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Friday, November 28, 2025

Complimentary to homes by request

Danielson Elks holds annual food drive



Jason Bleau

Volunteers from the Danielson and Killingly football team collected donations for Friends of Assisi outside of Stop N' Shop in Dayville.

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

DAYVILLE — The Danielson Elks Lodge #1706 got an early start to the holiday giving season on Nov. 15, hosting their annual food collection outside Stop N' Shop in Dayville.

The tradition has been going for more than 20 years, bringing members of the Elks and other volunteers to the Killingly

Commons to collect food and other goods to help those less fortunate. It's one of the first major food collections of the season leading up to the Thanksgiving holiday, all benefitting local pantry Friends of Assisi in downtown Danielson.

Jill MacQuarrie, Lodge Secretary for the Danielson Elks, said events like the food collection are more important now than they've proba-

bly ever been. "The homeless population is skyrocketing around us right now. A lot of people need food and are struggling right now," she said. "This is what we're all about, giving back to the community. That's our main focus."

Although their collection event is usually a popular one for locals, the outpouring of donations this year was inspiring, according to MacQuarrie.

The drive ran for six hours, but only a couple hours in they already had several shopping baskets full of goods.

"The need this year is probably greater than it ever has been. The donations have been consistent, so it's been great for us to help give back," MacQuarrie said, adding that the outpouring of support was "incredible."

All food and monetary donations from the

drive went to help Friends of Assisi with their Thanksgiving holiday programs and future food distribution efforts keeping everything in the local community. The event also saw support from several area groups, with the Killingly High School football team specifically providing on-site volunteers throughout the day.

Thompson renews lease With TEEG, greenlights latest CIF grant application

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

THOMPSON — The Thompson Board of Selectmen has reaffirmed the town's full support of TEEG, a local non-profit currently seeking grant funding to expand with a new building on its current campus.

The past few years, TEEG has worked to establish plans for a new second building on the grounds of Thompson Public Schools. Earlier this year, visual renderings of the proposed facility were on display during the agency's annual Have a Heart event although the concept of expansion has been floating around for much of the 2020s. As the agency continues to push for outside funding for the new building rather than seeking local taxpayer money, part of that process involves extending the lease of their current building and procuring a letter of support from selectmen for their latest Community Investment Fund (CIF) grant application which the new Board of Selectmen happily approved.

Representatives of TEEG met with selectmen during their Nov. 18 meeting where Executive Director Carl Asikainen reminded officials of the building plans. The new structure will be a compliment, not a replacement, of the current facility which opened in 2012 as the staff and programs have outgrown their existing space. The second building will be constructed in the adjacent parking lot, where a storage container currently used by the agency sits today. The two-story building will include a commercial-style kitchen, a loading dock, more space for staff offices and community programs, and a larger community market.

"We're excited to get the grant and have it be a town building and resource for the whole region," said Asikainen.

The food security aspect of the building has been a big selling point for the new facility as the need has only grown in recent years with TEEG serving roughly 60 households a week. The agency also offers senior and youth resources, a community garden, and other programs on site as well as annual programs like Thanksgiving and Christmas distributions. Over the years, the agency has also moved many programs like its youth summer offerings that had previously been housed off-site to their main building on Thatcher Road and expanded other programs like their community market which now includes a pantry in Pomfret and a mobile food distribution.

TEEG representatives revealed a Dec. 5 deadline for the grant application which will be their third time seeking CIF funding for the project. Each application requires letters of support from the Board of Selectmen to proceed. It just so happens this latest request also coincided with an extension of the agency's lease. Selectmen were thrilled to continue their relationship with TEEG and unanimously approved the requests calling it a "no brainer" and branding TEEG a "gift to the community."

Thompson residents — Ask Me Anything!

THOMPSON — The next event in Thompson's America 250 commemorations is "Ask Me Anything." This is an

opportunity for residents to meet and talk with town officials and representatives of town departments in a more relaxed, interesting and personal way. The event takes place on Wednesday Dec. 3 at the Thompson Library/Community Center. Light supper and snacks will be provided starting at 5 p.m., with the main event scheduled 6-8 p.m. On-site childcare will also be available, provided by Thompson's local Girl Scouts.

Why are we doing this? Informed citizens are one of the most valuable resources for our community. Our goal is to increase residents' knowledge of how our local government works and how to become more involved in the process.

Who will participate? All Thompson residents are invited. Most of our departments, boards, commissions and committees will have at least one knowledgeable representative to answer questions. It's your participation that will make this event a success!

What am I expected to do? Join us, enjoy a light

meal, bring your questions, your ideas and your open mind and ears!

What else do we hope to achieve? In addition to providing residents with better information during the evening, we also hope to generate interest for a follow-up program in the first half of 2026: Citizens' Academy. This would be a more intensive program, structured over a series of weeks, where residents would enroll to learn more about the inner workings of local government.

Each week of Citizens' Academy will involve a deep dive into the various municipal departments,

including interactive exercises and tours of town facilities. From this more intensive program, we hope to cultivate a new crop of volunteers and participants in the local government process.

We expect the following departments to be present: Selectmen, Town Clerk, Recreation, Planning & Development, Tax Office, Finance, Public Works, Animal Control, Emergency Management, Assessor's Office, Veterans Office, Recreation, TEEG, the Thompson Historical Society, the School District and Fire Chiefs. Members of Boards, Commissions

and Committees will also be attending including the Board of Education, Board of Selectmen, Planning & Zoning Commission, Inland Wetlands, Library Board of Trustees, Transfer Station Advisory Committee, Mill Sites Redevelopment Advisory Committee, Economic Development Commission, and the Trails Committee.

RSVPs from the public will help us plan, but feel free to just show up! You may RSVP to planner@thompsonct.org or 860-923-9475.

Celebrate community & holiday spirit at Saint Nicholas Victorian Fair

POMFRET — The holiday spirit is alive and well in northeastern Connecticut; so are community spirit and real-time engagement. Want to connect or reconnect in person with neighbors and friends? Interested in supporting your neighbors in need? Head to the annual Saint Nicholas Victorian Fair in Pomfret on Saturday, Dec. 6 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (snow date Dec. 13) at Christ Church in Pomfret, one mile south of the Vanilla Bean on Route 169. The Saint Nicholas Fair is known for holiday gifts at great prices, many handmade. In addition, profits from the Fair are donated to area charities and agencies. Enjoy good company, shop local and give back to your community for the holidays this year.

Can't make it in person? The Online Silent Auction runs Nov. 22 – Dec. 3. Last year, the Silent Auction raised over \$10,000 to support communi-



ty outreach. Auction items include gift certificates donated by local businesses, vacation destinations and numerous other items to bid on. The auction link new.biddingowl.com/christchurchpomfret goes live Nov. 22 at noon and closes on Dec. 3 at noon.

The in-person Saint Nicholas Fair features holiday gifts for everyone on your list! This year,

themed gift booths include baked goods, homemade chocolates, crafts, toys, cheese, holiday plants and wreaths, vintage jewelry, "Give It Again" items, and the Bottle Board. The Puzzle Booth and Kitchen Gadgets Booth are both back by popular demand. Luncheon will feature chicken salad and soup, which can be pre-ordered for takeout on the

online auction website. A new feature is a Thank You Basket Raffle featuring four themed gift baskets valued from \$140 to over \$300. Every \$5 donation made at www.christchurchpomfret.org/st-nicholas-fair-door receives 15 tickets entered in a drawing to be held at the Fair on Dec. 6 at 1 p.m. You don't need to be present to win.

