

Chicopee Register



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Szot hosts all-star event



Jeff Pula, of Chicopee, (third from left) shakes hands with Boston Red Sox Public Address announcer Carl Beane.

By Nate Rosenthal
Turley Publications Sports
Correspondent

CHICOPEE - The stars came out to Szot Park this week. The local church league held its 25th Annual Rick Lidwin Memorial All-Star game softball game. On hand for this event

were some big names from the Red Sox past. There was Rico Petrocelli, the long time shortstop and third baseman of the Sox, who was a key member of the Impossible Dream team of 1967 that came within one game of winning the World Series. Joining him was Bernie Carbo, a hero of the 1975 World Series, who hit one of

the most memorable homeruns in the team's history. Alongside to bring a little of today's team was Carl Beane, the public address announcer at the ballpark and Wally the Green Monster, the team's mascot.

Petrocelli joined the Red Sox in 1963 and played one game that fall.
Please see SZOT, Page 13

Turley Publications photo by David Henry sweetdogphotos.com

Valley Opportunity Council works to help homeless families

City still ranks second in number of homeless families housed in hotels

By Sandra Dias
Correspondent

CHICOPEE - A month ago, the city led the state in the number of homeless families living in hotels, but that ranking has since dropped to number two as a social service agency has worked to relocate families into permanent housing.

Mayor Michael D. Bissonnette said a month ago, there were 102 families living in Chicopee hotels and most of them came from communities outside the city, as far away as Boston. As of June 15, that number dropped to 80 families as 22 were relocated to apartments. Bissonnette said the 102 families actually added up to about 300 people.

"What we're getting is the placement of the homeless by the state in our hotels located off the Mass Turnpike," said Bissonnette. "Seventy five percent of those 102 families are from other communities. It does not make sense to bring people from other parts of the state and house them in hotels here, both from a

Please see HOMELESS, Page 14

Scholarships founded in memory of 1st Sgt. Kevin Dupont

Family honors memory of Chicopee native who died in service to country

By Kathleen Mitchell
Staff writer

CHICOPEE - Last week, in honor of the first anniversary of the death of



Submitted photo
1st Sgt. Kevin Dupont

Scholarship Fund will award scholarships each year to a deserving student at Chicopee High School and at Comprehensive High School.

"Kevin spent his entire adult life serving his country and this is a fitting way
Please see DUPONT, Page 14

Science/Techno Fair results in impressive projects

By David Grant
Correspondent

CHICOPEE - Hannah Chapdelaine could hardly believe it was really her name being announced as the winner of the third annual citywide Science/Technofair held recently at Comprehensive High School.

The fifth-grader from Anna E. Barry School covered her mouth as Jeff Cady, a general manager at Chicopee Electric, the event's main sponsor, named Chapdelaine the first place winner after nine judges deliberated for two hours.

"I'm really happy," she said. "I really believe in myself now and it gives me a lot more self confidence."

Chapdelaine was chosen among 33 fifth-graders representing ten public and Catholic schools in Chicopee for her project titled "What's the Scoop on Stopping the Stroop." The Stroop effect is a demonstration of the reaction time of a task, like naming the word blue when it's printed in a different color. The effect has been used to create a psychological test that is widely used in clinical practice and investigation.

"I wanted to learn more about it," she said. "I want to be a neonatologist when I grow up so this fit my interest."

Chapdelaine, second place winner Willard McKinstry III of Bowie School and third place winner Ruben Basnet of Litwin School each received a \$100 savings bond for their accomplishments.

"I'm excited," said Basnet, who studied different forms of germs for his



Chicopee Register photo by DAVID GRANT

The Science/Technofair winners, chosen from 33 fifth grade students who created projects for the competition, show off their winning certificates.

project. "All germs are bad and there are many variations of germs. Science is interesting. There are a lot of fun projects you can do."

And that's exactly why the event was started three years ago by James Fiola, president of Westwood Advertising Associates.

"We wanted to create a competitive event that emphasizes the importance of science and technology," Fiola said.

Fiola looked to Chicopee Electric to sponsor the event and the marriage was perfect.

