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PUTNAM VILLAGER

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Friday, April 10, 2026

Complimentary to homes by request

Fundraiser raises money and awareness for Christy's Angels

Killingly students honored with 2026 CAPSS Student Leadership Awards

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT



Guests at the event included Josh Nason, Valerie Gamble, Aimee Anderson, Sadie Dutremble (Manager of Grill 37 and event organizer), Julie Porrazzo, and Jason Donahey.

BY CALE FERLAND
FOUNDER
CHRISTY'S ANGELS

POMFRET — About a month before my wife Christy died, I went outside to mow the lawn. I made sure Christy had

everything she needed before I left. Water and a cell phone on the nightstand, pillows to prop her up. Not long after I started mowing, Christy attempted to use the bathroom. Weak but determined, she managed to get out of bed

only to fall a few steps later. She couldn't get up, she couldn't reach her phone, and so she stayed there, alone, on the floor, until I came back in. That moment has never left me. Was a mowed lawn really that important?

strong, active, and determined in a way that lit up every room she walked into. Even after her diagnosis, she kept showing up. She ran 5Ks. She pushed forward. That was who she was. Cancer was the only battle she didn't win. Christy passed away in July of 2023 at just 46, leaving behind our four children and a void we feel every day.

returning to the same questions: how can I best honor Christy's legacy? What would have made those two years easier for our family? And how could I help other families going through something similar? When a patient is in the hospital or with their doctor, they receive care. But when they go home, life doesn't pause. The lawn



Grand Opening celebration at Pomfret Public Library

POMFRET — Pomfret Public Library will celebrate the grand opening of their new building expansion. All are welcome to an Open House on Saturday, April 11 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Guests can tour the beautiful new space and enjoy family friendly activities.

The 2,000-square-foot expansion was designed to better accommodate the small library's many popular programs. It includes expanded deck/outdoor space, a large meeting room, a conference room, a cozy lounge, ADA bathrooms and a kitchenette. Rooms will be available for community gatherings. The project was funded entirely by grants and donations from a generous and caring community.

Pomfret Public Library is located at 449 Pomfret St, Pomfret. Parking for this event will be at the Rectory School ball field (across Route 44 from the library, look for signs), and at First Congregational Church of Pomfret, 13 Church Rd., a short, scenic distance on sidewalks.

Questions? Call Pomfret Public Library at (860) 928-3475.

Christy was diagnosed with stage four lung cancer in 2021. She was 44 years old, and had never smoked a day in her life. She was

When she died, I kept

Turn To ANGELS page A11

New hearing invention has local ties

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

PUTNAM — The world of hearing health has evolved tremendously over the last few decades, helping those with hearing impairment literally and figuratively amplify the world around them. That technology continues to advance year after year, and one local specialist has become part of the latest enhancement combining function and fashion to create a new device that helps improve hearing while also serving as an inconspicuous accessory for its wearers.

Ralph Campagna, a certified hearing instrument specialist with more than 35 years of experience in hearing health and part of the team at Amplisound in Putnam, is a co-proprietor of a new technology called H-earrings (pronounced hear-rings). These devices function as a high-end digital hearing aid but are designed to look like earrings to help empower individuals by providing a more elegant option for those who may be self-conscious about utilizing a more tradi-

tional hearing aid.

The concept came about around ten years when Campagna started working on prototypes. The idea really flourished after he met with Victoria Newton, now the CEO of H-earrings, and Alex Newton, who currently serves as COO. Together, they perfected the design with Campagna as the Chief Technology Officer. After working on several patents, they have finally put a product out onto the market. For Campagna, it's a dream come true to be a part of innovation in his industry.

"It's been an incredible journey. H-earrings is a revolutionary new concept. I've been around this industry all my life and seen a lot of innovations, and this is unique. There's never been a hearing aid like this," he said of the invention.

The device utilizes an app that helps control the sound being fed into the user's ears. Campagna even tested the efficiency of the device as not only a hearing aid, but high-end headphones by conducting his interview with The Stonebridge Press utilizing the H-earrings to



Ralph Campagna, Chief Technology Officer of H-earrings, shows off the invention.

hear and respond through a phone call. He called them a "spit personality device" that can serve many demographics, although the primary purpose is to provide a new option for those who require hearing aids but want something a little more fashionable.

"I've always wanted

to make a difference, and we've definitely made a difference helping people here in our communities, but if we can bring in a new audience of hearing aid wearers because a product like this is more appealing than we've really done something great,"

Turn To INVENTION page A10

Thompson Republican Town Committee announces new officers

THOMPSON — The Thompson Republican Town Committee is pleased to announce the election of new officers for the term of March 2026 through March of 2028. The new leadership (along with a slate of new committee members) is dedicated to ensuring republican representation throughout the town of Thompson, as well as providing support to republican candidates and initiatives on a statewide, and national basis.

The Officer Team brings extensive experience and leadership qualities to the Committee.

New Chairman, Steve Nickerson, recent Vice Chair, is a USMC Veteran and a graduate of Stonehill College. Steve also serves

on the Thompson Water Pollution Control Authority, Planning and Zoning Commission, and the Little Pond Improvement Association.

Vice Chair, Rob Werge, a long-term RTC member, has attended the Harvard executive education leadership program, and is a UConn graduate. Rob also serves as Chairman of the Thompson Board of Finance.

Susanne Witkowski, a 15-year member of the RTC, continues in her role as Secretary for the Committee and is a graduate of Charter Oak State College. Susanne most recently served as Second Selectman for the Town of Thompson.

Kathleen Herbert, an

18-year member of the RTC, continues in her role as Treasurer and is a Nichols College graduate. Kathleen also serves on the Thompson Board of Education.

Deputy Treasurer, Scott Antonson, is a 26-year RTC member and former Chair for 10 years. Scott earned his MBA from Nichols College and currently serves as Tax Collector for the Town of Thompson.

For the past several election cycles, the citizens of Thompson have voted-in republican candidates to positions of leadership throughout the town. The Republican Town Committee is dedicated to ensuring that this cycle continues; with the nomination, endorsement and election of high-quality candidates who exhibit the conservative



Courtesy

Left to right: Rob Werge-Vice Chair, Kathleen Herbert-Treasurer, Susanne Witkowski-Secretary, Steve Nickerson-Chaiman

traits and values essential to the ongoing success and prosperous future of the Town of Thompson.

The Thompson Republican Town Committee can be reached on social media at www.thompsonrtc.org and on Facebook under "Thompson Republican Town Committee."

Woodstock • Public • Schools

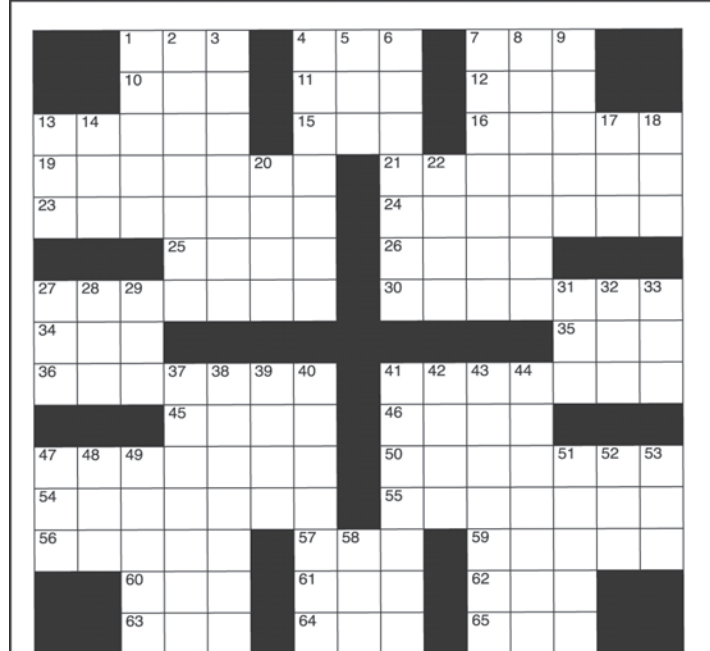
2026 – 2027 Kindergarten Registration

Woodstock Elementary School invites all Woodstock families with Kindergarten eligible students to register for the 2026-2027 school year. All students turning five years old before September 1, 2026 are eligible for entry into our full-day Kindergarten program.

