned. This will also include replacing the spray pad park and we will be receiving back half a million dollars in grant once the whole funds are allocated."

Parks and Recreation Superintendent Benjamin Strepka said the grants provide an opportunity "to improve the accessibility throughout the entire park" including replacing a walking loop that is not ADA accessible and replacing a playground structure close to 25 years old "with an inclusive play structure that will allow children of all ages and abilities to come and play and recreate" at the park.

"We'll also be doing field upgrades, all three diamonds will be renovated. We'll be adding bleacher seating, accessibility to all the fields, upgrades to the skate park and other minor improvements. Benches, trees, of that nature," Strepka said.

Strepka added a buried wading pool that Community Development allocated funds for the replacement of the splash pad would also be part of the project.

"However, we need to remove the wading pool which is contaminated with PCPs and, as a requirement through the U.S. EPA, to have those removed," Strepka said.

When Ward 4 Councilor George Balakier asked what the projected start date and the timeline for completion was, Strepka said if approved that night, they would get an engineer on board to begin work.

"They would have until June 30 to have the design done. We'd go out to bid.

Construction can begin July 1, 2025, and the whole project needs to be completed by June 30, 2026," Strepka said.

After Ward 6 Councilor Samuel Shumsky asked if the city would apply for this grant for other parks in the future, Strepka confirmed yes.

"Our plan is to apply for this grant as often as we're able to. One of the stipulations with this is the park needs to fall within an EJ neighborhood, which majority of our parks now do," Strepka said. "So, we do have a plan moving forward with other parks we would like to target with this grant moving forward to make improvements to."

Later, Ward 1 Councilor Abigail Arriaga shared she supported the order.

"This is a fantastic way for us just to get our parks, really, up to shape. We use this park for so many things. My kids play sports here. I think this is a great opportunity to just make something that's used by so many just updated and safer," Arriaga said.

Arriaga also emphasized the improvements for the splash pads.

"In summer it gets really hot and everybody can have ACs. This is pretty much for all the residents within the area and, like I said, I use this park too, so I think this is a fantastic thing and I want to thank Parks and Rec for this. I hope to see more of this come," Arriaga said.

Ward 3 Councilor Susan Goff was also excited about the project.

"This is the first park being done and this is in my ward and the fact that it's being made into an all-inclusive park," Goff said. "It is something that I've been pushing for since the beginning that I've started this."

After Ward 7 William Courchesne said Parks and Rec "does a good job of finding these grants" along with going through the city to fix what they do with them, Vice President/Councilor-at-Large Robert Zygarowski reiterated how the city will be reimbursed about \$500,000 due to the grant.

Zygarowski hopes these grants can be applied to other parks, including Sztot Park.

"Nothing's been done in that place for about 45 years. So, I like the idea of this--Sarah Jane--because I go into Sztot Park a lot. I know a lot of people there walking around and I've talked to you, Ben, about Sztot Park," Zygarowski said. "I hope to see someday you coming to us and say, 'Well we received \$50 million dollars to do Sztot Park over.' Plus, you're the grandstand."

IN THE CITY



The presentation consisted of the history of Kwanzaa and then performances from the dancer and drummers.



One of the attendees was excited to get up there and dance with Tay Pope and Ayanna Crawford, president of the Kwanzaa Collective.

KWANZAA from page 1

awareness and cultural diversity for Black Americans.

Sitting down with Assistant Director Holly Angelo and Program Coordinator Casey Conroy, both talked about the importance of bringing more cultural programs like the Kwanzaa Collective to RiverMills.

"We never had any Kwanzaa presentations here before, so The Kwanzaa Collective came to mind since they performed before in the city. I reached out to them since it's something we never had before. They are doing African drumming and Kwanzaa history. They will be back during Black History Month in February. It's nice to get new partnerships with people throughout the community," Conroy said.

Conroy stressed the importance of offering a variety of programming to its members.

"We try to branch out and offer new things. Aside from the health programming we have, we try to highlight some new programming, especially if we've

never touched upon them before. A couple of years ago we did a Polish dinner, so we try to branch out to do more every year. After the pandemic, we were able to get back to capacity and do what we were doing before," Conroy said. "We wanted to do it bigger and better, as the aging population grows, we are just getting busier. We have to provide those services and programs for our seniors, which sometimes is difficult because the more people age and come to the center, the less space we have to provide these programs. That is kind of a battle in itself, trying to figure out where we can put everything, but still offer as much as we do for our members."