"This is the third year we have done this project," Cady said. "We were looking at a community project we could do with the schools. The schools would

really like to emphasize science and our mission is to be involved in science and technology. By getting involved it's a win/win for everyone."

"They are a wonderful supporter and an excellent community partner," Fiola added. "They purchase the presentation boards and deliver them early in the fall. They also are very supportive in helping us secure judges."

Each school holds its own fair during the year and the top three finishers advance to the citywide competition. Students must follow certain rubrics such as researching a topic and using a scientific method to prove their hypothesis.

Please see FAIR, Page 20

The Tigers found themselves in a bit of a rut as of late. After a couple of close losses last week by one and two runs, they dropped their first two this week, both in the final inning and after making spirited comebacks. Down 3-0 to Peoples, the Tigers got one in the sixth on a Chris Hebert home run and three in the seventh to take a 4-3 lead. Peoples responded with a pair in the bottom of the seventh to walk off with the win. The next day, they fell victim to Teddy Bear. They were down 3-0 in the middle of the fourth, then came back to get a 4-3 lead with two in their half of the fourth and two more in the sixth. Rich Wilson's double in the sixth put them on top. Teddy Bear answered that with four runs in the top of the seventh and Chicopee was unable to come back from that.

They broke their losing streak with an emphatic 11-4 win over Oliver's and it was a five-run third that provided the fireworks. With one out, Jamie Mackie was hit by a pitch. The next six batters reached, starting with an RBI double by Mario Proietto. Two batters later, Wilson singled in two. Jeremy Hartbarger singled with the bases loaded for runs four and five that proved to be the ultimate game winner. Oliver made it interesting with one in the fourth and three in the fifth to close to 6-4, but a four-spot for Chicopee Falls in the bottom of the fifth, put them back in control. Hebert went the distance for the win. The Tigers now stand at 3-6 on the season.

AMERICAN LEGION

No one was busier than Chicopee-Aldenville, who played six games in seven days. By winning four of them, they improved to 5-2 on the season. First up was a 7-3 win over Palmer, but then they dropped their next two, 9-4 to East Longmeadow and 6-1 to East Springfield. They were down 4-0 to East Longmeadow after two innings and came back to tie with three in the third on back-to-back homers by Dan Asselin and Sean Bourgeois and

another in the fourth on a sacrifice by Ricci Sergienko. But East Longmeadow answered with three of their own in the fourth to regain the lead for good. They fell behind East Springfield by three after two, but could never mount enough offense to get back into this one.

They got back into the win column with a wild 13-12 win over Providence. Down 2-0 in the second they took a lead with four in their half of the second. Bobby Bowden, Dave Cloutier, Jake Alvaro and Tyler Gadoury all singled and scored in the inning. With a four spot in the fifth they took a 9-3 lead and seemed to be on their way to a comfortable win. A nine-run sixth for Providence changed that in a hurry. Now Chicopee was down 12-9, but scored three in the sixth to tie it once again. It was an inning where the Providence pitcher struck out four, but one got by the catcher and allowed the tying run to score. Chicopee won it in walk off fashion as Anthony Kmeczik singled in Sergienko.

They finished the week off with two more wins; a rain-shortened 4-2 decision over Belchertown and an 8-4 win over Holyoke. Chicopee fell behind 2-0 in the first and got one back in the second, but still trailed into the fifth. They took the lead and ultimately the game with three in the fifth, a two run double by Zach Beaulieu, and the big blow. After a scoreless Belchertown fifth, the rains came down and the game was called. It was another comeback for Chicopee in the win over Holyoke, as they scored six runs in the fifth inning to take the lead. Kmeczik pitched well over five, allowing just two runs on three hits. He knocked in his teams first run in that inning, but the big hit was a triple by Alvaro.

AMERICAN LEGION JUNIORS

Without a league for the Chicopee-Aldenville juniors, they will be playing a makeshift schedule of out of area games throughout their short season. They got that under-

way with a 12-2 win over East Windsor, Conn. They got it going quickly with two in the first as Bryan Donze doubled in Jonathan Brown and Joe St. Jean, who had each singled. They added two more in the second, the big blow a double by Shane Denault. After scoring five in the third and two in the fourth, they led 11-0. Nick Soillis was the winning pitcher.