Registration packets can be obtained by calling the main office at 860-928-0471 or by email at officewecs@woodstockschoools.net

Completed registration packets can be submitted in person at Woodstock Elementary School or mailed to:

Woodstock Elementary School
24 Frog Pond Rd.
Woodstock, CT 06281



- CLUES ACROSS**
- Health care pros
 - A person inhabiting Benin
 - One thousand cubic feet (abbr.)
 - Split pulses
 - Frozen water
 - Small constellation
 - Perennial mountain rice
 - Pick up
 - Japanese historical period
 - Suggesting the horror of death and decay
 - Unattached
 - Fishing port in SE France
 - Products for dogs
 - One point south of southeast
 - Having the skill or resources to do something
 - Involve oneself deeply
 - Immobile
 - ___ pai dong: Hong Kong food stall
 - Move quickly on foot
 - Gathered
 - A way through
 - Another name for Thor
 - Sharp dueling sword
 - The supreme commander of a fleet
 - Seasoned sausages
 - Path
 - Christian hermit
 - Ancient region of Asia Minor
 - Where wrestlers go to work
 - Roman statesman
 - Explosive
 - Licensed for Wall Street
 - Where golfers start
 - Grow old
 - Autonomic nervous system
 - No seats available
- CLUES DOWN**
- A legally binding command
 - General feeling of discomfort
 - Dribble
 - Soft touch
 - South American plant
 - Clouds of gas and dust in space
 - Warm-blooded vertebrates
 - Lines created by folding
 - Strong belief
 - Senior officer
 - Adult
 - Joint entrance examination in India
 - Passports and drivers' licenses are two
 - Those who go against an accepted authority
 - One point east of northeast
 - Journalist Tarbell
 - One's mother (British)
 - Nowhere to be found
 - A way to save for old age
 - Fall behind
 - Midway between northeast and east
 - The work of a sailor
 - Mark with striae
 - Energy, style and enthusiasm
 - Sticky situation
 - Monetary units of Spain
 - Three-banded armadillo
 - Chooses
 - More disreputable
 - Defensive nuclear weapon
 - "The Partridge Family" actress Susan
 - Livestock owners assn. in Spain
 - Duplicating machine (abbr.)
 - OJ trial judge
 - Politician
 - Airborne (abbr.)

PUZZLE SOLUTION

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WECS Radio presents 'Willipalooza' music festival

WILLIMANTIC — Eastern Connecticut State University will host a student-driven "mini-music festival" featuring local talent on April 15 from 6 to 9 p.m. in the Geissler Gymnasium. The inaugural "Willipalooza," formerly named "Willistock," is presented by the University's WECS Radio Club in partnership with Storrs-based music venue The Dog POUND.

Performers include Eastern student and DJ Jack Neri as Shinomiya, local punk/rock bands Symposia and Remedies, and New Jersey-based Punk band "joey exp."

Event information:
Where: Geissler Gymnasium, Eastern Connecticut State University, Willimantic
When: Wednesday, April 15, 6-9 p.m.

Admission: Free and open to the public.
Parking: Public parking is available in Cervantes Garage and the third and fourth floors of Shakespeare Garage.

"It's hard for local musicians to gain recognition in their communities, let alone at a regional scale," said Kyle Berson, president of the WECS Radio Club. "Willipalooza aims to get our performers' names out there, while providing a good time for our campus community."

"Supporting local music also opens you up to sounds you may not have otherwise heard," added Lucy Jones, the club's vice president. "Symposia, for example, plays music that I ordinarily wouldn't listen to or wouldn't get recommended to me through algorithms or social media, but I really enjoy listening to them because they feel different and exciting."

The student-run club helps manage Eastern's on-campus radio station, WECS Radio, with several members hosting their own radio shows. The club is working with The Dog POUND, a self-described DIY, LGBTQ+-owned music venue in Storrs with strong ties to UConn's student community, focusing on promoting LGBTQ+, BIPOC, and femme-fronted acts.

Alexa Udell, the venue's founder, said that "going out as a queer person or a person of color, especially at a primarily White institution, is not always safe or comfortable. We started operating with the hope of filling that niche for nightlife at UConn and we have grown to hosting shows all over the state with that same mission."

Another focus of The Dog POUND is promoting local music talent.

"Promoting local musicians is all about community. Providing a platform for local musicians lets them share their hard work and creativity, and it gets people interested in what those around them are doing," Alexa added.

The event will also feature various vendors, including The Dog POUND, performing artists, and student clubs and organizations. Willipalooza is free to attend and open to the public, with IDs being scanned at entry.

Poets at Large presents Stewart and Anderson April 18

POMFRET, Conn. — Poets at Large will once again present well-known poets Joshua M. Stewart and Doug Anderson on Saturday night, April 18 at 7 p.m. at The Vanilla Bean Café, 450 Deerfield Rd. in Pomfret.

Joshua Michael Stewart is currently the Massachusetts Beat Poet Laureate (2025-27) and he has published poems in the Massachusetts Review, Louisville Review, Rattle, Night Train, Evansville Review, Cold Mountain Review, and many others. His first full-length collection of poems, "Break Every String," was published by Hedgerow Books in April 2016. Stewart received his BA from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and lives in Ware, MA. He's employed as a teacher/counselor, working with individuals with special needs.

Doug Anderson's most recent book, "Undress, She Said," was published by Four Way Books. He has received awards from the NEA, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, Poets & Writers, the Massachusetts Artists Foundation, the Virginia Quarterly Review, and others. His first book, "The Moon Reflected Fire," won the Kate Tufts Discovery Award, and his second, "Blues for

Unemployed Secret Police," a grant from the Eric Matthew King fund of the Academy of American Poets. His third book, Horse Medicine, was published by Barrow Street Press in 2015 and his memoir, Keep Your Head Down was published by W.W. Norton in 2009.

Anderson taught in the Pacific University of Oregon and Bennington College MFA programs, and at Smith and Emerson Colleges. He lives in Ashfield, Massachusetts.

Poets at Large has brought over 120 published and awarded poets to the area since 2020 and dozens of people have participated in the open mic portions during that time. Poets at Large is a project of Windham Arts. All events are ADA compliant and are recommended for ages 16 and up. Readings for the rest of the season are sponsored in part by donations from bankHometown, Charter Oak FCU, WHZ Financial and The Putnam Area Foundation. Contact karen.warinsky@gmail.com to sign up for the open mic; five-minute max as time allows.

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Putnam Rotary Interact Club's members make presentation at conference



Courtesy

Pictured: Vivian Burk of the Somers Club, left, and Calleigh Levesque of the Putnam Interact Club.

PUTNAM — Three local Interact members, Paige Perry, Gabriel Cerasiello and Calleigh Levesque, presented the club's busy year at the 2026 Rotary District 7890 Interact Conference March 28.

Each Interact Club presented a slide show of its club activities and community service projects and the local Interact Club's show was extensive.

The Putnam Interact Club's service and events slide show included: Donation to TEEG, July 29, Aug. 16, 2025 at TEEG's Backpack Distribution, August 2025, Worked in TEEG's community garden, Sept. 23, 2025 Scarecrow Creation, Oct. 13, 2025, at TEEG's Halloween Costume Distribution and Fall Festival, Oct. 18,

Putnam's Great Pumpkin Festival, Nov. 11, 2025, Created Ornaments for Elderly Shut-Ins, Nov. 15, 2025, Putnam Rotary Interact Club Food Drive, Nov. 27, 2025, Camp Quinebaug Turkey Dip, December, 2025, Salvation Army Bell Ringing, Jan. 13, 2026, Created Valentine Cards for the Elderly Shut-ins, Feb. 28, 2026, Putnam Fire and Ice Festival, March 10, 2026 Created St. Patrick's Day Cards for the Elderly Shut-ins, March 14, 2026 Rotaract Club Trivia Night.

The Interact Club's next meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. April 14 in the Putnam Public Library. For info: robertarocchetti4@gmail.com.

Eleven Interact clubs from Massachusetts and

Connecticut took part in the conference. All the Interact members assisted in a community service project by packaging 25,000 meals for those in the Holyoke area with food insecurity. Two inbound exchange students, one from Thailand and one from Italy, spoke about their experiences as an exchange student. Five outbound exchange students spoke about the country they are headed to for high school next fall. The theme for the conference was "Unite for Good" and the active Interact Club did a lot of that in the past year.

For more information about the Rotary youth exchange program, go to <https://rotarydistrict7890.org/SitePage/youth-exchange>.

Do you love someone who lives with a mental illness?

DANIELSON — NAMI Windham County is offering "Family to Family," a free, eight-session education program for family, partners, and friends of people living with mental illness. The course helps family members understand and support their loved one while maintaining their own well-being. The program is taught by trained family members who know what it is like to have a loved one living with mental illness.

The class will be held at Connecticut State Community College at Quinebaug Valley, 742 Upper Maple St., Danielson, on Thursday evenings beginning on April 30 until June 18. The class will run from 6:30 – 9 p.m.

Class topics include information about mental health conditions and treatments, help in finding and using local support and services for your loved one, listening and communication techniques, coping skills, and handling crisis and relapse.

Millions of people are affected by mental illness each year. Mental illness also affects

those around the person living with the illness. If you live with or love someone with mental illness, this class can provide the support and information you need.

People who have participated in previous Family-to-Family classes have stated, "Before I took the course, I felt alone and overwhelmed dealing with my daughter's mental illness. By taking this course, I have met others who are going through the same things I am and have learned about many resources that I never knew existed," and "I wish I'd known about this seven years ago when the problem began. I felt safe in this class. I was able to talk about things I haven't been comfortable expressing elsewhere."

To register for this class, call 860-821-3543, email info@namiwindhamct.org, or go to <https://namict.org/support-and-education/mental-health-education/nami-family-to-family>.

NAMI Windham County is an affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Discover Connecticut with The Passports to CT Libraries Program

BY CLAUDETTE STOCKWELL
DIRECTOR
KILLINGLY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Inspired by the idea of travel and exploration, this program encourages patrons to visit participating libraries across the state. Each library offers its own personality, architecture, collections, and community spirit, making every stop a small adventure. Start at your hometown library to pick up your passport and start collecting stamps. A list of participating libraries will be given to you with your passport. When you visit a participating library, simply present your passport booklet to a staff member. They'll stamp it and, at many locations, offer a small token gift as a thank you for stopping by. (Just remember: not every library is able to provide gifts, and not every library in Connecticut participates — so kindness and patience go a long way.)