All proceeds from the Saint Nicholas Fair are allocated for outreach programs, including TEEG, the Access Agency, Day Kimball Hospital Hospice, ARC of Quinebaug Valley, Habitat for Humanity, Community Kitchens of NECT, Daily Bread, St. Francis of Assisi Food Bank and more.

Questions? Call 860-315-7780 or email office@christchurchpomfret.org. Christ Church is located at 527 Pomfret St., Pomfret. To learn more, visit ChristChurchPomfret.org or follow them on Facebook at [@christchurchpomfret](https://www.facebook.com/christchurchpomfret).

Sertex Broadband Solutions awarded new contract to expand Chicopee Electric Light's Crossroads fiber network

PLAINFIELD — Sertex Broadband Solutions, a leading provider of fiber optic infrastructure services throughout the Northeast, has been awarded a new contract by Chicopee Electric Light (CEL) to continue building its Crossroads Fiber broadband network. This

marks the sixth consecutive contract awarded by the municipal utility to Sertex since 2019 through CEL's open, competitive bidding process.

The new agreement extends the long-standing partnership between Sertex and CEL that began in 2019, when Sertex was first selected to construct the municipal fiber network. Under the new contract, Sertex will provide fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) construction and residential and business service installations, with a focus on connecting remaining customers and expanding service to multi-dwelling units (MDUs). The new one-year contract includes options for up to two additional one-year extensions.

5,000 customers have been connected to high-speed fiber internet to date. Extensive main-line construction completed in 2025 will enable the activation of additional areas and accelerate new service connections.

"We are proud to continue our work with Chicopee Electric Light to expand the Crossroads Fiber network," said Michael Solitro, Sertex Founder and CEO. "Our focus in the year ahead is on completing connections for all remaining customers, adding new subscribers, and ensuring that Chicopee residents and businesses have access to reliable, high-speed fiber broadband."

to workforce development, Sertex is dedicated to connecting communities through the power of fiber optic technology.

About Sertex Broadband Solutions
Sertex is a leading provider of fiber optic infrastructure services throughout the Northeast. Specializing in Middle Mile and Last Mile network construction, Sertex partners with municipalities, utilities, and state agencies to deliver high-speed broadband solutions that bridge the digital divide. With decades of experience and a commitment

Emergency restoration services are not part of this new contract; however, Sertex continues to provide rapid outage response under a separate existing agreement with CEL.

Since beginning work in May 2019, Sertex crews have constructed more than 100 service areas, or fiberhoods, in response to customer demand. Well over

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Nov. 28– Dec. 5

Friday, Nov. 28
When Thanksgiving's dishes are finally put by, Stroll Putnam's River Trail under a crisp blue sky.
At Putnam Public Library, 10 a.m.–5 p.m., stop in to see, New books on display—borrow one for free.

Saturday, Nov. 29
In Woodstock the craft folks gather with cheer,
At Roseland Cottage, 11 a.m.–4 p.m., their last fair of the year.
Warm cocoa, small gifts, and handmade delight,
A cozy start to the season feels perfectly right.

Sunday, Nov. 30
At Thompson Public Library, 1–3 p.m., young artists will meet,
For a winter-card workshop that's simple and sweet.
Glitter and markers, ribbons that shine—
A handmade creation is always divine.

Monday, Dec. 1
Brooklyn's the stop as the week starts anew,
At Brooklyn Town Hall, 6:30 p.m., a Planning meeting is due.
Residents gather to follow each plan—
The steady work of a small-town span.

Tuesday, Dec. 2
Killingly seniors meet happily, brisk and spry,
For Chair Yoga at the Senior Center, 10 a.m.–11 a.m., give it a try.
Gentle stretches, soft music, good friends in the room—
A perfect way to shake off the December gloom.

Wednesday, Dec. 3
Pomfret's Christ Church, from noon–1 p.m., opens its door,
For an Al-Anon gathering offering support at its core.
Quiet voices, kind company, and a moment to be—
A midweek pause brings calm and clarity.

Thursday, Dec. 4
In Eastford the lights glow soft in the night,
For Tree Lighting on the Green, 6 p.m., shining bright.
Carols, hot cider, and neighbors all near—
The season's beginning grows wonderfully clear.

Friday, Dec. 5
Putnam's First Friday Stroll, 5–8 p.m., charms the town again,
With music, warm storefronts, and greetings from friends.
A festive walk under twinkling skies—
December arrives with familiar surprise.

Paws Cat Shelter to hold holiday food drive for cats

PUTNAM — Paws Cat Shelter is holding a holiday cat food drive on Friday, Dec. 28 from 7 to 11 a.m. at the WINY radio station in Putnam. Donations of dry and canned cat food are needed to help their community pet food bank. Monetary donations and gift cards are always welcome and greatly appreciated.

Food donations may also be dropped off at Petco in Dayville, Quinebaug Valley Veterinary Hospital in Danielson, Agway in Plainfield, Joseph Jewelers in Putnam and Danielson Surplus. Food, gift cards and cash donations can be dropped off at Paws Cat Shelter at 74 School St. in Putnam on Wednesdays 4-5:30 p.m. or Saturdays noon to 3 p.m.

Paws is a non-profit, all volunteer organization caring for the cats of our communities. For more information or how you can donate, contact Paws at 860-315-1228.

Quiet Corner Al-Anon group meets Wednesdays

WOODSTOCK — An open Al-Anon meeting meets at the East Woodstock Congregational Church every Wednesday from 7:30-8:30 p.m.

The Quiet Corner Al-Anon Family Group is open to anyone affected by alcoholism, family or friend. Any enquiries can be directed to 860-634-3271.

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Borough of Danielson

The **Borough of Danielson Fire Department** is seeking an experienced and community-focused **Volunteer Fire Chief** to lead our department!

The Chief serves as the senior officer responsible for all department operations, training, and administration, representing the Borough with professionalism and integrity. This appointed position offers a six-year term (renewable) and the opportunity to make a meaningful impact in the community.

Minimum Qualifications

- 10 years of firefighting experience (5 in leadership)
- Fire Officer I (II preferred) & Fire Service Instructor I
- EMT (preferred) or EMR, NIMS/ICS 100, 200, 700, 800
- HazMat Operations
- Valid CT license (Q or CDL B endorsements)
- Residency within 8 miles of the firehouse

Also required: Fire Officer II within one year, 30 hours of continuing education annually

If you're a strong leader with a passion for public safety, we invite you to apply!
Apply by January 1, 2026 Learn more at www.boroughofdanielson.org
Application, letter of interest, resume, and certifications can be submitted to admin@boroughofdanielson.org



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FRANK G. CHILINSKI
PRESIDENT/PUBLISHERBRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

A season of gratitude, close to home

Thanksgiving arrives each year with its familiar rhythms: the scent of roasted turkey, the clatter of pans, the hum of visiting family, and the soft quiet of streets where most folks are indoors together. In Northeastern Connecticut, the holiday carries its own particular shape. It meets us on winding back roads, in small-town kitchens big enough for one cook and three helpers, and in living rooms where the same stories are told again because they matter to us.

It has been another long year. Families here have navigated rising costs, busy calendars, and the unpredictable turns that come with work, health, and community obligations. Not every household's year has looked the same, but nearly everyone has felt stretched in some way. That is why Thanksgiving is not only a celebration—it is a pause. A brief, necessary exhale before winter settles in.