Led by Crawford, the presentation consisted of a video with a brief overview of the history of Kwanzaa, explanation of the meaning behind the traditional Kwanzaa tablescape in the front of the room, and a beautiful dance and drumming show that got members of the RiverMills up and dancing.

From the video Teddy Pen-



TURLEY PHOTOS BY AMANDA MUNSON

In the front of the room, Tay Pope was dancing to the beat, while guests were clapping in the background.

dergrass - Happy Kwanzaa on YouTube, which was played during the presentation: "Kwanzaa is a spiritual, festive and joyous celebration of the oneness and goodness of life, which claims no ties with any religion. The focus of Kwanzaa is cen-

tered around the seven principles (Nguzo Saba) with particular emphasis on the unity of Black families."

After the pandemic, Conroy felt it was only right to make up for lost time and really give back to the community.

great job in coming up with new ideas. We want to have something for everyone here, some things are a hit and sometimes they aren't, we listen to the feedback. We've got the Lunar New Year celebration that is new this year on Jan. 29, so we're looking forward to that. We have a dinner and comedy show that's new in 2025. There's a lot happening here and there really is something for everyone. Whether you're into fitness, attend an educational class, grab a cup of coffee, there is a fit," said Angelo.

To learn more about upcoming events at the senior center, check out their newsletter or call 413-534-3698.

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SECURITY from page 4

call. As I said, your best financial option will likely be to take your survivor benefit from your deceased second ex-husband note, however, if your first ex-husband also dies before you, you can subsequently file for a survivor benefit from him, if that is more than you are getting from your second husband's record.

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Sports

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Colts offense shines over High

AMHERST – On Dec. 15, Chicopee Comprehensive High School girls basketball took care of rival Chicopee High 52-17 in the Pioneer Valley Tip Off Classic held at UMass-Amherst. Taryn Carriveau had a huge game with 20 points. Eliza Burger had nine points. Comp is 3-1 to start the season while Chicopee High is 0-3.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Jeneida Torres dribbles toward the paint.



Eliza Burger sends a pass away.



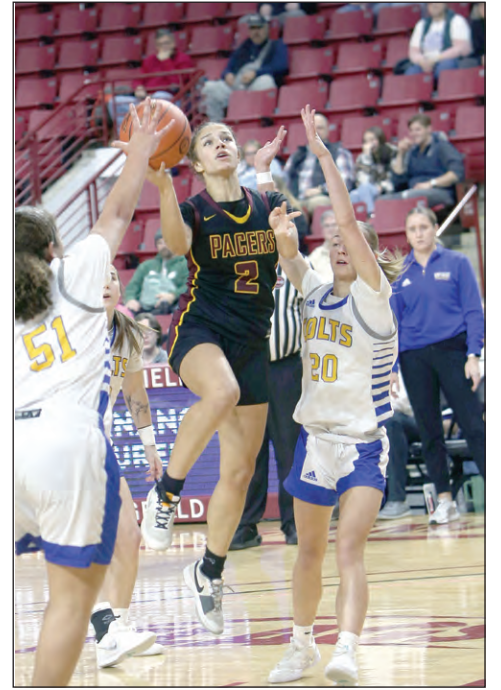
Taryn Carriveau gets a jump shot off.



Sophia Moreira makes her way across midcourt.



Kiyah Price holds the ball back as an opponent tries to defend her.



Cassidy Pytel tries to shoot through traffic.



Kaitlyn Gihooly sends a pass toward the corner.

Pacers win battle at the Tip-Off

CHICOPEE – In a battle of the two Chicopee High Schools, Comp took the early advantage, but the Pacers were able to come back and eventually scored a 51-50 win over Chicopee Comp at the Pioneer Valley Tip-Off

Classic at UMass-Amherst. Jay-Anthony Serrano had 17 points to lead the Pacers while Elijah Kleps had 19 points to lead the Colts. Comp is 2-2 to start the year while Chicopee High is 1-3.



Justin Martinez sends a three-point attempt away.



Jonah Mateo looks to make a pass.