Next was a doubleheader with Attleboro, which they split. They dropped the opener, 11-5 and came back to win the second game, 9-4. Attleboro took a 5-0 lead with one, one and two runs. Chicopee scored three in the third and two in the fifth and got as close as 6-5, but a five-run sixth for Attleboro put this one away. In the second game, Chicopee left no doubt with an eight-run first inning. They were helped by six walks in the inning. Donze's run scoring single was the only hit.

METRO SOFTBALL

The Chicopee Pacers got their season underway after a rainout on their scheduled opening day last Sunday. It did not start out well for the Pacers. They lost their opener to Monson, 17-2 in a five-inning game, which the Mustangs put away with a nine-run fourth. It was more of the same in the first game of this Sunday's doubleheader against Springfield, where they went down 12-0, that game also being called after five innings.

But back came the Pacers in the nightcap, getting an 8-7 win over the same team that had shut them down earlier and it started immediately, as they scored three in the first. The big hit was a two-run triple by Marie Valliere, scoring Sam Riley and Lauryn St. Jean. The Titans got those right back in the bottom of the first to tie the game at 3-3.

It remained that way until Chicopee took a 4-3 lead in the fourth. Jaeny Santos reached on an error to score Sam Hill. A couple of bases loaded wild pitches in the fifth scored Raven Fornier and St. Jean, giving the Pacers a 6-3 lead before the Titans responded closed to one run with a pair in their half of the fifth.

Chicopee got those two back in the sixth, they loaded the bases with no outs. Santos and Rachel Riley both singled and Fornier reached on an error. A passed ball scored Santos and a wild pitch scored Riley to give them an 8-5 lead. Springfield would score one in the sixth and one in the seventh to come within one run.

Szot from Page 1

Two years later he was up to stay as the team's short-stop, a position he played until 1974. During his 13-year career in Boston, Petrocelli was one of the early power hitting middle infielders. His 40 home runs in 1969 still stands as the Red Sox record at the position. He had 210 in his career. He was part of two World Series teams (1967 and 1975) and his playing career spanned those of George Scott, Jim Lonborg, Dick Radatz, Fred Lynn, Dwight Evans, Carlton Fisk, Luis Tiant and many others. He also got to play with two of the greatest in the game, Hall of Famers Carl Yastrzemski and Jim Rice. His 1967 team took the St. Louis Cardinals to seven games in the World Series

One of his teammates in 1975 was a young outfielder named Bernie Carbo, who joined the team after a stint with the Cincinnati Reds. In that year, the two teams would meet in what many consider to be the greatest World Series ever. His moment came in the epic Game 6, when he hit a three-run pinch-hit homer in the eighth inning to tie the game at 6-6. It would go into extra innings, where another homerun for the ages was hit by Fisk in the 12th to win the game. That forced a seventh game, but the "Big Red Machine" would win it, 4-3. That ended a 40-year title drought for Cincinnati and extended that of the Red Sox to 57 years.

Sherm Feller had been behind the microphone at the ballpark for 26 years and his soothing tones had become a staple at Red Sox games. When Carl Beane came onto the scene in 2003, the Red Sox and their fans had found their man. Beane has been there ever since.

They set the stage for what would be a memorable night.

And that it was, as another special guest was introduced. In 2009, Chicopee High baseball player Jeff Pula was severely injured in a car accident. He had been a catcher for the Pacers as a freshman and played junior varsity ball as a sophomore. The accident occurred just before varsity tryouts last year. After sending six months in a coma, he has made miraculous strides and is getting better. He was honored by the team as a senior at their last game and there was more for him this night.

He and his family were introduced by Pacer coach Pat Garvey, who worked with him as a player. Present day players Jason Varitek and Kevin Youkilis

put together some brief words and sent them over. They were played before the game and brought tears to many an eye. Pula has been an inspiration to his friends and teammates

Just before the game, the "Commissioner" of the league, Turley's own Dave Henry was honored for all of the great work he has done to put this together year after year. Then he went back to work snapping pictures.