Across the Quiet Corner, families will spend the holiday returning to one another. Some will travel across states; others will drive a few minutes down Route 12 or 169. Many will gather around extended family tables, while others will choose quieter holidays with a handful of loved ones. However they assemble, it is the coming together itself that matters.

In a time marked by division in national conversations, the holiday meal still welcomes a variety of personalities and opinions around the same table. Children who spent the morning watching the parade will sit beside grandparents who have seen many more. Neighbors may drop by with pie. College students home on break will share stories from their first semesters away. The small rituals—a gravy mishap, a competitive family card game, the walk taken after dinner—are reminders that belonging is built through repetition and presence.

Thanksgiving also offers an opportunity to recognize those who bind our community together all year. Volunteers who staff the food pantries. EMTs and firefighters who answer calls on holidays as readily as any other day. Teachers preparing for winter concerts. Local farmers who completed another demanding growing season. Library staff who create gathering spaces for all ages. There is no shortage of people strengthening our towns in ways both visible and quiet.

This season, gratitude does not require grand gestures. It can be as simple as checking on a neighbor, supporting a local business during the weekend rush, or offering a bit of patience during the year's busiest travel days. Small kindnesses, multiplied across our little corner of the state, give Northeastern Connecticut its identity.

As the long weekend begins, may every household find warmth, rest, and genuine connection. May our tables—whatever shape they take—be full enough. And may gratitude carry us forward into December with steadiness and hope.

Letter submission policy

Letters to the Editor must include the author's name, address, and a daytime phone number for purposes of verification in order to be considered for publication. Only the author's name and the town in which they reside will be published. Letters submitted without all of the required information will not be accepted.

It is the sole prerogative of the Editor to determine whether a submission satisfies our requirements and decency standards, and any submission may be rejected at any time for any reason he or she might deem appropriate.

OPINION

Opinion and commentary from the Quiet Corner

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Saying thank you to so many

To the Editor:

As president of Community Kitchen of Northeastern Connecticut, I feel compelled during this Thanksgiving season to publicly express gratitude to all those who participate with us and support our mission. Problem is, there are so many to thank! Too many to name in one letter to the editor, certainly.

At present Community Kitchen of Northeastern Connecticut is providing a free nutritious noon-time meal at four locations: First Congregational Church of Woodstock on Mondays, United Methodist Church of Danielson on Wednesdays, Creation Church of Thompson on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, and Moosup United Methodist Church on Fridays. All are welcome. We feed everyone who comes through our doors. At present we are serving or delivering over 2,000 meals each month, about 25,000 meals a year.

This requires an enormous collaborative effort,

which involves 9 churches; 8 municipalities; 1 fire department; more than a dozen banks and businesses, bakeries and grocery stores, non-profits and philanthropic groups and fundraisers; several state and federal agencies; our 300 Club members and individual donors.

And, of course, there is the heart of our organization—our many volunteers and cooks, site coordinators, directors and officers, and food procurers—who do this work week in and week out with cheerfulness and compassion. Neighbors feeding neighbors is our slogan, and it expresses the essence of who we are and what we do.

While I am humbled by the breadth of all this giving—and my inability to name and thank everyone individually—I am consoled by the thought that any words I might use would be superfluous anyway. The reward is in the doing. As Saint Francis said, “In giving we receive.”

ROBERT KIRK
PUTNAM

A wakeup call

To the Editor:

Way back in 1995, Speaker Newt Gingrich encouraged his GOP House membership to play hard ball and refuse to work across the aisle — no compromise, no consensus, no solving problems together. No listening. No way forward. In 2010 the Supreme Court validated Citizens United so big business could legally pour money into influence campaigns. Then came the Court's validation of outsized presidential power. And their

refusal to make gerrymandering illegal. And where are we now?

Can we find the way back to listening to one another, to working together, to compromise and consensus -- a procedure that has kept our country strong, vigorous and prosperous for 250 years?

KAREN RYKER
WOODSTOCK

The clock is ticking on America's health

To the Editor:

How do you feel about health care? Do you have it? Do you like having it?

The United States is one of the richest countries in the world, yet medical debt from health insurance is the number one cause of bankruptcy here. This says a lot about the system we rely on to stay alive.

Unless Congress acts before December 31, 2025, thousands of Connecticut families covered by the Affordable Care Act (ACA) will see dramatic premium increases in their January bill. Many will be forced to choose between medicine, food, rent, utilities or going without health insurance. For people with chronic conditions, an unexpected accident or a medical emergency, going without insurance is not a choice. It is a death sentence.

Senator Chris Murphy said about 20 million Americans rely on ACA marketplace plans and will feel the impact “instantly” if Congress allows the subsidies to expire. He said Connecticut residents are already seeing projected annual increases between \$6,000 and \$25,000, costs “most low- and middle-income families cannot absorb.”

Most Americans agree that our health care system needs work. The answer is not booting people off of it or making it so unaffordable that America devolves into the Hunger Games where survival of the strongest or the wealthiest is at play. Our lives are not a game.

According to HR Healthcare Reader, the top

Support the Fire Department but change the proposed bylaw!

To the Editor:

On Nov. 6, a presentation was made to the town of Thompson on the new proposed Thompson Fire Protection District Association (FPDA). I think their presentation was very well done, detailed and informative with their needs. It is clear the Thompson fire department funding has been left behind over the years and they are in real need of catchup funding to sustain the requirements and regulations they need to adhere to in addition to theirs and our safety.

Their request for additional funding in this transition year is modest but in years to come, once established, the mill rate will probably be higher and could in fact increase our tax by hundreds to thousands of dollars a year for homeowners. Thompson has five fire stations with a fleet of aging trucks; I would expect the mill rate to be higher. This is a tax that is needed, and in my opinion, it should be on the top of the list of priorities when considering the whole town budget.

My concern is that the authors of this proposed bylaw have changed the approval process for this new added mill rate to be by a simple raising of hands for those who attend an annual meeting and not by a referendum vote as it has been in the past. This is still a budget item that directly impacts each landowner in Thompson and the taxes they pay each year. I am guessing maybe 125 people attended last meeting. This would be approximately 1.95 percent of the registered voters in town. Even if the attendance

at the annual meeting doubled it would still be a very small percent of the all the registered voters. I think a small percent of residents deciding how much we get taxed is a mistake and unfair to the citizens of Thompson. I also feel that verification of Thompson residence should be necessary when voting on changes in taxes. Referendum voting typically has a considerably higher turnout and we need to have more residents involved in making this type of fiscal decision.

I would propose that the new bylaw be changed to remove the simple hand vote at an annual meeting to a required approval by referendum ballot. This could be done along with the town's fiscal budget (no additional costs to the town) but as a separate line item and have it stand alone on its own merits.

For those interested in seeing the actual detailed presentation, email thompsonfpa@gmail.com and request a copy of all four documents.

Please give your complete support to the Thompson Fire Protection District Association but let's do it the right way that is reasonable and fair to all landowners / registered voters in Thompson.

The next town meeting to vote on this bylaw is on Thursday, Dec. 4, 7 p.m. at the library. Please come, share your opinions and hopefully vote for this change in the bylaw.

