

Response to daily whistles

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Dear Editor:

After reading Mr. Thomas Elliott's letter to the editor regarding eliminating Holyoke's daily sirens, I feel I must provide a rebuttal. He obviously has very strong feelings about the siren(s), but I am sure there are many others in Holyoke who feel differently, as I do.

Even though I do not live in Holyoke any more, I feel qualified to discuss the topic as I had the pleasure to listen to the siren daily for 21 years. (maybe that's what is wrong with me, too much cold war siren annoyances).

In fact I was raised directly across the street from one of them (city park), so we were fortunate to experience the full effect on a daily basis. Sometimes things aren't totally logical or have to be fully justified, Mr. Elliott.

In the case of the daily sirens, I believe tradition and community identity provide much of the reason for the long history. Yes, there is some justification of the noise, like making sure all sirens are operating properly, but there's more to it than that.

Tradition, Mr. Elliott, can be a good thing, as I believe it has been in this case. It has given Holyoke part of its identity. It's a unique part of the town and its history, as are the daily bells provided by the Methodist church (thank you, Methodist church).

These two occurrences give Holyoke a uniqueness, and I venture to guess that neither is considered an annoyance by the majority of the community.

I commend the city council for listening to the complaints it has received and having acted on them and having implemented a temporary solution while it explores how to proceed. I too ask the council to avoid any hasty action based on what may be the voice of a few, and to remember the things that make Holyoke unique, special and different from other communities.

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My father used to come home for lunch every day (as did I) and I remember him taking a short nap after eating, and using the 1 p.m. whistle to wake him up and send him back to work. Who needs an alarm clock when you have Holyoke's whistle?

Craig Leben, Paducah, Ky.