The 28 area church teams were represented by two players each and broken into the East and the West. What followed was a wild game won by the West, 21-18. This was a battle from the beginning. In the top of the first, the East came up empty, though they got a leadoff hit from Jordan Zantingh and a two-out single by Rico Petrello. The West, however, wasted no time getting on the board. Caleb Cole led off with a hit and was followed in the hit parade by Mark Stiles, Moses Gonzalez, Kyle Theriault and Craig Opal. When the inning was over they had a 4-0 lead.

But that was just the beginning of a back and forth affair. The East put up a five spot in the second to gain a short-lived one-run lead. As each inning passed the lead changed hands over and over. The East had one last chance to win it in the last inning, but would fall short.

Theriault was named the game's most valuable player. He also won the home derby that was held earlier in the evening,

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Calendar

Send us your listing by Monday for publication in next Thursday's paper ♦ 333 Front Street, Chicopee, MA 01013

COOPER'S GIRLS NIGHT OUT - Thursday, June 24 from 5 to 8 p.m. at Cooper's Gift and Curtain Shop, 161 Main St., Agawam. Refreshments, complimentary spa services. Guests asked to clean out closets; bring professional clothing to donate to Dress for Success of Western Mass. Questions? Call 786-7760.

AMERICANA CONCERT - by Boris McCutcheon and The Salt Licks with opener Ray Mason at the Pioneer Arts Center of Easthampton on Thursday, June 24 at 8 p.m. \$12 or \$10 for members. Call 413-527-3700 or go to <http://www.pioneerarts.org>

ALL YOU CAN EAT SPAGHETTI SUPPER - Thursday, June 24 from 4 to 6:30 p.m. at Holyoke Lodge of Elks, Whitney Avenue, Holyoke. Tossed salad, spaghetti with Elks meat sauce, parmesan cheese, plain and garlic rolls, lemonade, coffee or tea. \$5, \$2 for children 6 to 12 and free under 6. Meatballs, dessert available.

YOUNG AT HEART CONCERT TO BENEFIT WGBY - at The Paramount Theatre in Springfield June 25 at 7 p.m. Tickets \$20 to \$50. For more information or to purchase tickets, please visit www.wgby.org

CONCERT - Old Time Musketry and Bella's Bartok at the Pioneer Arts Center of Easthampton on Friday, June 25 at 8 p.m. \$8 or \$7 for members. For tickets or more information, call 413-527-3700 or go to <http://www.pioneerarts.org>.

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY RADIO CONTROL MODEL AIRPLANE CLUB - Open House and Family Day on Saturday, June 25 and Sunday, June 26 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at their flying field located north of the Coolidge Bridge on Route 9. Free; food concession booth or bring a picnic lunch. Questions? Call Dave Sherman at 413-774-7375 or email dsher10578@aol.com

'A TASTE OF DAVE'S'; - free event June 26 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Dave's Soda & Pet City, 151 Springfield

Relay from Page 12

"It's been a big year for PVRD," she said. "In January, the league opened its own facility in the Florence section of Northampton. The number of active players has grown to over 60 and with only 14 skaters making the roster for a game, competition is fierce. It's good for the sport. We have a whole database where you have to register your name. When I registered four years ago I was somewhere in the mid 2,000's across the world. Now there are over 20,000 skaters."

The sport attracts a whole array of people from college students to stay at home moms, kindergarten teachers and lawyers, all seeking the thrill of the competition.

Forzano said the women's team is at capacity, but the men's team is still taking on new skaters. The teams are just three bouts into the season, and they return back to Fitzpatrick Arena on July 25 against an opponent from Ottawa, Canada.

Any one interested in volunteering, donating to the Relay for Life or those who want to try the sport can find more information online at www.pioneervalleyrollerderby.com.

Homeless from Page 1

compassionate standpoint and from an economic standpoint."