To qualify for prizes, participants must visit at least five (5) participating libraries. After that, you will be entered into one of two age categories:

- Adult: Ages 18 and up
- Child: Under 18

Each age group will have three winners of Visa gift cards, awarded as follows:

Prize Categories

Top Traveler: Awarded to the participant who visits the most libraries across the state.

Random 25+ Drawing: One winner from each age group who visited 25 or more participating libraries.

Random 5+ Drawing: One winner from each age group who visited at least 5 participating libraries.

Overall, there will be six Visa gift card winners — three adults and three children — making this journey both enjoyable and rewarding.

No Library Card? No Problem.

You don't need a library card to have your passport stamped. However, bringing your card is encouraged, as

part of the fun of visiting new libraries is uncovering new books, movies, games, and resources to borrow.

And here's a bonus: you can return borrowed items to any Connecticut public library, not just the one you checked them out from, making exploration even more convenient.

The Passports to CT Libraries program is a celebration of community, literacy, and the remarkable work

libraries do every day. Whether you're a lifelong book lover, a family seeking weekend adventures, or simply

someone who enjoys discovering new places, this program provides a delightful way to explore Connecticut.

You might stumble upon a cozy reading nook, a stunning historic building, a creative makerspace, or meet a

friendly librarian who introduces you to your next favorite book.

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BRENDAN BERUBE

EDITOR

When neighbors carry the weight together

Serious illness does not arrive quietly. It changes the rhythm of a household overnight. Routines disappear. Energy disappears. Time disappears. What remains, too often, are ordinary responsibilities that suddenly feel impossible to manage.

That is why the work of Christy's Angels stands out as something both practical and deeply humane.

The organization began with one family's experience after a diagnosis of stage four lung cancer and the difficult months that followed. Out of that experience came a simple but powerful idea: when cancer enters a home, everyday tasks should not become another burden families must carry alone.

Across Northeastern Connecticut, residents understand what it means to step forward when neighbors need help. Meals appear on doorsteps. Driveways are cleared. Children are picked up from practice. These acts rarely make headlines, yet they form the foundation of small-town life. Christy's Angels brings that same spirit into focus and gives it structure.

Services like lawn care, housekeeping, and snow removal may seem modest at first glance. In reality, they restore something families often lose during illness: breathing room. When a household is centered around treatment schedules, medical appointments, and uncertainty, even a freshly cleared walkway can make the day feel manageable again.

One story shared during a recent fundraiser captured this truth with quiet clarity. A family stopped welcoming visitors during a loved one's final months, not because they lacked support, but because they felt embarrassed that they could not keep up with the house. No one should feel they must close their doors during a time when connection matters most.

Programs like this change that equation.

They remind families that accepting help is not a failure. It is a sign that a community is doing what it should do.

In Northeast Connecticut, where many families have lived for generations and neighbors often know one another by name, there is a long tradition of showing up without being asked. Yet modern life can make it harder to organize that help. People commute farther. Schedules grow tighter. Even those who want to assist sometimes do not know how.

Christy's Angels creates a pathway for that goodwill to become action.

Events like the recent gathering at Grill 37 in Pomfret show how strong that response can be. More than 100 people came together not only to raise funds but to raise awareness. That matters. Awareness is what turns sympathy into participation and participation into lasting support.

It also reminds the rest of us of something easy to forget. Illness rarely affects only one person. It affects entire households. It affects children, spouses, and caregivers who continue managing daily life while carrying heavy emotional strain.

When a driveway is cleared so someone can reach chemotherapy during a snowstorm, that is not simply a service. It is a statement about who we are as neighbors.

Small communities do not measure strength only by population or resources. They measure it by whether people step forward when it counts.

Programs like Christy's Angels show that the Quiet Corner still does.

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

Support Woodstock! Vote yes on April 28

To the Editor:

The recent March 24 Woodstock Board of Finance Public Hearing was well-attended, orderly and proceeded smoothly through its administrative agenda (a credit to Dawn Adiletta as Moderator). In the course of the two-plus-hour proceedings several critical take-aways emerged that should inspire and energize all Woodstock voters to the polls on April 28 to pass the proposed budget on the first try.

First Selectman Chandler Paquette thoroughly explained the town budget variables resulting in a 2.77 percent requested increase (approximately consistent with inflation). He identified the major factors of the increase, and gave a detailed accounting of the significant cost savings and efficiency initiatives taken by the Selectmen to benefit taxpayers and hold the line on expenses.

Christopher Rossi, EMS Administrator, walked through the services benefitting our town from our EMS providers, volunteer firefighters and ambulance staff. He gave a detailed and transparent itemization of the costs of training, certification, supplies and equipment in support of the department's budget request. The statistics in terms of responsiveness are impressive and compare favorably to state averages. Additionally, our emergency service personnel are leveraging their expertise through community partnerships training.

Woodstock's new Superintendent, Christopher Roche, presented a cogent, data-grounded and compelling case for the urgent requirements of the BOE budget. The statistics regarding our students' declining proficiency in Math and Reading are alarming and heartbreaking. Every parent, every grandparent, every citizen who

believes in the basic right and fundamental promise of education should take note and get energized to turn this around. We have great teachers and great potential in every child. We have systematically, year over year, denied the schools the funding to allow our kids to succeed and thrive. A shocking 60 percent of our third grade students do not meet proficiency standards in math (performing below Pomfret, Brooklyn, Thompson and the Connecticut state average). 46.5 percent do not meet Reading proficiency. Woodstock's proficiency levels have declined over the years. As Mr. Roche notes, "Reduction in staff over time and lack of professional development= decreased academic performance." He makes a clear and compelling case for the strategic restoration of core reading, math and enrichment teachers, and references research demonstrating the positive return on investment of these core competencies. Importantly, he also identified a number of measures taken to trim expenses and avoid cost increases. Mr. Roche's plan for a turnaround in student outcomes identifies targeted, careful and strategic investments in high value initiatives. This is a critical first step to re-establishing Woodstock Public Schools and its kids as high performers. Mr. Roche and the WBOE deserve our support.

Our town is fortunate to have dedicated, smart and committed leaders who work hard to balance fiscal austerity with the necessary services which keep Woodstock an attractive, safe and desirable community. Please support the budget on its first round on April 28.

Respectfully,

LINDSAY B. PAUL
WOODSTOCK

Donnie Despot's attack on democracy continues

To the Editor:

Once again, Donnie Despot is doing everything possible to put the results of the midterm elections into question with the purpose of invalidating the entire process. Donnie Despot signed an Executive Order on March 31 to create a nationwide voter list ahead of midterms. Donnie's edict would create a "true" list of all eligible voters and severely limit mail-in voting. It is to have Homeland Security and Social Security work together to list all eligible voters.

This would infringe on secret balloting, limiting access to voting and illegally inserting the Federal government into the voting process. It would disenfranchise anyone whose information is not a perfect match between voting lists. There would be no court of recourse to correct things in time for casting ballots. This is clearly illegal and unconstitutional. We could only hope SCOTUS would get their heads back in the sunshine and do

the honorable and irreproachable thing by ruling it invalid.

We're rarely surprised by the contradictions and outright cruelty that comes out of the cesspool of Donnie-Land, but every now and then we say, "Holy crap." On March 31, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said, "Imagine if instead of spending billions on weapons, Iran spent that money on its people. They'd have a much different country." On April 1, Donnie Despot said, "We can't take care of daycare. We're fighting wars. It's not possible for us to take care of daycare, Medicaid, Medicare, all those things." On April 2, he said, "We can't do it on a federal level. We have to take care of one thing: military protection." But for whom? America, or just those in Donnie-Land? Wunderbar. Sieg Heil.

STEPHEN ETZEL
PUTNAM

Let Woodstock shine

To the Editor:

The Woodstock budget proposal for fiscal year 2027 is now being put through its paces and calls for a 4.49 percent increase in spending. Of this, there is a 4.97 percent increase for the schools, and 2.77 percent for general government or town services. The current inflation rate is about 2.7 percent.

In the past, and recently too, criticism of Woodstock budget proposals has centered around "spenders," as if this money was a pile of \$100 bills being tossed into the wind by a phalanx of top-hatted bureaucratic fools wearing tails prancing down Route 169.

In fact, this money has a prosaic and carefully considered purpose. It is used to build and repair our roads, keep them safe and passable in winter, staff the town hall where any Woodstock resident can get assistance on all sorts of issues, provide for fire and ambulance services, police protection, and for libraries and recreational opportunities — all of the things that make the town a livable place. This year, after a brutal winter and the recent establishment of a town-run ambulance service, the town government is requesting an increase in its budget of 2.77 percent, a number which seems remarkably low.

The money is also used to educate our children, something which, if it is done right, should be a matter of pride to townspeople and a way of making sure that the town stays vibrant and alive.

For many years, the Woodstock public schools have been funded at a rate substantially lower than the schools of surrounding towns. This may or may not be generally recognized. In fact, Woodstock spends \$19,918 per pupil (2023-2024), as compared to \$24,079 in Thompson, \$22,226 in Pomfret, and \$22,285 in Eastford. The state average is \$22,054. In 2024-2025 Woodstock ranked 142/169 Connecticut towns in per pupil spending. The attrition rate for teachers in the Woodstock schools is higher than the state average, numerous programs have been cut, the elementary school lacks a reading specialist, and the middle school does not have a Spanish teacher. Particularly missed by teachers, parents, and students is a defunct enrichment program called Spice which was designed to stimulate ambitious learners.