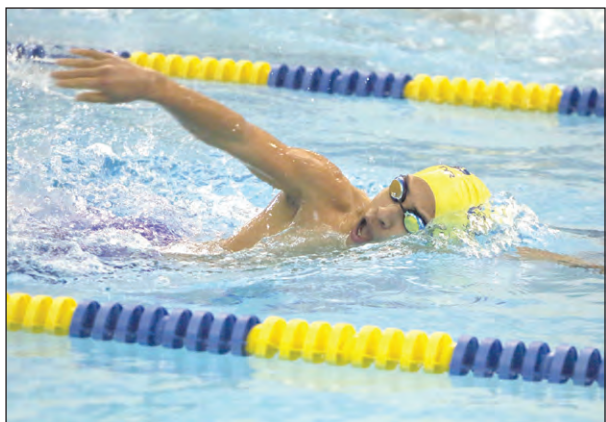
Brandon Thomas dribbles toward the hoop.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Jovan Gollman makes a shot.

Boys swimming out to 3-0 start

CHICOPEE – The Chicopee Comprehensive High School boys swimming team is 3-0 to start the season. Their most recent win came over Easthampton 139-0. The Colts got wins in every event. Ilan Jimenez won the 200 individual medley and the diving competition. Ruvim Tsikhotskiy also took two events, the 100 fly and the 100 breast.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

Govi Kunanele swims in the 200 individual medley.



Julian Demers finishes up the 100 freestyle.



John Nawrocki takes a lap in the 500 freestyle.



Ruvim Tsikhotskiy does the fly stroke event.

T-Birds fall to Checkers on the road

SPRINGFIELD — The Springfield Thunderbirds (12-10-2-1) fell victim to a two-goal comeback by the Charlotte Checkers (15-6-1-2) last Wednesday night at Bojangles Coliseum in a 4-3 defeat.

The T-Birds did themselves no favors by taking back-to-back penalties just four seconds apart, resulting in 1:57 of two-man advantage time for the league's top power play. Steve Konowalchuk's team dug in, though, as Vadim Zherenko and the penalty killers did the job to survive the lengthy threat.

Charlotte still rode the momentum from the power play to the game's opening tally by Oliver Okuliar at 4:45 of the first period, giving the Checkers a 1-0 advantage.

After the burst from Charlotte, the T-Birds quickly chipped away on the shot board. At 15:00 of the frame, Dalibor Dvorsky brought Springfield even with his team-leading 11th of the season, cashing in on a rebound at the edge of the crease and driving it past former T-Bird Chris Driedger.

The 1-1 score continued for nearly a whole period of game action until the T-Birds' third and fourth units capitalized on back-to-back shifts. Tanner Dickinson started the scoring blitz with a wrist shot from the left circle that glanced off traffic and eluded Driedger at 14:02 of the second period, making it a 2-1 lead for Springfield.

34 seconds later, Mathias Laferriere and Drew Callin entered the offensive zone on a 2-on-1 and took advantage of the situation. Driedger made an initial pad save off a Laferriere shot from the left circle. However, the rebound kicked right to Callin, who quickly deked to the forehand and put it behind Driedger to give the T-Birds a 3-1 advantage.

Penalties, though, continued to throw a wrench in the T-Birds' plans, and the Charlotte power play finally connected in the final minute of the second as Rasmus Asplund redirected a Trevor Carrick wrist shot behind Zherenko, chopping the lead to 3-2 at 19:21 of the middle frame.

For a second straight night, rookie Ben Steeves provided a clutch tying marker for Charlotte, taking a feed from Okuliar in the right circle and snapping a shot past Zherenko's stick hand at 3:55 of the third, bringing the game to a stalemate, 3-3.

The two teams did not generate much after the Steeves goal, with the two clubs combining for only eight shots in the entire third period, and the tie score carried into the final three minutes of the game.

Again, discipline proved pivotal, as Tobias Bjornfot drew a high-sticking double minor and a four-minute power play for the Checkers with 2:39 remaining.

The league's top man advantage lived up to their billing in the final minute, as Wilmer Skoog unloaded a blistering one-time slapper that found twine with 54 seconds left to give Charlotte the 4-3 lead. Springfield's last-ditch efforts to tie came up empty in the closing moments, and Charlotte completed the two-game sweep of the T-Birds.

Railers announce major coaching change

WORCESTER – The Worcester Railers Hockey Club (@RailersHC), proud ECHL (@ECHL) affiliate of the New York Islanders (@NYIslanders) and Chief Operating Officer Michael G. Myers have announced that Bob Deraney has taken on a new role within the organization, Head of Scouting, effective immediately. Nick Tuzzolino has been named Head Coach & General Manager of the Worcester Railers.