The city received a \$550,000 grant from the federal government to move these families into more permanent housing and provide them with assistance to hold onto it. The city hired the Valley Opportunity Council (VOC) to do outreach to families living in the hotels and help get them into apartments. Through the grant, the VOC also is working with Chicopee families who are not yet homeless, but are at risk of losing their homes, to prevent that from happening.

Bissonnette said the situation evolved after the state closed numerous homeless shelters due to a lack of funding, but without creating a backup plan for dealing with rising numbers of homeless people in a depressed economy. The most recent unemployment rate statewide is 9.2 percent.

"It doesn't make a lot of sense," Bissonnette said. "The state has ended up paying \$2,000 per month for each family to stay in a hotel. That is \$75 a night. The only benefit is to the hotel owners. It is not good public policy and it is especially not good for the children living in this situation."

Stephen Huntley, executive director of the VOC, said many of the families moving into three Chicopee hotels - which he declined to name - are from Springfield. Of the 102 families originally placed in the city's hotels, only 10 had any connection to Chicopee, according to Bissonnette.

The VOC works with 20 families at a time to locate permanent, affordable housing. The grant also enables the VOC to provide the families with some cash assistance, such as first and last month's rent and a security deposit. The VOC works with the families to uncover how they became homeless and helps them access services such as food stamps, fuel assistance, welfare, and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) vouchers for milk and nutritious foods. Huntley said many of the families became homeless due to job loss and the program also helps them obtain career training and conduct job searches. The VOC counselors also work with landlords to negotiate lower rents, when necessary, and offer to pay arrears or a few months rent to help get the family back on its feet. Huntley said the primary focus is to get people back to their neighborhood of origin so children can return to the schools in which they were enrolled and families can regain a sense

of stability. St., Agawam. Free gifts, raffle with prizes; LUV My Pet Clinic, low cost vaccinations and microchipping. \$5 rabies shots for cats and dog, dog obedience and agility demos, local adoption organizations promoting adoption for ferrets, rabbits, cats and dogs. Visit www.davessodaandpetcity.com for clinic details.

DUET - Ameri-MF-cana will perform at the Pioneer Arts Center of Easthampton on Saturday, June 26 at 8 p.m. \$10 and \$8 for members. For more information, call 413-527-3700.

SUMMER PICNIC: HIBERNIAN STYLE - Saturday, June 26 at 6:30 p.m. at the Wherehouse? in Holyoke. Irish folk music. \$12 or \$8 for children under 12 includes hot dogs, hamburgs, salad, dessert, soda, entertainment. For reservations, call 534-4039.

CHILDREN'S SUMMER THEATER - Saturday, June 26 at Eastfield Mall in Springfield with Magical Moments

show by Ed Popielarczyk at 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. in Center Court. Free; children 12 and under receive a voucher valid for lunch in the food court and a \$1 kid cone at Dairy Queen following the performance and will be entered into a free raffle for prizes. Questions? visit www.eastfieldmall.com or contact 543-8000.

ARMORY DAY - Saturday, June 26 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Springfield Armory National Historic Site, One Armory Square, Springfield. Free; salute to African American Buffalo soldiers; Native American Inter-Tribal Pow-Wow; Living History encampment - Revolutionary War to Vietnam. Questions? Call 734-8551 or visit www.nps.gov/spar

WOMEN ON TARGET INSTRUCTIONAL SHOOTING CLINIC - for women June 26 in Florence. \$60. For more information or to register, contact Lori L. Scott at 413-587-9725 or loriscott839@comcast.net

Dupont from Page 1

to help him continue to serve," said Kevin's brother, Chris Dupont. "Kevin seemed to have a way of getting involved. There were so many soldiers at his wake who knew him or were trained by him. When he saw a young soldier going off course, he tried to get him or her back, even if the soldier was not directly under his tutelage."

Kevin's military accomplishments were many and he had a fabled history of achievements. He served his country for more than 30 years after graduating from Chicopee High School in 1976; first in the U.S. Marine Corps and then with the Massachusetts Army National Guard.