Only 40 percent of Woodstock elementary school students are able to meet state standards in math, and only 54% can do so in reading

and language skills. And, the numbers have been declining steadily over years which most feel is due to the cutting of various programs, teacher positions, and professional development, as well as a "bare bones" approach necessitated by years of budgetary constraints in which the schools were the last ones to the table. As first-year Superintendent of Schools Christopher Roche put it succinctly at the March 24 Board of Finance public hearing: "Reduction in staff over time and lack of professional development equals decreased academic performance."

The proposed schools budget includes contractual wage increases, a 12% increase in health insurance premiums for those on the State Partnership Plan 2.0, rising special education costs, and significant costs to maintain badly aging facilities. It also includes restoring a reading specialist, the restoration of an enrichment program directed by a full-time teacher, as well as a teacher to assist in math instruction. Study of this budget will reveal no fat, only a very basic effort to improve declining skills.

Roche, in his first year in Woodstock, has been highly visible: meeting with parents, appearing regularly on WINY, constantly encouraging his teachers and students, and speaking to just about anyone in the community who wants to meet with him. There has been a palpable sense of enthusiasm as he makes a vigorous effort to dissect and fix what has led to the decline in student proficiency.

It is, of course, incumbent on each and every Woodstock resident to carefully review the budget, to understand what's in it, where the money's going, and decide if, in fact, these are things that we, as townspeople, want for our town. We should not be swayed by confusing and alarmist rants but make, just as we do for our own household budgets, careful assessments of cost and benefit. My own judgement is that the proposed town budget is an extraordinarily thoughtful, considered effort to do an awful lot under very difficult circumstances. I think this is Woodstock's chance to reverse disturbing trends in its educational outcomes, and keep the town moving — in essence, to make sure that it stays a wonderful place to live, a place that truly shines.

JOHN A. DAY, JR.
WOODSTOCK VALLEY

A history of taxation

Mark your calendars: Celebrate America 250 Killingly. The Killingly Historical & Genealogical Society will hold its annual business meeting Saturday, May 2 at 1 p.m. at the Killingly Public Library. Mohegan educator and storyteller, Madeleine Hutchins, will present a program and video on the history of the Mohegan tribe at the Killingly Public Library at 1:30 p.m. All are welcome. Refreshments will be served. The Killingly Historical & Genealogical Society will be closed Saturday, May 2.



KILLINGLY
AT
300
MARGARET
WEAVER

The Gertrude Chandler Warner Boxcar is open by appointment. For additional information, please call (860) 207-6044 and leave a message.

Celebrate America 250. "The Sons of Liberty in Windham County." Saturday, April 11 1-2:30 p.m. at the Putnam Library. Bev York of The American Museum will speak of "Some of the same patriots who served on the Connecticut Assembly and the Governor's Council of Safety were radical rebels by night." Co-sponsored by the Aspinock Historical Society of Putnam.

Celebrate America 250 with the Pomfret Historical Society. Pomfret. Saturday, April 11. The Old Town House, 11 Town House Dr. Open House and Art Exhibit at 1 followed by the program at 3 p.m. Afterlife: Re-imagining 18th Century Gravestone Carvers featuring Pomfret's Richard Kimball and his son Libbeus by Laura Tedeschi at 3 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

Plainfield America 250, in conjunction with the Deborah Avery Putnam Chapter of the DAR, presents Taverns and Tavern Life in Early New England by Tom Kelleher of Old Sturbridge Village, Sunday, April 12 at 2 p.m. at the Plainfield VFW 7 Windsor Avenue, Plainfield. Free and all are welcome.

America 250. Quiet Corner Garden Club Book Discussion. "Founding Gardeners-The Revolutionary Generation, Nature, and the Shaping of the American Nation." Wednesday, April 15, 4-5 p.m. Putnam Public Library. Hosted by Lanette Lepper. Copies of the book are available to borrow at Putnam Library with a valid Connecticut, Massachusetts, or Rhode Island Library card. Call 860-928-6826 for additional information.

Celebrate America 250. Wednesday, April 22, 6-7:30 p.m. at the Putnam Public Library. Revolutionary Connecticut with Natalie Belanger of the Connecticut Museum of Culture and History. This new program on how Connecticut colonists experienced the Revolution, and how they have since commemorated it, utilizes artifacts and documents from the Museum's collection. Co-sponsored by the Aspinock Historical Society of Putnam.

In addition to working on history, I've spent quite a bit of time the past few weeks organizing all my tax documents. Do you know any of the history of the federal income tax? The 16th Amendment to our Constitution, which gave Congress the power to levy a federal income tax, was passed on July 2, 1909 and was ratified

Turn To KILLINGLY page A5

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Misinformation central

To the Editor:

I read the Opinion section of the Villager weekly without fail as I like to see all the misinformation the Trump-haters are posting. The March 20 edition was no exception.

It didn't take too far into one writer's piece to see his mention of Trump's alleged bombing of a girl's school with hundreds of victims. I just shook my head, as that allegation has repeatedly been proven false, but accuracy doesn't matter when it comes to Trump bashing.

The writer also wonders why Trump didn't go to the UN, NATO, Congress, or the American people. That's a simple one.

What happens if we run out of oil?

To the Editor:

The current U.S.-Israeli conflict with Iran is triggering the largest disruption in the history of the global oil market. It raises a question we've avoided for decades: when will we learn that our dependence on fossil fuels puts us at risk?

European governments are warning people to reconsider summer travel because fuel is in short supply. Airlines are canceling thousands of flights, especially across Asia, saying they simply can't afford to operate. Jet fuel prices are hitting record highs.

The disruption goes far beyond travel. Factories around the world, particularly in Asia, are facing shutdowns. Semiconductor production is at risk, partly because it depends on helium at multiple stages. Helium isn't just for balloons. It's essential for cooling superconducting magnets used in MRI machines and advanced research. A shortage doesn't just slow semiconductor chip production. It ripples into healthcare, science, and even space exploration.

In parts of India, people are hoarding cooking gas. Universities are canceling classes. The Philippines has moved to a four-day workweek to conserve fuel. Gas stations in Vietnam and Thailand are already running dry.

If this feels familiar, it should. The United States went through something similar during the oil crisis of the 1970s. Gas stations closed early or shut down entirely. Drivers waited in lines that stretched for miles. Fuel purchases were rationed on even or odd-numbered days based on license plate numbers.

Shipping costs also rise when fuel is scarce. That means fewer imports, higher prices, and less access to everyday goods. Seasonal produce becomes harder to find. Exports drop, and jobs go with them.

Construction slows as materials become too expensive to produce or transport. Fewer homes get built. The ones that already exist become even less affordable.

Agriculture isn't spared either by the war. Key fertilizer components like phosphorus are already in short supply in parts of Asia. Less fertilizer means lower crop yields. That means less food.

All of this feeds into inflation. Prices will rise across the board, and people will be forced to make harder choices about what they can afford. The standard of living will slip further.

If you want a glimpse of what prolonged energy shortages look like, look at Cuba. The U.S. blockage on oil shipments has plunged the island into its worst energy crisis in modern history. It has led to widespread blackouts, failing infrastructure, and daily life becoming a struggle. Millions are living without electricity and water; "... flushing a toilet, cooking a pot of rice or riding a bus to work is now considered a luxury."

Global systems are more connected than ever. What may start as a regional con-

It's called the element of surprise. Had Trump gone to any of those four outlets, the plans to attack would have been leaked almost certainly. The writer also shows some more ignorance by claiming that the Constitution requires that he "discuss this with Congress." More misinformation.

I could go on, but I think you all get the picture. The Trump-haters will post whatever they wish in hopes that someone reads it and believes it.

Oh, and if diplomacy was the answer in Iran, why wasn't that done by any of the former administrations?

MICHAEL DOUGLAS
BROOKLYN

flict or something happening "over there" doesn't stay "over there."

Even if the Iran war ended tomorrow, the damage to supply chains and infrastructure could take years to repair. We saw how fragile the system was during COVID. This feels uncomfortably similar.

At some point, we have to confront the bigger issue. Our reliance on fossil fuels isn't just an environmental problem. It's a vulnerability that can reshape economies, disrupt daily life, and drag entire countries into crisis.

So, what can we do?

Start by making your voice heard. Call or email your representatives in Congress and demand they assert their constitutional authority to stop this unauthorized war of choice that is destabilizing the global energy supply.

Push for policies that reduce dependence on fossil fuels, including investment in green and renewable energy, and domestic energy resilience.

And don't underestimate personal choices. Support our small local businesses. Stay informed and talk about these issues with people around you. Public pressure only works when it's widespread and sustained.

The question isn't whether we can afford to act. It's whether we can afford not to.

LISA ARENDS
BROOKLYN

Our enemies laugh while our allies shake their heads in wonder

To the Editor:

Any speech given by Donald Trump is painful to watch. Not just because of his lies and exaggerations, or that he contradicts his own statements. We expect to see all of that. The pain comes from something much more basic — the realization that this self-absorbed dimwit is our President and Commander-in-Chief of U.S. Armed Forces.

Seeing Trump mispronounce and stumble over words from a teleprompter, it's obvious that he's dangerously confused and probably senile. Around the world, our enemies are laughing, while our allies are shaking their heads and wondering what's happened to this great nation.