"Bob has been a part of the Railers family for a number of years," Myers said. "We can't thank him enough for his dedication and commitment to this organization over the past several seasons. We look forward to him continuing to work with the team in this new role."

Tuzzolino becomes the fifth head coach in Worcester Railers history after serving as Gener-

al Manager & Associate Head Coach to begin the season. He first came to Worcester in June after he spent the 2023-24 season as assistant coach and director of player development with the Savannah Ghost Pirates. As a defenseman, he played over 500 games professionally between the UHL, IHL, ECHL & American Hockey League from 2007-2023. During his initial retirement, he coached the Buffalo Jr. Sabres of the Ontario Junior Hockey League from 2016-20.

"In his time here, Nick has demonstrated his readiness to lead the team both on and off the ice," Myers said. "He has a wealth of experience in dissecting professional systems and working in pro player development. We're excited for him to take the reins and continue his work on bringing a winning culture to Worcester."

HoopHall ceremony announced

SPRINGFIELD – The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame announced that the Class of 2025 Enshrinement Ceremony will take place on Saturday, Sept. 6, in Springfield – the Birthplace of Basketball.

The nominees for the upcoming class were set to be revealed on Thursday, Dec. 19, at 3 p.m. during "NBA Today" on ESPN. The Class of 2025 Finalist Announcement will be Friday, Feb. 14, as part of the NBA All-Star Weekend in San Francisco, and the Class of 2025 will be announced on Saturday,

April 5, during the NCAA Final Four Weekend in San Antonio.

Enshrinement Weekend will begin at the Mohegan Sun on Friday, September 5, with the Tip-Off Celebration and Awards Gala, inclusive of the Class of 2025 jacket and ring presentation and the annual Hall of Fame Awards. The Enshrinement Ceremony will take place the following day in Springfield's historic Symphony Hall and will be available to a global audience.

A full schedule of events will be announced at a later date.

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.

GARDEN from page 4

Finally, give it a good look. Is it a nice, round shape? Is there any foam showing? Where could it use a few berries?

Rose hips or winterberry, or even artificial berries will surely brighten it up, as will strands of ribbon wired to a wooden pick and inserted into the bottom. Wired ribbon is a

good choice since it has a little shape; less droopy so to speak.

It will be surprising just how much greenery it takes to make a kissing ball. When I am making wreaths or decorations of any sort I always continue harvesting even after I think I have enough, just as a bit of insurance. It's always better to have extra than have to stop everything and go picking again.

One little factoid for cruise ship trivia: "Kissing bunches" in Old England were comprised of two intersecting circles of greens that were often decorated with fruit as well as figures of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. The "kissing" aspect came from the sprig of mistletoe that hung on the very bottom of the sphere – evoking the same response it does when hung by itself today.

Paws Finding Peace announces the opening of a Pet Aftercare Center

CHICOPEE - Pet parents now have a local, eco-friendly option for aftercare. Located in Chicopee, MA, Paws Finding Peace offers water-based cremation for those who have had to say goodbye to their beloved pet companion.

Paws Finding Peace was founded by Dr. Lauren Atkins in 2018. For the past six years they have offered at-home euthanasia, allowing pet families to say goodbye in the comfort of their own home. Dr. Atkins explained "I wanted to ensure that the same amount of attention, love, kindness and dignity that was given to the pets at home was extended throughout the cremation process." Before opening the aftercare center in Chicopee, pets would be transported out-of-state for cremation.

Water-based cremation has been around for decades but is more popular in states such as California and Colorado. In Massachusetts, there are three pet aftercare centers offering water-based cremation: Paws Finding Peace in Chicopee, Petrichor Aquamation in Woburn and Pawsitive Memories in Sandwich. Water-based cremation is also known as aquamation or alkaline hydrolysis. A combination of gentle water flow, temperature, and alkalinity are used to accelerate the breakdown of organic

material. It's the same process that occurs as part of nature's course when a body is laid to rest in the soil.

With traditional fire-based cremation, the bones that are left after the process are ground and given back to the family as ashes. With water-based cremation, the bones that are left after the process are also ground and given back to the family.

Since water-based cremation is so gentle, there are more ashes returned. Because this is such a gentle process, it is often preferred by pet families with small pets such as guinea pigs, rabbits, bearded dragons and birds.