ERIC DAY
THOMPSON

The thank you habit



BEYOND THE PEWS
BY BISHOP JOHN W. HANSON
ACTS II MINISTRIES

We stood awkwardly and patiently. Two adults focused on the upturned face of a toddler. I had just handed the child a gift. It was not much, and I needed no response. But their parent had just dutifully asked them, “What do you say?” It was obvious that the child knew what to say. But they were at the age where they were having to decide whether or not they would be thankful or a spoiled brat. We waited - for the child's sake - knowing that “the thank you habit” (if they would be willing to adopt it) would serve them well for their entire lifetime.

Years later I conversed awkwardly with a full-grown adult, waiting for a hint of gratitude. I was part of a group of people who had raised a great deal of money and had done a community service. I was now talking with a person who had benefited from the service, at no cost to them. Unfortunately, all I was hearing at the time was complaints that our group had not been timely enough and we had not carried out the act of service in a way they felt was appropriate. I couldn't help but wonder how horrible it must be to live in a mindset that would keep you from enjoying the good things that others were doing in the world.

Unthankfulness is a self-imposed sentence of misery. It doesn't accomplish anything positive. Since we instinctively know it is not positive, maybe we just do it for the endorphins? But there is an alternative that has been recommended and practiced for thousands of years. There are over 150 Bible verses encouraging us to be thankful. Here is one of them:

Colossians 3:15 Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other. None of this going off and doing your own thing. And cultivate thankfulness.

Many readers may have experienced of been close to someone who has experienced depression. One of the tell-tale signs of depression is that people tend to hide away in a dark place. Those who step in to help restore mental and emotional health will often do something very simple but effective: they will open blinds and curtains. The goal is to help the victim of depression to focus on any warmth or light that is available.

Thankfulness is like opening the blinds on a cold winter day. It will still be cold outside, but the sunlight coming through the window will bring some warmth and comfort. The sun is still shining. It takes some effort, but we can focus on any bit of goodness in spite of the pain and suffering that may trigger our sadness.

The holiday season is a wonderful opportunity to find things for which we can be thankful. Our thankfulness will warm our own hearts and save the people whose lives we touch much grief. But it is a habit, so only the intentional will enjoy its fruit.

Bishop John W. Hanson oversees Acts II Ministries in Thompson. Please visit www.ActsII.org for more information or to view recent sermons.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

There is nothing scientific about religious belief

To the Editor:

I would like to address some statements made by The Rev. Phil Cannistraci, Sr. in the Nov. 21 edition of the Villager.

In his letter, Pastor Cannistraci repeatedly uses the term "It's scientific to believe." This phrase is incorrect, and is misused throughout Pastor Cannistraci's letter. When a person of science uses the term "believe" it is not the same as when a person of faith uses the same word. To a scientist that word is construed as "based on our current evidence and understanding," whereas to a person of faith, it means this is absolute truth. The scientist changes their "belief" as soon as new evidence becomes available, or the last "belief" was proven false through experiment or new data. A person of faith's belief is unwavering, whereas a person of science belief is in a constant state of flux.

The other statement that is repeated throughout the letter is the term "supernatural," as in "It's scientific to believe our eyes are supernaturally programmed by God." Science does not accept that anything is supernatural. One of the basic tenets of science is that the universe is understandable and that everything can be explained, even if it currently is not. The next important tenet of science is that every scientific claim must be falsifiable. That is to say, it is possible to test it and to prove it false. This is not true in the realm of faith where no proof is necessary, and evidence does not alter the belief. There

is no supernatural, in the scientific realm, only natural. In any graduate level class on evolution the evolution of the human, and other eyes, is covered through various progressions from light sensitive organelles in single celled organisms to simple indentations in multicellular organisms to fluid filled indentations and on and on. Evolution

explains how the eye came to be with no supernatural involvement. Just as evolution explains the various nesting behaviors of the different bird species the

Reverend addresses in his letter. As stated correctly in his letter, the Earth happens to be the right size and the right distance from the sun to sustain advanced life. In scientific terms this happened due to collisions of asteroids somewhere between four and six billion years ago when a giant star exploded. That star created all the elements that are found in our current solar system. In the universe there are billions of galaxies, and each galaxy contains billions of stars about the size of ours, and of those billions of stars there are billions with planets of various distances and sizes. It is beyond belief that in all of that we are the only place where there are advanced life forms. But all that formation can be explained through natural, not supernatural means. As we learn more, thanks to advanced space telescopes and data gathering equipment and supercomputers, our knowledge, or "belief" changes and grows. Science does not just accept without strong evidence.

None of this is to say or imply that scientists do not believe in God. Some do, some don't, just like non scientists. Certainly one of the most famous scientists, Isaac Newton, was a strong believer in God and Christianity and wrote more on religion than he did on science. But to make the claim "It's scientific to believe" followed by some natural occurrence that can be explained by physics, chemistry, or evolution is an incorrect statement. Even Isaac Newton would agree with that.

DAVE CLARK THOMPSON

Grateful to a supportive community

To the Editor:

The Woodstock Education Foundation (WEF) kicked off its 20th Anniversary Year with our premier fundraiser, the annual Fall Fling at the Mansion at Bald Hill on Nov. 7. Thanks to the extraordinary support of our community, the evening was an overwhelming success. Sponsorships, attendance and participation from local businesses and families were exceptional, and funds raised through our raffle and lively auction exceeded our goals

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to the sponsors and friends whose generosity made the event possible:

- The Mansion at Bald Hill •
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- bankHometown • Bryan & Caitlin Hitchcock •
- Mr. & Mrs. Reeder •
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- Senator Gordon, MD & Dr. Lisa Canter • The Woodstock Fair • Northeast Flooring • Taylor Dance Studios • New England Plasma • J Wells Kennels • Yankee Sales and Service • Lindsay Paul, John Day, Sonia Green

Special thanks to those who helped make it possible:

- WINY for helping spread the word
- Christopher Roche, Superintendent of Woodstock Public Schools
- Kristen Elliott, Principal; Donna Ogle, & Kathy Cheney of Woodstock Middle School
- Jenna Demers, Principal; and Susan Kilborn of Woodstock Elementary School
- The Carlone Family, Janet Waterman and the incredible banquet crew at the Mansion at Bald Hill
- David Sirrine, Auctioneer

Founded in 2005 by a group of dedicated parents and community members, WEF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to enriching and enhancing the educational curriculum in Woodstock's K-8 students by providing education grants to the teachers at both WES and WMS. As of June 2025, WEF has granted over \$500,000 to support enriching programs at Woodstock Elementary and Woodstock Middle School.

As we reflect on two decades of impact, we want to reconnect with our long-time supporters and introduce ourselves to a new generation of families, educators, and community members. Together, we've accomplished so much—and this year, we're planning exciting ways to honor our legacy and build momentum for the future.

With gratitude,

KAREN DONOVAN
FOR THE WOODSTOCK EDUCATION
FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Investment portfolio performance: Looking beyond the shutdown



FINANCIAL FOCUS
LAURENCE HALE
INVESTMENT ADVISER

When faced with the looming threat of a potentially disastrous Thanksgiving holiday travel period, US senators finally reached a compromise to reopen the government on Nov. 12. Republican Senate leaders agreed to vote by mid-December on a Democratic bill to extend the Affordable Care Act subsidies and seven Democratic senators and one Independent crossed the aisle and agreed to vote for the Senate's government funding bill.

The bill still needs to be approved by the House of Representatives, which is expected to occur smoothly, and then it will be sent to the president's desk for signing. The only drawback: the deal only funds the government through the end of January. So, we may go through all of this drama again sooner than anyone would like.