TODD PATRIE
POMFRET CENTER

I haven't forgotten hybrids

To the Editor:

Ever notice how hybrids have fallen by the wayside in favor of arguments over gas versus electric cars? Hybrid cars pretty much took off when the Toyota Prius did in the 2000s. The second generation eggmobiles pretty much became what a hybrid was for years, a.k.a. slow little nerd-mobiles, where it was a joke if one passed you on the highway. The 2010s, however, brought about numerous hybrids that weren't Priuses, and dare I say looked and drove like normal cars.

Fast forward to today, and with the price bubble on used cars making nearly everything cost the same unless there's some weird drawbacks you can find in a CarFax or on a car complaint site, I decided to spring for a retired fleet hybrid when the perennial car destroyer known as New England Rust came for my last gas car and I was risking having the frame snap on the way to work.

The experience has been awesome. The best gas cars I've driven use CVTs (continuously variable transmissions) to manage 35 miles per gallon in Putnam. The hybrid I picked up starts at 35 and only goes up from there. Hit the Eco button (or hippie mode as I call it) and you can drive like a chauffeur splitting electric and gas and flirt with 50 miles per gallon, or turn hippie mode off and put the hammer down with both the motor and battery working together to jolt you into your seat, especially with low speed electric torque.

When you're stopped in traffic, who

cares? Nothing idles. The system keeps the battery around 50 percent so there's headroom for regenerative braking charge, plus the healthiest range for lithium ion batteries is 80 percent or less. Eco mode adds a little electric braking by default when you take your foot off the gas, and the car has a grade mode that speed-limits you to the speed you start at when going down a steep hill if it's turned on - no real brakes necessary.

Coming from a brake-murdering gas car, the ability to reverse the polarity on one of the electric motors and slow the car electrically to save wear and tear on the real brakes is pretty awesome. In terms of battery wear, I'm not concerned because it's a standard hybrid and not a plug-in hybrid so the computer cycles everything and there's no real emphasis on the battery like there is with a plug-in being used as an EV.

There's no starter either. The 300-volt high voltage battery spins up the motor and it sounds more like a machine turning on than a car starting. The "regular car battery" a.k.a. low voltage battery just runs accessories and turns on the computer. It doesn't need to crank an engine. Instead of an alternator with its moving parts, the low voltage battery charges via a voltage converter circuit.

As I've adjusted, I couldn't help but nod at the engineering that makes all of these technologies possible. We can argue about electric cars all we want, but hybrids are nothing we should sleep on either.

JAY GERHART
PUTNAM

KILLINGLY

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on Feb. 3, 1913. "Congress quickly passed the Revenue Act of 1913 in October, which established a 1 percent tax on personal incomes over \$3,000 and a graduated surtax up to 6 percent for high earners. The first Form 1040 was introduced shortly after, in January 1914." The country had actually instituted a federal income tax for a short while during the Civil War era. "The financial requirements of the Civil War prompted the first American income tax in 1861. At first, Congress placed a flat 3-percent tax on all incomes over \$800 and later modified this principle to include a graduated tax. Congress repealed the income tax in 1872, but the concept did not disappear." (<https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/16th-amendment>). This lack of an income tax in the late 1800's enabled enormously rich families to build their summer mansions in places like Newport, R.I.

Just because early inhabitants of the colonies and young United States did not pay a federal income tax, that did not mean that they were tax free. No, in Congregational Connecticut they paid a tax for the support of the local minister. "The Congregational Church was the established, official church of the colony. The church even oversaw local schools until 1795. All residents were expected to pay taxes to their local Congregational Church, whether or not they worshiped there. In 1727, the General Assembly

passed a law exempting members of the Anglican Church from paying taxes to the Congregational Church and allowing their taxes to be delivered to their local minister instead. Later laws exempted members of other Christian denominations from paying taxes to the 'established Society,' as long as they filed a certificate declaring that they attended a dissenting church and contributed to it financially." (<https://teachitct.org/lessons/church-state-in-the-land-of-steady-habits/#:~:text=The%20Congregational%20Church%20was%20the.to%20their%20local%20minister%20instead>)

You may recall that in the 1770's, Godfrey Malbone, a staunch Episcopalian, was so opposed to paying the tax for the construction of a new Congregational meetinghouse (the present Unitarian-Universalist Society in Brooklyn), that he paid for the erection of Old Trinity Church (in present-day) Brooklyn so he would not have to pay the tax. (For a detailed account see Ellen D. Larned's "History of Windham County, Connecticut").

On Aug. 20, 1819, a list of the polls and taxable property in Killingly was compiled. I expected to find the houses, stores, mills, and acreage being taxed but was surprised to see clocks and watches being listed. Today we pay motor vehicle taxes; in 1819 men paid carriage taxes. Poll taxes were also being paid although a number of men with military certificates were exempt from this tax. The infant cotton manufacturing industry was being promoted so those mills and mill houses were

exempt from taxation as were the ministers' houses, lands and horses. (Killingly Town Meeting Records).

Beware of AI! Please, be very careful if you are searching for historical/genealogical information and AI provides you with a speedy answer. Check the sources this artificial intelligence is using! The Killingly Historical & Genealogical Center recently received an email request from Canada for information about a purported photography studio, in what is now the Killingly Town Hall, that had done an ancestor's wedding photo circa 1902. The supposed photographer's name was Andrew J. Bitgood. Three of us used directories, histories, obituaries, two newspapers, and more to try to see what we could find. We learned Bitgood was a prominent contractor/lumberman in Moosup and served as a State Senator, but found nothing related to photography. An email was sent to the person who sent the original request asking for sources. What did we get back? AI! Maybe someday we'll find verification of the material in an obscure source. Who knows! Do note your sources when working, and please be particularly careful if it is only AI.

Margaret M. Weaver Killingly Municipal Historian, April 2026. For additional information email me at margaretm-weaver@gmail.com or visit the Killingly Historical Center at 196 Main Street Danielson Wednesday or Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m., or call 860-779-7250. Like us at Facebook — www.facebook.com/killingly-historicalsociety.



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Espinosa makes Putnam High history with All-State honors

PUTNAM — In a season filled with remarkable achievements, Putnam High School freshman basketball player TJ Espinosa has etched his name into the record books, becoming the first freshman boys' basketball player in school history to earn All-State honors.

Espinosa, a standout point guard for the Clippers, delivered a sensational debut season, showcasing skill, leadership, and maturity beyond his years. He averaged an impressive 23 points, eight rebounds, five assists, and two steals per game, leading the team in scoring, assists, three-point field goals made, three-point percentage, and free-throw percentage.

One of the most unforgettable moments of Espinosa's season came on January 20 against Lyman, when he recorded the

first quadruple-double in Putnam High history. His stat line was nothing short of extraordinary: 21 points, 18 assists, 10 rebounds, and 10 steals. His 18 assists also tied a school record that had stood for nearly 50 years, previously set by Bob Chenail.

Espinosa continued to rewrite the record books throughout the season. He shot an outstanding 85% from the free-throw line, converting 91 of 107 attempts, and set a new single-season record for three-point field goals made with 57, surpassing the previous mark of 56 held by Peter Vitale. He also posted a season-high 36 points in a January matchup.

Basketball excellence runs in the Espinosa family. TJ's father, Tom Espinosa, was a two-time All-State selection for Putnam High

in 1996 and 1997, making TJ's accomplishment even more special.

Head coach Shawn Deary had high praise for his young star.

"TJ arguably had the greatest freshman season in Putnam High history," Deary said. "He brought the Clippers to another level with his work ethic—not just in games, but in practice. I'm really excited to see what the future holds for TJ and the Clippers in the coming years."

In addition to his All-State recognition, Espinosa was also named First Team All-League in the ECC.

Espinosa and the rest of Connecticut's All-State selections will be honored on Tuesday, April 21, capping off a historic season for one of the state's brightest young talents.



The Week in Sports at Woodstock Academy

Boys Volleyball

Woodstock Academy 3
New London 0
Brayden Bottone had 18 kills, 4 aces and 14 service points to lead the Centaurs to their first-ever Eastern Connecticut Conference win. Owen Budd added 10 kills, Jake Henderson had

35 assists and Christian Hart seven digs in the win over the Whalers who were playing in their first boys volleyball varsity match.

Boys Tennis

Woodstock Academy 6
Ledyard 1
Centaurs coach Siana

Green accomplished a personal goal in the first match of the season. Green had never had a team defeat the Colonels in her tenure until Monday when Woodstock Academy swept the singles and then went to two tiebreakers to win two of the three doubles matches. Rodrigo Diaz, Ryan

Chabot, Dan Jameson and Heath White all posted victories in the singles for the Centaurs.

Baseball

Waterford 15
Woodstock Academy 6
The Lancers broke out to a four-run lead in the

first inning only to see the Centaurs rebound in the second.

A Will Ellsworth RBI double, a sacrifice fly by Hayden Maloney and a bases-loaded walk to Caleb Simoneau drew Woodstock Academy with a run.

Waterford (2-0) essentially put the game away,

however, in the third inning when it scored 11 runs.

Brooks Lane led the Lancers with three hits and three RBI while Sal Bonnanno and JT Sheppard each added two hits and two RBI each.

Simoneau and Ellsworth had two hits each for the Centaurs.

Killingly High School Weekly Sports Wrap-Up

Baseball

Killingly Baseball (1-1) took the win over Fitch (1-1) in Groton behind a 5 inning 4 Hit 2 ER performance with 8 K's from Michael Fabiano, Jr.!

