

HOLYOKE Plus

South Hadley
and Granby

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Inside:

Viewpoint

Being a literacy volunteer feels great.

See Page HP2

Family tree

Looking forward to reopening of museum.

See Page HP3

Just browsing

All this talk about health care reform induces headache.

See Page HP6

Great Gardens

South Hadley sanctuary a peaceful paradise.

See Page HP14

Sudoku

Challenge your mind with a puzzle.

See Page HP18

YMCA

Learn how to strengthen your "core."

See Page HP20

Holyoke cobblestones given new life

By KATHRYN M. ROY

HOLYOKE – Pieces of the Paper City's past now adorn the valet area of an upscale hotel in Warwick, R.I.

Some 14,000 cobblestones that were once part of the old Holyoke train station at 170 Main St. have a new lease on life at NYLO, dubbed Rhode Island's ultramodern boutique hotel built with green and renewable technology.

The stone was removed by New England Architectural of Newport, R.I., found at www.piecesofhistory.net, New England's largest dealer of antique and reclaimed cobblestones. Owner Peter G. Hill said he gets calls from people all over the region, looking for an antique or unique look for their property.

Please see Cobble, Page HP17



Some 14,000 cobblestones that once covered the property of the old Holyoke train station at 170 Main St. are now part of the valet area at NYLO, an upscale hotel in Warwick, R.I.

South Hadley workers walking to wellness



By SANDRA E. CONSTANTINE
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SOUTH HADLEY – Health Director Sharon D. Hart recently had dozens of employees of the town and its two fire district hand in their walking papers.

In this instance, walking papers are sheets tallying the number of steps they have walked during a recent 10-week

said during a recent interview in her Town Hall office.

Town Planner Richard L. Harris and Town Collector Deborah L. Baldini have each piled up more than 500,000 steps or about 250 miles each. About 2,200 steps come out to a mile.

Baldini said she is pleased to be neck and neck with Harris as he is an avid hiker and back-

Cobble: Holyoke stones get new life in R.I. Walking: Workers counting steps

Continued from Page HP1

"The thing that makes vintage or recycled cobblestone unique is there is less and less available," Hill said. "Most of your major cities are keeping them and they're starting to reuse them. There's so much more emphasis on recycling these days."

The Holyoke property is now used for commercial space. It has been privately owned for years, so the city could make no claim to the cobblestone, as Hill said officials in big cities like Boston and Providence have been doing recently with city property.

The Holyoke property likely was first used as a train station around 1880, when all the roads were made of cobblestones. The station was a busy one, as one of the main stops between Northampton and Springfield. It was likely still in use until the late 1940s, with heavy traffic of all kinds hitting the cobblestones constantly.

"The one thing that is cool about them is, you cannot replace, replicate or duplicate the wear on the stone - vintage cobblestone has something that other stone doesn't have," Hill said. "It has wear, color variation and size variation. Wagons and horses and carts and people walked on those stones in those cities for 50 years or 100 years."

Hill said NYLO owners wanted something unique for

their valet area, and he found it at the Holyoke property.

"It's a very contemporary hotel," he said. "They wanted to do something different and they leaned in that direction, and it worked. There are certain older products that can marry very easily in a contemporary design."

Indeed, NYLO General Manager Christine Nevers said they were looking for something that matched with their green technology.

"It was a perfect fit," she said. "The cobblestones bring the modern and the past together." Nevers said NYLO was built on the site of a former mill. It is adjacent to the Pontiac Mills, two 19th century mills. Fruit of the Loom undergarments were once made there. She said the cobblestones just seem to be well-suited for the spot.

"I'm really proud of the fact that we used a renewable resource like that and incorporated it into our brand new building," Nevers said.

Continued from Page HP1

New Hampshire 4,000 feet or higher in elevation. He also walked all five in Vermont, 11 of 14 in Maine and five of the 46 in the Adirondacks. He is hopeful of someday hiking Mount Whitney in California, which at about 14,500 feet, is the highest peak in the lower 48 states.

The program is being funded by a \$75,000 state grant the Board of Health was

awarded to start a pilot program to improve the health of municipal employees here and in Easthampton, Northampton and Amherst.

The grant has been awarded under the aegis of the Mount Tom Tobacco Control Coalition, of which South Hadley is a member, and with which the town is working.

A survey of town employees showed that smoking cessation, exercise and diet are top concerns, Hart said. The town has already gotten nicotine

patches for employees who are trying to quit smoking. Hart said walking was chosen as an activity for the exercise component because it is something most people can do and does not require any special equipment. This fall, the program will offer a class in Zumba, a program that combines dance with body sculpting.

The dietary part of the effort will feature instructions by a nutritionist and a Mediterranean dinner, Hart said.

View: It feels great to volunteer

Continued from Page HP2

than a year until he or she is approved for attendance. It's a huge problem that requires funding that can be hard to find. But volunteers make a difference.

In my case, I was an extra set of hands in the computer lab, so the head teacher could keep the class moving as I helped individuals. Other classroom volunteers can help

a class move forward at a steady pace, making sure no one gets left behind.

Plus, it's really fun. I've heard "Happy Birthday" sung in more than 15 languages, celebrated a student's new citizenship, cheered on another student's restaurant opening, and crowed over several new babies. It doesn't matter that I don't know everything. I just have something I can share.

So, I got lucky and had a

child who loves to read, and now I realize that I don't have to keep that in the family.

Mary Martone is a volunteer at the Ludlow Area Adult Learning Center who wrote this essay in celebration of International Literacy Day on Sept. 8. For information on volunteer opportunities at an adult education center near you, click on www.rebhc.org/pages/adult_education.html

The Experience to Lead Holyoke

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