Stocks rally on reopening

Nonetheless, news of the compromise sent stocks sharply higher. A reopened government means employees will receive pay for the time they were out of work, the federal government will fund the SNAP (food stamps) program, air traffic controllers will be paid (and flights will take off on time again), and uncertainty about the government's operations will be alleviated. It means people will have money in their pockets to make purchases during the all-important holiday shopping season, which kicks off on Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving.

Valuations are lofty

Now that the shutdown has been resolved, investors can turn their attention to the stock market's fundamentals. So far, investors have largely shrugged off any concerns about valuation. The S&P 500 has had a fabulous 2025, rising roughly 15 percent

through mid-November. Technology-related stocks have fared even better. The S&P 500 Information Technology sector has gained about 27 percent this year (as of the time of this writing), and the S&P 500 Semiconductor Equipment industry has soared about 73.0 percent.

The market's strong performance has lifted valuations to levels rarely seen before. The S&P 500's forward PE was recently at 22.8, far above its 30-year average of 17.0. Likewise, the index's dividend yield has fallen to 1.5 percent, far below its 30-year average of 2.0 percent. The S&P

500's forward PE has only been higher one other time: in the period preceding the tech bubble of 2000, which certainly isn't reassuring.

Focusing on diversification

The S&P 500 is also dominated by a few very expensive, very large companies. The 10 largest companies in the S&P 500 represent a record 40.1 percent of the index's market capitalization, but only 32.5 percent of the index's earnings. Investors who buy the S&P 500 may think they're diversified, but in reality, they are highly exposed to these ten large stocks and underexposed to the remaining 490 stocks in the S&P 500.

The S&P 500's 10 largest companies also sport a very high P/E of 29.9 times forward earnings. That's higher than their long-term average forward P/E of only 20.6 times. The 10 largest companies are also much

more expensive than the remaining 490 companies in the S&P 500, which have a forward P/E of 19.5.

The companies that sport the highest P/Es, in general, can fall the most when there's a market correction. It's essential to recognize the importance of diversification in an investment portfolio and ensure it's not overly concentrated in the top ten stocks of the S&P 500. An equal-weighted S&P 500 index fund will increase investors' exposure to the 490 stocks in the index.

Investors should always strive to understand the stocks in their investment portfolios and ensure they are well-diversified. Our team at WHZ is here to help. Call us at (860) 928-2341 or schedule a complimentary discovery session now with our team. Together, we can create a strategy designed to give you Absolute Confidence. Unwavering Partnership. For Life.

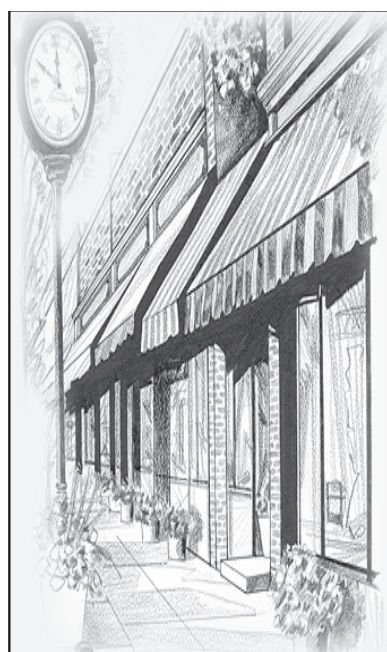
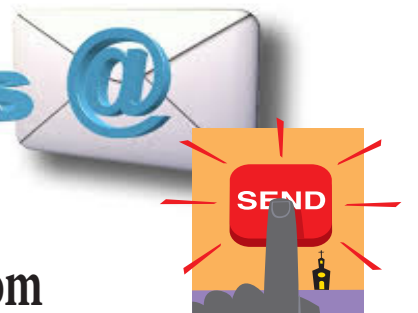
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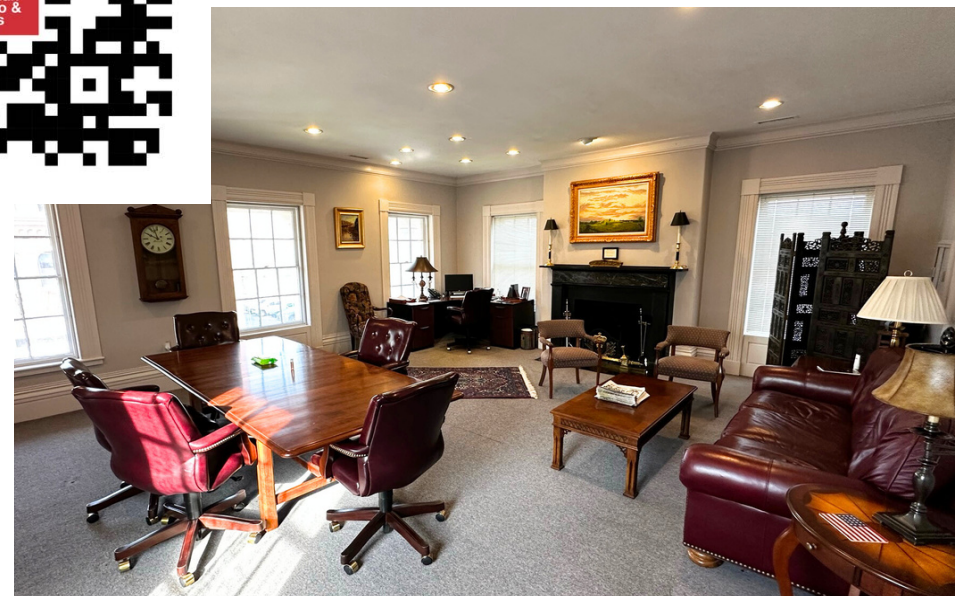


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Danielson American Legion Post 21 Commander Dave Mulford presented a \$1,000 check to Tami Sherman, Exalted Ruler of Danielson Elks Lodge 1706, to help fund their continued support of local Veterans and their families, the Wreaths Across America project, youth sports and educational programs, and the general benefit of our local communities.

Interact Club holds successful food drive



Pictured, left to right: Estela Freitas, Alyssa Daniels, Janet Young, Paige Perry, and Billie Lewis.

PUTNAM — Nov. 15 was a beautiful sunny day for the Putnam Rotary Club's Interact Club to have a food drive — they raised \$761 and filled a truck with nonperishable foods. Janet Young from the American Legion Post #13

Ladies Auxiliary, joined forces with the Interact members. Interact advisor Roberta Rocchetti said she appreciated WINY Radio for allowing the Interact Club to have their food drive in their parking lot.

The proceeds will be shared with the Daily Bread and TEEG food pantries. Rocchetti thanked Paige Perry, Alyssa Daniels, Billie Lewis, Estela Freitas and Janet Young for their participation. Busy club — Interact

members and their friends will be ringing the bells for the local Salvation Army office located in Putnam. They will be ringing bells from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Nov. 28 and 29 and Dec. 6, 13 and 20 at Putnam Walmart, Putnam Stop & Shop,

Putnam Price Chopper and Putnam Supermarket. She added that there is a QR code on the kettle signs that will allow donations to be made. Rocchetti said that 90 percent of what is received in the kettles stays in Putnam to be used in the

northeastern corner. For more information about the Interact Club contact Roberta Rocchetti at 860-933-8603 or robertarocchetti4@gmail.com.