Final Score: 13-3!

Killingly took the lead in the 2nd inning on a Matt Poirier RBI Double to CF scoring Gaighe DeBella!

Three straight RBI singles from Michael DeAngelis, Jake Voyer (2 hits), and Alex Murdock (2

hits) delivered a 5 run inning for Killingly to extend the lead!

Fabiano, Jr. (2 hits) and DeBella both added RBI doubles, while Jake Beaudreault and Joey Gould each added RBI hits!

Joey Gould finished the game off with 2 innings of 1 hit and 3 k's!

Killingly will host Bacon on Wednesday at 4:15pm at Owen Bell Park!

Mark McBride added 2 hits for Fitch.

Girls Tennis

April 6: Tennis match K-Trailblazers v. NFA
KHS girls tennis came out ready to defend their last year championship and defeated NFA 7-0 all straight sets

- # 1 S: Talia Santese (K) defeated Talia Gonzalez (NFA) 6-1, 6-1
- # 2 S: Nina Purcell (K) defeated Peyton Welch (NFA) 6-2, 6-2
- # 3 S: Abbey Danielson (K) defeated Ana Cuevas-Garcia (NFA) 6-0, 6-3
- # 4 S: Mariette Vien (K)

defeated Samantha Paquette (NFA) 6-1, 6-4

#1 Doub: Kayce Edwards & McKenna Mulvey (K) defeated Aniyah Charles & Eve Raposo (NFA) 6-2, 6-0

#2 Doub: Samantha Smith and Corinne Daniels (K) defeated Mackenzie Meyer & Cerina Carrol (NFA) 6-3, 6-2

3 Doub: Allegra Turbayevskiv & Lillian Beach (K) defended Angeliz Garcia & Tsering Dhondup (NFA) 6-4, 6-4

Killingly 6, NFA 1

Will Clayton defeated Jacob messier 6-0 6-0

Evan Kozey defeated Trevor Rathburn 6-2 6-1

Jackson Santese lost to Jacob De Carufel 6-2 6-7 7-10

Bradley Breznjak defeated Ben Berchman 6-0 6-1

Max Richardson & Bradey Jonasch defeated Dhyam Patel & Leeano Kimsoto 6-1 6-1

Ed Purcell & Tomas Gutierrez defeated Shiv Patel & Om Patel 7-5 6-3

Riley Nolin & Glenn Leveille defeated Michael Lin and Aiden Yu 6-0 6-2

Boys Tennis

Samuels headed to Tennessee Tech

PUTNAM — Kamai Samuels is the fifth member of the 2025-2026 Putnam Science Academy men's prep basketball team to commit to a Division I program. Samuels will continue his academic and athletic career at Tennessee Tech University out of the Ohio Valley Conference.

Samuels called the recruiting process "eventful," as he had the opportunity to visit multiple schools in the last few

weeks.

"It was a great experience, new experience. It was a tough process making a decision, ultimately it came down to one school," he said.

That one school was Tennessee Tech and newly appointed head coach Tobin Anderson. It was Coach Anderson's investment in Samuels game that was the driving force to his commitment to the school.

"He came to see me

early in the fall and said just be patient. If he gets a head coaching job, I stayed patient," Samuels said. "On the visit, he showed me everything I need to work on, how he's going to get me better. The play style fits, beautiful campus, felt like it was right."

The realization that Tennessee Tech was the place for Samuels came after Coach Anderson was tabbed as the next head coach of the program.

"As soon as Coach Tobin got the job, I knew great things would happen," said Samuels.

Along with Samuels' basketball talent, Tennessee Tech is getting "that Little Burgundy grit," according to Samuels, as well as high intensity and heart. Samuels described the moment of commitment as a "relief," but emphasized that "the job is not done."



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“Barks & Blooms” to offer spring fun for pets and people

KILLINGLY — The Killingly Business Association (KBA) is pleased to announce its next “Pawsitively Killingly” event: Barks & Blooms, a spring festival celebrating furry family members, spring flowers, and local artisans. The event will be

held on Sunday, May 17 from noon to 3 p.m. on the grounds of Killingly Intermediate School. Admission is free, and all leashed, well-behaved dogs and pets are welcome.

A full afternoon of fun for pets and their people

Barks & Blooms is designed to be a celebration for the whole family — two-legged and four-legged alike. The festivities kick off at 11:30 a.m., with a pre-event “Pack Walk,” giving early arrivals a chance to stretch their legs alongside their dogs with a 30-minute walk before the main event begins. All pets must remain leashed at all times throughout the event.

The event officially opens at noon, with a ribbon-cutting and “pawesome” gift bags for the first 50 attendees. Activities will include voting and awards for a pet photo contest conducted by the event’s title sponsor, Charleen’s Portrait Studio; a pet tricks competition; police K-9 bite training demonstration; animal readings and reiki from Above the Clouds; dog training demonstration; paw print memento making; pet-made art masterpiece station; and more.

The festival will also feature live music from Daley DJ, a dog adoption parade featuring adoptable pups from Doggoholic Rescue, and a vendor fair featuring a variety of pet and floral products as well as crafters, artisans and business-sponsored activities. Food trucks Poultry in Motion and Wicked Sinister will also be on-site offering delicious food and rink for festival-goers.

Participating vendors include: Charleen’s Portrait Studio; Bark-Society; Mountain Laurel Floral Designs; Happy Hounds LLC; Author Julia Kneeland; Bark N Crumble; Strout’s Custom Acrylics; Beth’s Creations; Salt & Light Baked Goods; CoCo & Enzo “Eclectic Art”; Little House Sourdough Co LLC; United Methodist Church of Danielson; Paula’s Pet Sitting; Felted Fillies and Friends; Kay’s Creations; Colonial Dog Training; Sophia’s Farmhouse; and others.

For full event details, vendor updates, and more, visit killinglyba.org/bark-sandblooms or visit the Barks & Blooms page on Facebook.

Building on the success of Bark Harvest



Barks & Blooms marks the latest chapter in the KBA’s “Pawsitively Killingly” initiative, which launched in the fall of 2025 with the inaugural Bark Harvest festival. That event was an overwhelming success, drawing families, pet owners, and dog lovers from across the region — and raising more than \$1,500 for Doggoholic Rescue, a local organization dedicated to finding loving homes for dogs in need. The KBA is proud to carry that momentum into spring with an event that celebrates both the season and the community’s remarkable bond with its four-legged residents.

About the Pawsitively Killingly Initiative
Killingly has developed something truly special: a remarkable concentration of dog-related and dog-themed businesses, particularly along Main Street. From coffee shops that celebrate their canine spirit

in their very names, to pet care businesses that cater to the dog-loving community, Phaiiah’s Dog Park and more, Killingly stands out as a destination for pet owners.

Dog-themed businesses on Killingly Main Street alone include Bark-Society (a dog groomer and retail shop), Two Dogs Coffee Shop, Chubby Dog Coffee Co. & Gaming Bar, and CrossFit Underdog Union — creating a one-of-a-kind cluster of canine-inspired businesses that reflects the friendly and active heart of this community.

“Killingly has something no other community around us can claim,” said KBA President Jennifer Reynolds. “Our ‘Pawsitively Killingly’ events are a way for us to celebrate that identity, bring people together, and shine a spotlight on the incredible local businesses that make our town so special.”

A community that loves its dogs

The Pawsitively Killingly initiative represents the KBA’s long-term commitment to celebrating what makes Killingly unique. By shining a light on the town’s dog-friendly businesses and hosting events that bring the whole community together, the KBA hopes to strengthen local pride, support animal welfare, and build on the warm spirit that defines Killingly.

Proceeds from the event will support Doggoholic Rescue’s work as well as future Pawsitively Killingly initiatives. The event is organized through the Killingly Business Association and sponsored by Charleen’s Portrait Studio, with support from BankHometown and Quiet Corner Veterans Support Coalition, as well as Jaylee Stokes Yoga, Monogrammit Plus, Happy Hounds LLC, and Dunn Marketing.



Members of Cub Scout Pack 21 of Putnam learned how to apply a splint to a broken leg during their weekly meeting on Wednesday, April 1. Den Leader Patrick Federer showed the Cubs how to do it, using two wooden stakes and two strips of cloth. This is just one of the many fun and challenging activities Cub Scout Pack 21 does throughout the year. Pack 21 welcomes boys and girls ages five through ten. To join, call John Ryan, at (860) 928-5873.



Courtesy

Michelle Stanley, environmental services (EVS) housekeeper/lead, has been named Employee of the Month for February 2026.

PUTNAM — Day Kimball Health (DKH) is proud to recognize Michelle Stanley as its February 2026 Employee of the Month, honoring her dedication, positivity, and commitment to excellence.

Stanley serves as an environmental services (EVS) housekeeper/lead, where she plays a vital role in maintaining a clean, safe, and welcoming environment for patients, visitors, and staff. While leading and supporting her team,

she consistently goes above and beyond to ensure high standards are met.

“I’m excited and very proud to be named Employee of the Month,” Stanley shared. “What I value most about my role is the people. I truly appreciate the kindness of my colleagues and try to contribute to that positive environment by bringing a smile to those around me.”

Since joining DKH, Stanley has made a last-



Courtesy

ing impression through her strong work ethic and uplifting attitude. She is known among her colleagues for her willingness to help others and for fostering a positive, supportive workplace culture.