Since opening the aftercare center at 904 Meadow Street in Chicopee, Paws Finding Peace has helped hundreds of local pet families. Pet parent Kim Bonacker says, "they will always be my first choice for our little angels. Thank you for everything you do, this world needs more amazing people like you. No request is ever too big or too small and every time I have needed their services it's made a difficult time so much easier to process."

To learn more about Paws Finding Peace visit our website at www.pawsfindingpeace.com.



PHOTOS AND CAPTION COURTESY OF CITY OF CHICOPEE MAYOR'S OFFICE

Chicopee marks Pearl Harbor Anniversary

CHICOPEE - On Dec. 6, in honor of the 83rd anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, Mayor Vieau joined members of The American Legion Post 275 to pay tribute to Chicopee's own Seaman 1st Class Joseph A. Gosselin.

A heartfelt ceremony was held at the monument located at the intersection of Montgomery Street and Memorial Drive, recognizing his courage and sacrifice in service to our nation.

Let us always remember and honor the bravery of those who gave their lives for our freedom.



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.

Focusing on Goals

CHICOPEE - The Council on Aging will offer the program "Focusing on Goals" on Tuesday, Jan. 7 at 10 a.m. at Chicopee Council on Aging's RiverMills Center, 5 West Main St.

The Foodbank of Western Mass will be at RiverMills for a program on how to keep you on top of your goals and how to stay on track with your health resolutions. A healthy cooking demonstration will take place during this program. Although this is a free program, please register at RiverMills Center or by calling 534-3698.



PHOTOS AND CAPTION COURTESY OF CITY OF CHICOPEE MAYOR'S OFFICE



Vieau attends CHS John and Abigail Adams Scholarship Ceremony

CHICOPEE - On Dec. 12, Mayor Vieau had the honor of attending Chicopee High School for the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship Ceremony, celebrating 40 outstanding students! This scholarship recognizes academic excellence and provides tuition credits for up to eight semesters at Massachusetts state colleges and universities.

We are so proud of these hardworking students whose achievements inspire our entire community. Best wishes to them and their families as they embark on bright futures ahead!



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

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2008 Infiniti G35
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: JKSKXCP26A016277
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

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2011 Chevrolet Silverado 1500
VIN: 1GCRKPEA2BZ262077
Joseph Hodgdon
185 Artist Falls Rd,
North Conway, NH, 03860

2015 Hyundai Accent GLS
VIN: KMHCT4AE5FU875870
William Gilmore
28 Maple St, Apt 1
Westfield, Ma, 01085

2007 Freightliner Conventional
VIN: 1FUJA6CK57LY27205
Lulus Trucking LLC
1077 North Ave, STE 1184
Elizabeth, NJ, 07201

2006 Wabash National Corp
VIN: 1JJV532W46L024973
Lulus Trucking LLC
1049 Sumit Ave, Apt 1
Bronx, Ny, 10452

2004 Honda Accord Ex
VIN: 1HGCM56894A175215
Kiara Falcon Melendez
185 College St, Fl 1st
Springfield, MA, 01109

2005 Toyota Sequoia Sr5
VIN: 5TDBT44A25S241668
Marc Louis Razza
71 Toms Pond Lane,
Warner, NH, 03278

2010 Mazda CX-9
VIN: JM3TB3MV8A0233017
Samuel Opoku
3 Jim St,
Enfield, CT, 06082
12/13, 12/20, 12/27/2024

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

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.

Build with LEGO on Thursday, Jan. 2 at 4 p.m. Freeform building time with our big pile of LEGO! Recommended for ages six and up.

Little Movers will be held in the children's program room on Fridays Jan. 3, 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 AHM (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 activities. This month's program theme is *Iskai*, also known as "That Time Anime Club Got Reincarnated with a Really Long Title."

The library is hosting a **Hands-On-ly 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.

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

BACKYARD from page 4

Dec. 14. National Audubon Society 125th Christmas Bird Counts take place Saturday, Dec. 14 through Sunday, Jan. 5, 2025. This is one of the most popular birding events of the year. It is rarely held on the actual designated holiday itself, counts are scheduled to take place on various days surrounding Dec. 25 within the official count period noted above. Counting takes place anytime during the 24 hours, midnight-to-midnight.

The goal is to find, identify and count all birds within a 15-mile diameter "count circle." All are welcome. Compilers do their best to make sure that beginners join a group with at least one experienced birder. Locations in late December include: Quabbin on Saturday, Dec. 28 compiler Scott Surner at ssurner@aol.com and Westminster on Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2025 compiler Charles Caron at 978-874-5649 or caronev@aol.com.