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Help
Wanted

DMMA students earn promotions



DANIELSON — Thursday, Nov. 19, five-time Martial Arts Hall of Fame inductee and current USA Karate Team Member, 7th Dan Master Daryl Laperle announces promotion of students in Danielson Martial Arts Academy's most recent grading, including:

Colby Densmore - Apprentice
 Kyra Dionne - Apprentice
 TJ King - 1 Gup Red
 Jase Pingitore - 3 Gup Red

Lilliana Huling - 3 Gup Red
 Isaac Sawyer - 3 Gup Red
 Sam Richardson - 3.5 Gup Green
 Lillian Antunes - 3.5 Gup Green
 Bodhi Dyer - 4 Gup Green
 Jeff Fugazzi Jr. - 4.5 Gup Green
 Ziggy Fugazzi - 4.5 Gup Green
 Clyde LaPorte - 4.5 Gup Green
 David Schreiner - 5 Gup Purple
 Madelyn Markley - 5 Gup Purple
 Abby Napierata - 5.5 Gup Purple
 Esme King - 6.5 Gup Blue

Ainslee Gagne - 6.5 Gup Blue
 Chase Landry - 7 Gup Blue
 Peyton Landry - 7 Gup Blue
 Avery Dietlan - 7 Gup Blue
 Rhonin Erickson - 7 Gup Blue
 Krisztian Toth - 7 Gup Blue
 Aria Provencher - 7 Gup Blue
 Jamerson Kisner - 7 Gup Blue
 John Wisniewski Jr. - 7 Gup Blue
 Bradley Hebert - 7 Gup Blue
 Gabriel Schreiner - 7 Gup Blue
 Ella Dietlan - 8 Gup Blue

Lillian Santiago - 8 Gup Blue
 Aidan Gardiner - 8 Gup Blue
 Linda Byrne - 8 Gup Blue
 Lilith League - 8 Gup Blue
 Jasmine Solis - 9 Gup Orange
 Jaxton Burek - 9 Gup Orange

For more information regarding classes, please call 860-779-0699, or visit the Web site at DanielsonMartialArts.com.



What's the Difference?

Find the four differences between the two pictures.

A



B



Answers: 1. Garnish missing from stuffing 2. Extra slice of turkey 3. Missing knife 4. Pie in place of cranberries

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



1833: A massive undersea earthquake rocks Sumatra.

1915: Albert Einstein presents the field equations of general relativity.

1963: The state funeral of John F. Kennedy takes place and the President is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

NEW WORD

GRATITUDE

the quality of being thankful

World FACT:

This country celebrates Thanksgiving in October.

Answer: Canada

How they say that in...

- English:** Turkey
- Spanish:** Pavo
- Italian:** Tacchino
- French:** Dindon
- German:** Truthahn

Did You Know?

Pumpkin pie is a popular dessert served on Thanksgiving. Apple pie also is popular on this beloved holiday.



Get the PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Cranberry sauce

Bring a bit of spring indoors this winter

Pot them up, give them a chill and enjoy spring flowering bulbs indoors or outside on a patio, deck or porch. Forcing spring-flowering bulbs like tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, grape hyacinths and crocus is a great way to use those bulbs that didn't get planted in the garden or were on sale late in the season.

All you need is a suitable container, some well-drained potting mix, the bulbs and a place to give the bulbs the chill necessary to force them to bloom. Gather all your supplies and clear a space to assemble your bulb planter.

Select a container with drainage holes that is deep enough to accommodate the largest bulbs. Shorter varieties are less likely to flop but taller ones can be held upright with stakes, twigs and other decorative supports. Cover the bottom of the container with two inches of a well-drained potting mix. Place the bulbs close together about one half the bulb width apart with the neck of larger bulbs at or just below the soil surface. Set tulips with the flat side of the bulb facing the pot for a better display.

Create a spring garden in a larger container by using a deep container and planting the bulbs in layers. Select a variety of bulbs that bloom at the same time for greater impact or



A container of forced grape hyacinth, daffodil and tulip bulbs.

Melinda Myers

Extend your enjoyment and the bloom time by removing one or just a few pots every week. Place the pot in a cool, bright location to encourage more compact growth. Water thoroughly when the top few inches of soil begin to dry. Soon the leaves will begin to sprout, and flowers will appear in about three to four weeks.

Provide ongoing care if you plan on moving the bulbs into the garden. Remove the faded flowers, place the leafy plants in a sunny window and water thoroughly whenever the top inch of soil is dry. Fertilize with a dilute solution of any flowering houseplant fertilizer. Move them into the garden once the danger of frost has passed. Be patient because it may be a year or two before they bloom again.

Plant plenty for you to enjoy and share with others. Everyone will appreciate the extra spring color the forced bulbs provide.



GARDEN MOMENTS

MELINDA MYERS

use a combination of early-, mid- and late-blooming spring-flowering bulbs to extend the bloom time and your enjoyment. The

package usually lists the color, height and bloom time of the bulbs.

Place an inch or two of soil in the bottom and set the largest bulbs in place. Cover these bulbs with soil and add the smaller bulbs, like grape hyacinths and crocus, on the next level. Plant these bulbs close together for greater impact. Cover this layer with at least an inch of soil. Water thoroughly until

the excess water drains out the bottom of the pot.

Move your bulb-filled containers to a cool location where temperatures remain above freezing and between 35 to 45 degrees Fahrenheit for 12 to 15 weeks. A spare refrigerator works well for this. Just avoid storing the bulbs with fruit, like apples and pears, that emit ethylene gas that can negatively impact flowering. If refrigerator space is limited, you can store the unplanted bulbs in a paper bag, so they take up less space in the fridge for the needed

chill before planting.

Those gardening in colder climates can also store the pots in an unheated garage. Just water the containers whenever the soil is thawed and dry. Or sink the container into a vacant garden space in your landscape. Mulch the soil once the ground starts to freeze with evergreen boughs. The winter mulch makes retrieving the container easier in winter or early spring.

Begin moving the containers out of cold storage once the 12- to 15-week chilling period is complete.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including the *Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition* and *Small Space Gardening*. She hosts *The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything"* streaming courses and the nationally syndicated *Melinda's Garden Moment* radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine and her Web site is www.MelindaMyers.com.

Canvases of the Cosmos

BLOCK 134 SPOTLIGHTS ART OF ROLAND COMTOIS



Roland Comtois

PUTNAM — On Saturday, Dec. 6 from 6–8 p.m., Block 134 Arts & Wellness Collective in Downtown Putnam will host an Opening Reception for Roland Comtois, Artist in Residence. Guests are invited to meet the artist, explore his new works, and step into an environment alive with inspiration and connection. After an acclaimed debut in Rhode Island, Roland Comtois presents the next chapter of "Canvases of the Cosmos," a luminous continuation of his exploration of art, energy, and the infinite beyond. The exhibition will remain on display through Dec. 27.

This extraordinary exhibition presents a new selection of Roland's original cosmic paintings. "Roland's work is more than art—it's a living transmission," says Carly Sage, Founder & Curator of Silver Circle Gallery. "This follow-up to his November 1st experiential installation feels like a full-circle moment. To witness his vision come alive has been an honor. Canvases of the Cosmos invites viewers into an intimate, interactive space where the creative process expands beyond the canvas."