“Michelle’s dedication and her positive, team-first attitude make a meaningful difference across our organization — for patients and staff, alike,” said Kyle Kramer, CEO of Day Kimball Health. “Her warm smile, friendly and welcoming disposition, and her commitment to creating a safe and welcoming environment for our patients and staff truly reflects our mission and values. We are very proud to recognize her with this well-deserved honor.”

Originally from San Juan, Puerto Rico, Stanley now lives in Danielson with her husband and three children. Stanley was recently selected to participate in the DKH leadership development program, recognizing her potential for continued growth within the organi-

zation. Outside of work, Stanley enjoys spending time with her family, watching movies, and participating in outdoor activities such as kayaking.

About Day Kimball Health

Day Kimball Health is a nonprofit community healthcare system composed of Day Kimball Hospital, Day Kimball Medical Group, Day Kimball Health at Home, and healthcare centers in Danielson, Dayville, Plainfield, and Putnam. Its service area includes Northeast Connecticut as well as nearby Massachusetts and Rhode Island communities. Day Kimball Health’s comprehensive network employs more than 1,000 staff, including nearly 300 associated, highly skilled physicians, surgeons, and specialists. Its Web site is daykimball.org.



Mountain Laurel Floral Designs announces April workshops

DANIELSON — Mountain Laurel Floral Designs is excited Spring is finally here, and while the ground warms up, the shop is bringing garden activities indoors. This April, enjoy a wide range of workshops for all ages, from creating seed paper to starting flower seeds and even painting beautiful watercolor pastoral landscapes!

“As flower farmers, Gabby and I are so happy Spring is finally here and we can get outside again,” said co-owner Pam Blinten. “It’s the perfect time to plan out your gardens and start seeds for the upcoming season. We’re here to help with several gardening classes this month!”

To register for upcoming workshops, visit

mountainlaurelfloralct.com. Customers are also encouraged to sign up for Mountain Laurel’s email list to receive special monthly workshop offers and updates.

Mountain Laurel is also opening up their space for small private workshops and events. If you have a birthday party, shower, or a small gathering and you’re looking for an intimate space where you can let your creativity take over, consider Mountain Laurel! Pam and Gabby will work within your budget and theme to design a custom floral arranging or crafting workshop based on your guests’ interests. If you’re interested, email mountainlaurelfloraldesign@gmail.com.

April Workshops

Needle Felted Bunnies & Flowers

April 11 | 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.
\$55 - Learn how to craft a bunny in a field of flowers using wool and a needle. Led by local artist Susan Scott Kenney.

Stitch Club

April 12 | 3 - 5 p.m.
\$5 - Bring any stitching project and hang out with fellow crafters. New to stitching? We’ll teach you cross stitch or crochet! Basic materials can be purchased for \$10.

Seed Paper

April 17 | 9:30 - 11 a.m.
\$25 - Turn recycled materials into handmade seed

paper containing flower seeds, then plant it in your garden to grow into beautiful blooms!

Stippling 101: Intro to Dot Drawing
April 19 | 1 - 3 p.m.

\$55 - Local artist Kayla Degnan will teach the art of stippling, a drawing technique using tiny dots to create shading, depth and texture. Includes materials and pens. Ages 15 and up.

Earth Day Seed Bombs
April 22 | 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

\$15 - Celebrate Earth Day by crafting seed bombs packed with wildflower seeds. Learn how to create and plant these mini garden starters to bring more greenery to your community! Stop by at the time most

convenient for you.

Dahlia Tuber & Flower Seed Starting

April 23 | 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.
\$20 - Learn the basics of tuber/seed starting to help your garden and dahlias thrive. Includes a free seedling six pack!

Two-Class Watercolor Landscape Workshop

April 25 & May 2 | 1 - 3 p.m.

\$75 - This two-part workshop goes beyond Watercolor 101, guiding students through the foundations of landscape painting. Learn how to build a painting with a clear foreground, middle ground, and background.

About Mountain Laurel

Floral Designs

Mountain Laurel Floral Designs is more than a flower shop—it’s a space where community, sustainability, and artistry flourish. Owned by local flower farmers Gabby and Pam, the shop is located at 98 Main St. in Danielson, and specializes in fresh, seasonal blooms grown in southeastern New England.

The business began with a shared love of the land and a commitment to sustainable flower farming. Today, Gabby and Pam create floral arrangements that honor the rhythms of the seasons and host a variety of hands-on workshops that celebrate creativity and connection.

Pomfret Historical Society celebrates America 250 programs with open house, art exhibit at Old Town House

POMFRET — The Pomfret Historical Society (PHS) invites the public to an opening day celebration on April 11. The Old Town House (OTH), built in 1841, is one of only handful of Town Houses built in the 1840’s still standing in Southern New England. An emblem of participatory democracy, the OTH with its vaulted ceiling and fifteen large windows, is the perfect venue for the monthly educational programs, concert series, and exhibits celebrating the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

PHS is collaborating with the Pomfret America 250 Commission to provide

rich and diverse educational programs celebrating local participation in the Revolutionary War under the theme of: Long Ago But Not So Far Away – Exploring the Revolutionary War Through a Local Lens. Topics include Revolutionary Gravestone Carvings; The Lexington Rider; Hidden Patriots; John Trumbull’s Paintings; Doctoring the Soldiers in the Revolutionary War; Witnessing Black Patriots from the Revolutionary War to the Tuskegee Airmen; and a summer concert series featuring music of the Revolutionary period and Early America. Concerts, programs, and exhibits will

take place in the OTH from April to October, culminating in a Living History event, Revolutionary Pomfret, on Oct. 3 & 4, which will take place in historic Abington Village and the Pomfret Recreation Park.

The April 11 Open House for the 2026 season will feature artist – illustrator, Laura Tedeschi, whose Afterlife series reimagines early New England gravestone carvings in vibrant color. Laura has had a lifelong connection to historic burial grounds and has participated in several PHS workshops about

local gravestone carvers. Through her vibrant pastel and acrylic creations, Laura transforms traditional “soul effigies” and memorial imagery for the contemporary pallet. Drawing on global visual traditions, the series highlights the bold forms and symbolism of early Sothern New England stone carvers while honoring those memorialized by the headstones. The artwork will be available to buy at the OTH during the April 11 Open House, the April 20 PHS program, and by appointment.

The exhibit and following presentation highlights

the remarkable carvings of Richard and Libbeus Kimball who lived in the Jericho section of Pomfret from the 1750’s to the late 1780’s. Libbeus served with the 11th Regiment from Abington and eventually moved to upstate New York where he died in 1839. The work of Richard and Libbeus Kimball can be found throughout Pomfret’s early burial grounds.

The open house and Afterlife Art Exhibit reception will begin at 1 p.m., with refreshments, gallery walk, and historical information about the OTH and Pomfret during the

Revolutionary War. At 3 PM, Laura Tedeschi and gravestone carver scholar Keegan Day will give a presentation about the carvers represented in Laura’s work.

For more information contact Donna Dufresne, windsong@snet.net or visit the following Web sites:

Pomfret Historical Society: <https://pomfret-historical-society.org/>

Pomfret America 250 Commission: <https://www.pomfretct.gov/america-250-celebration-committee>

Pomfret invites community to cherished Mother’s Day Rose Event and Meet & Greet

POMFRET — Celebrate the warmth of spring and the heart of family at the annual Mother’s Day Rose Event, a beloved tradition returning Saturday, May 9 at 9 a.m. Hosted at The Barn, 56 Babbitt Hill Rd., this family-friendly gathering offers pre-ordered bouquets of long-stemmed roses alongside complimentary coffee and snacks in a historic post-and-beam setting that echoes Pomfret’s rich farm heritage.

Eventgoers can reserve \$30.00/dozen in timeless red, elegant white, or soft pastel shades (yellow, pink, peach), each thoughtfully arranged with baby’s breath, fresh ferns, and clear cellophane wrapping. Bouquets are perfect Mother’s Day gifts for moms, grandmas, partners, caregivers, or colleagues—split into single-stem arrangements to share the love with more.

Local businesses are encouraged to join the joy:

- Restaurants can brighten tables or offer roses to diners.
- Clubs can present them to golfers, tennis & pickleball players, fishing & gun enthusiasts, or brunch/dinner guests.
- Day Spas can offer roses to men buying Mother’s Day gift certificates or to women enjoying treatments.
- Shops and offices can elevate counters and desks with natural floral charms.

“This event grows more popular each year, reflecting our commitment to family and community,” said organizer Martha Emilio. “Guests can linger in the barn or on the deck, connecting with neighbors as part of a broader year of America 250 celebrations of local history.”

This year’s gathering will also welcome Chris Reddy and several other state and local candidates, who have added the event to their schedules to meet constituents and join in celebrating Pomfret’s community spirit. Their presence underscores the event’s growing importance as both a social and civic occasion, offering residents a relaxed setting to exchange ideas and connect with local leaders.

Bouquets sell out quickly— Contact Martha at martha@majilly.com. Donations are also welcome to support this longstanding tradition.

Danielson sets spring schedule for budget vote, council meetings

DANIELSON — Borough residents will have several opportunities this spring to weigh in on local spending decisions and follow municipal business as officials prepare for the upcoming fiscal year.

The Borough of Danielson has announced a series of public meetings between April and June, including its annual budget meeting, regular council sessions, and monthly Fire Commissioners meetings. All sessions are scheduled to take place in

the second-floor meeting room of the Danielson Fire Department, 47 Academy St.