Dupont's dedication to the U.S. and his military career was so great that he turned down a promotion in 2008 which would have kept him from being deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Before that deployment, he had received 30 awards and decorations, including the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart Medal and the NATO Medal.

On March 8, 2009, Kevin suffered severe burns when the vehicle he was conducting a combat patrol mission in was struck by an improvised explosive device. Three months later, after a long and difficult fight to survive at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, Kevin succumbed to the burns which had damaged his lungs and a large part of his body.

During his stay at Brooke Army Medical Center, the community rallied around the Chicopee family and a spaghetti supper was held to help defray the costs incurred by family members who were traveling back and forth to Texas to insure Kevin would have someone at his side at all times. "Our cousins mobilized the spaghetti supper and held tag sales, craft sales and bingo games," Chris said. "And the Knights of Columbus, veterans groups throughout Massachusetts and many other people worked hard to make the spaghetti supper a real success," Chris said.

After Kevin died, the family debated what to do with the money. "So much money was raised and we had spent very little of it," Chris said. "The entire local community had mobilized to help us out. They threw their arms around us and the money wasn't ours to keep."

Shortly after that, they were approached by some of Kevin's close friends, including Michael Axton and Bruce Socha, who wanted to host a memorial golf tournament in Kevin's name.

The proceeds from that event, held Oct. 9, 2009 at Chicopee Country Club, combined with the money from other gifts and fundraisers, gave the Dupont family the \$50,000 needed to establish a scholarship fund.

"So many people came forward," Socha said. "The scholarship is the perfect opportunity to recognize the consummate professional that Kevin was. He appreciated art, music and anything anyone could do at a high level and he gave all of his attention and all of his effort to everything that he did because he strove for perfection," he said. "He is still a great friend and ours was a friendship that will last forever."

The Community Foundation will administer the scholarship fund and the scholarships will be awarded by a board composed of two of Kevin's family members and four people in the educational field.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2011, graduates of Chicopee High School and Chicopee Comprehensive High School will be invited to apply to the Foundation for this scholarship. Preference will be given to students who are graduating seniors, who demonstrate leadership qualities and/or community service involvement, who have financial need, and who have academic merit.

Students who apply to the Foundation will also be matched with any of the more than 100 scholarship funds administered by the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts that they may be eligible for. This is the third scholarship fund administered by the Community Foundation to honor the memory of a veteran of the conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan.

of stability.

"We are able to help them find apartments that are close to affordable and then we provide that something extra to push them over the edge into that apartment," Huntley said.

The VOC also works with families on the cusp of becoming homeless, negotiating with landlords to reduce rent temporarily and assessing where people need help paying household bills.

"When someone has lost a job, we get them into our workforce program," Huntley said. "We talk to the landlords and say, 'did you know this is why they are not paying their rent; because they are not working?'"

Huntley said none of the families are receiving federal Section 8 vouchers for subsidized low-income housing because that program is under funded and the waiting list is astronomically long.

"Oftentimes we can get the landlords to lower the rent for six months or so until people can get on their feet if we are able to put some money towards arrears or something along those lines," Huntley said. "The landlord gets something out of it and they know they are going to retain a quality tenant who will get back on their feet, as opposed to someone who has always been behind on their rent."

The program does not provide help to homeowners who have lost their jobs and whose homes are being foreclosed upon, Huntley said, but only to renters. He said that is regrettable, but the grant funding does not allow it.

Huntley said some of the homeless families are headed by people with college degrees who have unfortunately fallen on hard times due to the recession. They have never received public assistance and do not know how to negotiate the complex system of obtaining welfare, help paying for childcare, food stamps, and fuel assistance from the state.

"A lot of folks who are coming to us are the first generation in their families who have had to ask for help," Huntley said. "Many times they are college grads who have, through circumstance, very suddenly found themselves in dire straits. They have no idea that they qualify for all these other forms of assistance. We help them enroll in various programs. If you have not been in 'the system,' you have no idea how to do it."

Huntley said it is critical for the VOC to provide these services because families will just become homeless again.

"We do not want to just put them in an apartment, we want to give them an opportunity to succeed," he said.