Each of Roland's canvases opens a radiant portal of light, energy, and emotion—inviting viewers to explore what lies beyond the visible world. With his signature fusion of color, vibration, and intuitive expression, Roland's art transcends the boundaries of time and space, creating an immersive experience that connects the soul to the infinite.

Learn more about Roland Comtois at paintingsbyroland.com.

New Al-Anon meeting in Pomfret

POMFRET — The recently formed Together We Can Do It Al-Anon Family Group is meeting at Christ Church in Pomfret (Route 169) on Tuesdays at noon. This is an open meeting, meaning not only family and friends of people suffering from the effects of addiction are welcome, but also professionals who may have clients they would like to recommend attend the

meetings. Al-Anon is a worldwide program for people just like you, who are worried about someone with a drinking problem. This Pomfret group will also welcome folks concerned about someone suffering from drug addiction. Utilizing the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, the group will discuss the Steps, Concepts,

and Traditions as well as offer support for your specific situation. No advice is given; understanding and support in a confidential setting are the largest benefits of membership in the group.

For more information about Al-Anon, visit www.al-anon.org. For information about the meeting in Pomfret, call 203-561-7954.

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Shining a light on Chanukah celebrations

Fall and winter provide plenty of opportunities for merriment, including Chanukah, which encourages the Jewish community to gather and celebrate their faith together.

What is Chanukah?
Chanukah (also spelled Hanukkah), is a Jewish festival that lasts eight days. It starts on the twenty-fifth day of Kislev, which usually falls within the month of December, and commemorates the rededication of the Jewish Temple in 165 BC by the Maccabees. The Temple had been pre-

viously desecrated by the Syrians.

Why is Chanukah eight days?
After the Maccabees fended off the Syrian-Greeks and reclaimed their Temple, they sought to light the Temple's menorah. However, they found only a single cruse of olive oil that had escaped contamination, according to Chabad.org. Miraculously, the one-day supply of oil lasted for eight days, until new oil could be prepared under conditions of ritual purity. Sages subsequent-

ly instituted the festival of Chanukah to commemorate and publicize this miracle.

Menorah lighting
The menorah is the centerpiece of the Chanukah celebration. It holds nine flames, one of which is called the "shamash" (attendant). That candle is used to kindle the other eight lights. By the eighth night of Chanukah, all eight lights are lit and glowing. The menorah is placed in a doorway or window.

Oily foods
Since the Chanukah miracle focuses on oil, it is customary to enjoy foods fried in oil. Potato latkes are commonly enjoyed, as are jelly-filled donoughs called "sufganiyah."

Giving
Chanukah really isn't about exchanging gifts. The



tradition actually is to give out Chanukah gelt, which is gifts of money to children. Also, individuals reward positive behavior and devotion to Torah study. The cash gifts enable kids to give to charity.

A minor holiday
Although it is a significant and widely observed festival, Chanukah is a historical rather than biblical holiday. It doesn't carry the same religious weight as other Jewish high holidays like Yom Kippur, for exam-

ple. Its emphasis may be due in part to Chanukah's proximity to Christmas. Chanukah celebrations enable faithful Jews to celebrate together and focus on their faith during a festive time of year.

100 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

100 Years Ago This Month: Historical events from December 1925

The month of December has been home to many historical events over the years. Here's a look at some that helped to shape the world in December 1925.

- The Farmer-Labour Party is dissolved just two hours after its formation in Japan on December 1. The dissolution was ordered by the Japanese government, which accused the party of harboring a secret communist agenda.

- The border delineating Northern Ireland and Ireland is established on December 3 when representatives of both countries sign the Northern Irish Border Agreement.

- The George Gershwin composition "Concerto in F" is performed for the first time on December 3. The performance in New York's Carnegie Hall is conducted by Walter Damrosch and features Gershwin on piano.

- A counterfeiting scheme is uncovered by the Banco de Portugal on December 4. An alert bank teller tips off the bank, which ultimately discovers that wealthy entrepreneur Arthur Virgílio Alves Reis is the mastermind behind the scheme. Reis was eventually sentenced to 20 years in prison.

- The Pottsville Maroons defeat the Chicago Cardinals in front of 6,000 fans on December 6 in a game the press depicted as the championship of the National Football League.

- Russian Orthodox bishop Peter of Krutitsy is arrested on December 9. Peter is charged with conspiring with Russian emigres in the west. Peter is ultimately executed by shooting on October 10, 1937.

- George Bernard Shaw is awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature on December 10.

- Karam Chand and Kartari Chand tie the knot in India on December 11. The Chand's marriage lasts 90 years and 291 days, and is the longest marriage recorded. Karam Chand passed away in 2016 and Kartari in 2019.

- Communist politician Benjamin Gitlow is pardoned by New York Governor Al Smith on December 11. Gitlow was convicted for publishing a manifesto calling for the overthrow of the U.S. government, which Governor Smith characterized as a "political crime" upon issuing his pardon.

- The Qaja dynasty, which had ruled Iran since 1789, comes to an end on December 12 when the country's Parliament declares General Reza Khan Pahlavi Prime Minister and installs him as Shah of Iran.

- The Fascist government in Italy signs a secret pact with Britain on December 14. The pact is designed to reinforce Italian dominance in Ethiopia.

- The national service fraternity Alpha Phi Omega is founded at Lafayette College in Pennsylvania on December 16.

- U.S. Army Colonel Billy Mitchell is convicted on eight charges of insubordination on December 17. Mitchell was critical of military leaders for investing in battleships and had argued for greater investment in air-based defenses.

- Reichstag President Paul Löbe speaks out in favor of partial prohibition in Germany on December 19.

- George Edwin Taylor passes away on December 23 at the age of 68. Taylor was the first African American presidential candidate, running for the highest office in the United States as nominee of the National Negro Liberty Party in 1904.

- Law No. 2263 is passed by the Italian parliament on December 24. The law states that the decisions of Prime Minister Benito Mussolini and his government were not subject to legislative review and could only be overruled by order of King Victor Emmanuel III.

- A Christmas story published in the London newspaper The Evening News on December 24 identifies a children's character as "Winnie-the-Pooh" for the first time. The character had previously been referred to as "Edward" in a poem published in Punch magazine in 1924.

- The Turkish government passes a law identifying the Gregorian calendar as the official calendar for all government affairs on December 26. The use of the Islamic calendar in government affairs also is banned.

- The Japan Sumo Association is founded on December 28.

- The first attempt at a global New Year's celebration is made via international radio on December 31. Musical entertainment and greetings from various consuls general from an assortment of foreign countries are sent from New York.

Kwanzaa brings communities together

December is brimming with festive holidays designed to celebrate family, friends and good fortune. While Christmas and Chanukah may dominate the holiday landscape this time of year, African American and Pan-African cultures observe a week-long celebration known as Kwanzaa from December 26 to January 1.

Kwanzaa is designed to affirm African family and social values. It is primarily celebrated in the United States and is not a religious holiday, setting it apart from events like Christmas and Chanukah. The name of the holiday and the celebration were the brainchild of Maulana Karenga, a professor of Africana studies at California State University, Long Beach. Karenga borrowed the word "kwanza," meaning "first," from the Swahili phrase "matunda ya kwanza." He added an extra letter "a" to the word to make it a seven-letter word to coordinate with the seven children present at an



early Kwanzaa celebration in the mid-1960s, as well as the seven principles of the holiday, according to Britannica. The notion of the holiday is rooted in first fruit celebrations, which are found in cultures throughout Africa both in ancient and modern times.