People may visit <https://www.audubon.org/community-science/christmas-bird-count> to read about CBC history, science and data.

Juncos and snow

The Brimfield resident noted a large flock of juncos about 40 the day before the Dec. 5 snow storm. He said, "Storms a commin' I looked out near where the feeding stations are located and where I spread mixed seed on the ground and a quick count resulted in 40 junco. And chickadees and titmice were constantly back and forth to the black oil sunflower seed feeder." I also saw a large flock of juncos on my daughter's lawn in Barre on that Wednesday.

Pond visits

The Brimfield resident makes frequent trips to ponds in his area. He found most of them frozen over on Dec. 4. He did count 12 hooded mergansers at Holland Pond, a large group of mallards over 200 and three black ducks at Sherman Pond.

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

WE'VE EXPANDED OUR WEB SITE PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

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HELP WANTED

The **Town of Oakham** is seeking an experienced municipal **Treasurer/Collector**. 15 hours a week, negotiable pay based on experience. Please send resumes to **admin@oakham-ma.gov**.

TOWN OF BLANDFORD HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

The Town of Blandford is seeking a qualified individual for the position of Highway Superintendent. Salary range starting at \$75,000-\$80,000+ negotiable based on experience/skills. Please visit our website **TownOfBlandford.com** or email **Administrator@TownOfBlandford.com** for more information.

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ALL REAL ESTATE advertised herein is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation, or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or intention to make any such preference, limitation, or discrimination." We will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. All persons are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised are available on an equal opportunity basis.

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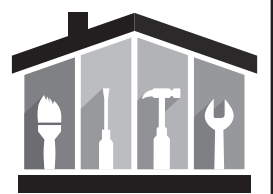
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All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (number of children and or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, or any intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination. 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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CFD receives visit with holiday treats



PHOTOS AND CAPTION COURTESY OF CHICOPEE FIRE DEPARTMENT

CHICOPEE – The fire department received a special visit on Dec. 22 from friends Lauren, Lynne and Maddie who shared holiday baking treats with everyone. The treats were enjoyed by all.

CPD shares puppy jail photos



CHICOPEE – The police department shared photos they received from a resident after responding to a call recently, eliciting chuckles:

“Late last week the owner of this dog received a call letting them know that the pup had broken out of the house and was barking non-stop in the back yard. Our officers were able to get the dog back into the house for the owner and secured them back in the doggy room. As a result of their escape the owner has put them in puppy jail. Thank you for sharing these photos with us.”



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

CFD puts out car fire on Main Street

CHICOPEE – On Dec. 17, crews responded to the car fire on Main Street. The fire was extinguished quickly and no injuries were reported.



PHOTOS AND CAPTION COURTESY OF CHICOPEE FIRE DEPARTMENT

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Events &
announcements schedule

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 December 2024.

Saturday Playgroup will be held at 1 p.m., on Saturdays, Dec. 21, 28. Come play at the library! The playspace will be open for families with kids of all ages to meet up and play.

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

Harmony House Needs Volunteers

CHICOPEE - The doors have opened at Harmony House of Western Massachusetts and potential volunteers are invited to explore the opportunity to help others in our communities.

Harmony House of Western Massachusetts is a social model home for hospice care located in Chicopee. After closing our original home in 2019 and purchasing a house in the Aldenville section of Chicopee for renovation, the organization is actively serving our residents with the help of volunteers and staff members.

Harmony House is currently in need of caregivers and people who would enjoy the opportunity to support our residents. Whether it's a few hours a week or a few hours a month, Harmony House is a wel-

coming place for people looking to help people.

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 harmonyhousewma@gmail.com.

Holyoke Chicopee Head Start holding Raising A Reader Family Shared Reading Program

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Chicopee Family & Community Program is currently hosting a “Raising A Reader” Family Shared reading program.

The program is for families with children from infant to five years old.

Let's get together for fun activities that develop reading readiness and social emotional skills! Take home a red bag each week with books to borrow.

The program takes place on Wednesdays, 4 to 5 p.m. at HCS Head Start the first and third Wednesday of the month at 41 Commercial St., Holyoke.

Please call or email Shane at ShaneW@headstart.org or 413-310-1632.

This program is funded by the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grant awarded to HCS Head Start by the Department of Early Education and Care.

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.