The values that are the tenets of this festival include Umoja (Unity),

Kujichagulia (Self-Determination), Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility), Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics), Nia (Purpose), Kuumba (Creativity), and Imani (Faith). These principles were drawn from the values found throughout Africa. Each day of the celebration is dedicated to one of the seven principles.

Seven symbols embody the holiday, including fruits, vegetables and nuts; a straw mat; a candleholder; ears of corn; gifts; a communal unity cup; and seven candles in the colors of red, green and black. Families come together to light one of the candles in the kinar (candleholder) each day, and discuss the day's principle.

On December 31, participants join in a community feast, and many people wear traditional African clothing. The feast includes foods from African, African American and Caribbean traditions. Dishes enjoyed during Kwanzaa include candied yams, fried chicken, jerk chicken, jollof rice, gumbo, and collard greens. CBC Kids News says celebrants also play drums and dance during Kwanzaa festivities.

Kwanzaa unites Black communities and helps to celebrate heritage, culture and community spirit. The holiday rounds out the year with ritual and celebration.

These cookies make a perfect homemade holiday gift



Holiday shopping poses some unique challenges each December. The "perfect gift" can be elusive, particularly when shopping for loved ones who seemingly have it all. When confronted with such conundrums, holiday shoppers are urged to keep a familiar and reliable option in mind to save themselves the frustration of finding the perfect gift.

Food makes a great holiday gift, especially when it's homemade. Baked goods might prove particularly irresistible gifts this holiday season, and those with a knack for baking can gift

a batch of these "Oatmeal Cranberry Cookies" courtesy of Lines+Angles.

Oatmeal Cranberry Cookies
Makes approximately 16 to 18 cookies

- 3/4 cup unsalted butter
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 2 small eggs
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 4 cups rolled oats
- 1 cup dried cranberries

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F. Grease and line a large cookie sheet with parchment paper.
2. Melt the butter in a small saucepan set over medium heat. Once the butter has melted, pour into a large bowl and add the brown sugar.
3. Mix until well combined. Add the eggs and vanilla, and continue to mix

until incorporated.

4. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, salt, baking soda, spices, and oats. Add the dry ingredients to the wet and mix well. Add the cranberries and stir until thoroughly incorporated.

5. Drop scant tablespoons of the batter onto the cookie sheet, spaced apart. Press down slightly in the centers.

6. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes until golden and set. Remove from the oven and let them cool on the cookie sheet for a few minutes before moving to a cooling rack to finish cooling.

Unique holiday traditions across the globe



The holiday season is a special time of year. Regardless of which holiday people celebrate in December, billions of people across the globe embrace chances to be a little more festive and spend additional time with family and friends over the final month of the year.

Tradition contributes to the special feeling felt in many communities each December. Holiday celebrants who can't get enough seasonal magic can take note of some of the many unique traditions across the globe that help make the month of December such a special time of year.

The Yule Lads, Iceland
In a tradition that might call to mind the seven dwarves who welcomed Snow White into their home in the classic fairy tale, the Yule Lads of Iceland are said to leave a small gift for children who leave a shoe on their windowsills before going to bed beginning on the night of December 11. The tradition continues through Christmas Day, with each night featuring a

visit from a different Yule Lad.

Hiding Brooms, Norway
Norwegian folklore suggested evil spirits and witches awoke on Christmas Eve, and this unique tradition is rooted in efforts to keep those unwelcome holiday guests grounded and avoid lost brooms. On the night of Julaften (Christmas Eve), Norwegians hide their brooms in closets inside their homes to keep them from being stolen by ill-intentioned witches.

Night of the Radishes, Oaxaca, Mexico

Held annually on December 23, the Night of the Radishes is a local celebration in Oaxaca, Mexico. This unique event celebrates oversized radishes, which certainly merits the celebration's inclusion on any list of unusual holiday season celebrations. The event involves the carving of large radishes into figures, a tradition that began as a way to attract more customers to Oaxaca's Christmas market. A formal radish-carving competition was instituted in the late

nineteenth century, and the Night of the Radishes continues to draw visitors today.

Krampus Parades, Austria (various sites)

The holiday season might be a heartwarming time of year in many locales, but the various Krampus parades throughout Austria turn that notion on its head. Krampus is a horned anthropomorphic figure in central and eastern Alpine folklore. Krampus is something akin to Santa Claus's alter ego who's said to punish bad children rather than reward good ones with gifts. Legend says Krampus and his band of less-than-jovial elves roamed an area of the Alps and delighted in causing mayhem. Austrian Krampus parades take place at night and feature revelers dressed in scary costumes, making this a unique if not exactly lighthearted holiday season tradition.

Tradition figures prominently during the holiday season, and some customs stand out for their uniqueness.

OBITUARY

Michael J. Hibbard
1965 – 2025



N. Grosvenordale - Michael J. Hibbard, 60, passed away, Thursday, November 13, 2025, at Villa Maria Health Care. Born in Worcester, he was the son of George B. and Irene (Glennon) Hibbard, Jr. Michael

lived in Auburn, MA for 38 years prior to moving to Connecticut.

Michael enjoyed over the years playing UNO, eating at McDonalds, playing in the pool, miniature golfing, and watching professional wrestling on the television. His favorite foods were cake and ice cream.

Mike leaves behind his nephew, Shane J. Hibbard and his wife Christina and grand-

niece, Audrey Hibbard; nieces, Heather M. Hibbard and her partner Jason and Autumn Hibbard; cousins, Lauri McCory and her husband Daniel, Derek J. Glennon and his wife Corie, and Shawn P. Glennon and his wife Rene; his sister in law, Lisa "Ti-Ta" Roy, Diane Lacrox, and her daughter, Mea.

He was predeceased by his brothers, George B. Hibbard, III and Joseph D. Hibbard, his sister-in-law Wendy, uncle and aunt Daniel J. Glennon, Jr. and Patricia (Colbridge) Glennon that he fondly referred to as "Butch and Pat-Pat."

Funeral services are private and have been entrusted to the Gilman Funeral Home & Crematory, 104 Church St., Putnam, CT. For memorial guestbook please visit www.GilmanAndValade.com.

Send all obituary notices to Villager Newspapers, PO Box 90, Southbridge, MA 01550, or by e-mail to obits@stone-bridgepress.news

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LEGALS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ESTATE OF
Maurice Earle (25-00420)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated November 17, 2025, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Brenda Duquette, Chief Clerk
The fiduciary is:
Steven Earle,
1020 Hartford Pike,

PO Box 573,
Dayville, CT 06241
November 28, 2025

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ESTATE OF
Roxanna Racine (25-00418)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated November 19, 2025, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Elyssa A. Foley, Clerk
The fiduciary is:
Mark Racine
c/o MICHELE ANN P ALULIS,
ATTORNEY MICHELE ANN PALULIS,
LLC, 158 MAIN STREET, SUITE 2, P.
O. BOX 616, PUTNAM, CT 06260
November 28, 2025

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ESTATE OF
Sarah R Hamburg (25-00438)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated November 18, 2025, ordered

that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Brenda Duquette, Chief Clerk
The fiduciary is:
David A Hamburg
c/o THOMAS A BORNER,
BORNER SMITH ALEMAN HERZOG
& CERRONE, LLC,
155 PROVIDENCE STREET,
PO BOX 166,
PUTNAM, CT 06260
November 28, 2025

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