The annual budget meeting is set for Monday, April 13, at 7 p.m. During that session, taxpayers will vote on the borough council’s proposed budget. The meeting represents one of the most direct opportunities for residents to influence borough finances, as the spending plan must be approved by voters before it takes effect.

Regular monthly council meetings will follow on Wednesday, April 15; Wednesday, May 20; and Wednesday, June 17, each beginning at 7 p.m. Borough officials typically use these meetings to conduct routine business, review reports, and address issues affecting services within the borough.

The Fire Commissioners also will meet Tuesday, April 28; Tuesday, May 26; and Tuesday, June 23, with each session scheduled for 6:30 p.m. The commissioners oversee fire ser-

vice operations and related administrative matters within the borough.

Officials encourage residents to attend the upcoming meetings, particularly the April 13 budget vote, which directly determines the borough’s financial plan for the coming year.

Residents seeking additional information about meeting agendas and borough business can consult materials posted by borough officials ahead of scheduled sessions.

Putnam Corridor Gallery features Anna Ionkin

PUTNAM — The first ever public display of the amazing art by Anna Ionkin is currently on display at the Corridor Gallery in the Putnam Municipal Complex. The show, entitled “Many Paths,” features landscapes from around the quiet corner and places Anna has traveled over the past year. Mixed in are

smaller moments from her home.

Anna sums up her approach to art by saying “Nature is an overflowing well of inspiration but also a source of connection. Whether I focus on a bird, plant, a whole landscape or just the sky, I try to reimagine the familiar to make them feel more fantastical

as if looking at them with new eyes by over-emphasizing colors and stylization. My work connects with the people in my community who share appreciation for simple pleasures that come from hikes, bird watching, and gardening. The moments and scenes I render have a New England charm but also explore my

personal experience living in rural Connecticut.”

The show will be on display until the end of June. The Corridor Gallery, sponsored by the Putnam Arts Council, is located at 200 School St., Putnam. Hours and more information are available at PutnamArtsCouncil.com

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 inquiries can be directed to 860-634-3271.

Danielson American Legion hosting blood drive

DANIELSON — In conjunction with the American RedCross and the Dayville Fire House, Danielson American Legion Post 21 is sponsoring a Blood Drive on Tuesday, April 28 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Dayville Fire House.

Please call 1-800-RED C R O S S (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: DayvilleFire to schedule an appointment.

The psychology of money in families

WHY WE AVOID FINANCIAL CONVERSATIONS

Money plays a central role in nearly every aspect of life—financial security, lifestyle choices, relationships, and long-term goals. Yet despite its importance, family financial conversations are often avoided. Many people find it easier to talk about sensitive personal topics than money.

Why do families avoid talking about finances?

The answer lies in the psychology of money. Financial behaviors are shaped not only by numbers and logic, but also by emotions, personal experiences, and deeply ingrained beliefs. Understanding these factors can help families move from avoidance to productive financial communication—and ultimately build stronger, more sustainable wealth strategies.

Why Financial conversations feel so difficult

Money is not just a practical tool—it is deeply emotional. Conversations about finances often touch on identity, success, security, and even self-worth.

For some, money represents achievement. For others, it may trigger feelings

of anxiety or inadequacy. These emotional associations make financial discussions feel personal and, at times, uncomfortable.

Additionally, financial stress reduces communication. When individuals feel overwhelmed by money concerns, they are less likely to engage in conversations—precisely when those discussions are most needed.

The “Money Taboo” in families

Despite progress in openness around many topics, money remains one of the last major taboos in family life. Many individuals were raised in households where finances were considered private or inappropriate to discuss. As a result, these patterns are passed down from generation to generation.

This silence can create significant challenges:

- Unrealistic expectations about wealth or inheritance
- Lack of preparedness among heirs
- Poor alignment on financial goals and decisions

Research shows that financial education and

open communication are critical to preserving wealth across generations. Without it, families risk mismanaging even substantial assets.

Behavioral biases that prevent money conversations

Behavioral finance offers insight into why families avoid discussing money. Several psychological biases contribute to this pattern:

The Ostrich Effect: People tend to avoid financial information that may cause discomfort, choosing short-term relief over long-term clarity.

Fear of conflict: Money discussions often reveal differences in values or priorities, leading families to avoid conversations to maintain harmony.

Shame or judgment: Concerns about being perceived as financially irresponsible—or overly conservative—can prevent open dialogue.

Emotional attachment to money: Because money is tied to identity and self-worth, discussions can feel more personal than they actually are.

Why talking about

money matters for families

Avoiding financial conversations may reduce short-term discomfort, but it often leads to long-term problems.

Open communication about money helps families:

- Teach financial literacy to the next generation
- Align on shared financial goals and values
- Prepare for major life events such as retirement, estate planning, and business succession
- Reduce misunderstandings and future conflict

This is especially important today. The United States is in the midst of the largest generational wealth transfer in history, with tens of trillions of dollars expected to pass between generations. Without clear communication, much of that wealth risks being mismanaged or lost over time.

How to start financial conversations with family

Breaking the money taboo does not require full transparency overnight. Instead, families can take gradual, intentional steps:

Start with values, not numbers: Focus first on what money represents—security, independence,

opportunity, or legacy—before discussing specific figures.

Normalize regular financial conversations: Ongoing discussions reduce discomfort and build familiarity over time.

Prioritize financial education: Teaching children and young adults about budgeting, investing, and decision-making creates long-term confidence.

Work with a financial advisor: A trusted advisor can serve as a neutral third party, helping guide conversations and align family members around a shared strategy.

The psychology of money explains why financial conversations are often avoided—but also why they are so important. Silence around money can lead to confusion, stress, and missed opportunities. In contrast, open and thoughtful communication builds clarity, confidence, and stronger financial outcomes across generations.

These conversations don't have to be perfect—they just have to start.

At WHZ Strategic Wealth Advisors, we believe financial planning goes beyond managing investments. It's about helping families communicate effectively, align their financial decisions

with their values, and prepare the next generation for long-term success. If you're ready to start more productive financial conversations or build a comprehensive wealth strategy, we invite you to connect with our team today. You can schedule a complimentary discovery session at whzwealth.com or by calling us at (860) 928-2341.

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Quinebaug Valley Senior Center to host fall prevention program

BROOKLYN — Quinebaug Valley Senior Center is excited to present a free program titled “Fall Prevention in our Quiet Corner” on Wednesday, April 29 from 10:30 to 11 a.m. The presentation will be held at Quinebaug Valley Senior Center at 69 South Main St., Brooklyn.

A Certified Fall Prevention Specialist from Day Kimball Healthcare at Home will conduct this comprehensive and interactive session. Participants will identify their individual risk factors for falls and learn proactive measures to minimize the risk of fall and fall-related injuries.

Supported by Day Kimball Homecare and the Senior Resources Agency on Aging with Title III funds from the Older Americans Act, “Fall Prevention in the Quiet Corner” aims to prevent falls and enhance the safety and independence of seniors.

Please register for this event to take advantage of this chance to focus on your safety, independence and well-being!

To register, please contact QVSCC at 860-774-1243 or email Director@QVSCC.org.

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HELP WANTED
Commercial/Industrial sand blaster opening available in Oxford, MA. Duties include high pressure manual blasting of steel shot, grit and garnet. Experience a plus. Will train
Call BC Industries 508-987-3042

HELP WANTED
Industrial painter opening available in Oxford, MA Duties-include priming and painting of machine parts and structural steel. Experience a plus. Will train.
Call BC Industries 508-987-3042

American Legion Post 21 Danielson offering high school and college scholarships

DANIELSON — American Legion Post 21 in Danielson is offering scholarships to high school seniors and to students who are already attending college.

The Post will be awarding three \$1,000 high school scholarships and two \$1,000 college scholarships. Applicants must be a resident of Killingly, Danielson, Brooklyn, or Pomfret and must have a relative, living or deceased, who served, or is currently serving, in the military. Checks will be issued to the winners in each category. High school scholarship applications have been provided to the high school guidance departments. The deadline for submitting applications is May 1.

For more information or to request an application, contact Scholarship Committee Chairman Dave Mulford by email at dmalloway@yahoo.com or by phone at (860) 771-9151.

INVENTION
continued from page A1
said Campagna. “It’s an incredible feeling to bring something into a very crowded market that’s revolutionary and different. It’s exciting.”
H-earrings are currently on sale, starting at \$1,300. More information on these devices can be found at h-earrings.com.



This photo provided by H-earrings shows how the device is designed to mix function with fashion.

www.VillagerNewspapers.com

Paws Cat Shelter to hold comedy night fundraiser

PUTNAM — The Paws Cat Shelter is holding a comedy night fundraiser on Saturday, April 25 at the Valley Springs Sportsman’s Club, 65 Valley Rd., North Grosvenordale. Doors open at 6pm and show starts at 7 p.m. Cash bar, raffle and light snacks provided.

This is a 18-plus event. Tickets are \$30 per person and can be purchased at the shelter 74 School St., Putnam, www.funny4funds.com/events or at the door. For more information on this event, contact Jennifer.Lowell@outlook.com.

Paws is a non-profit, all volunteer organization caring for the cats of our communities. For more info or to make a monetary donation, contact Paws at 860-315-1228.

Paws Cat Shelter to hold can and bottle drive

PUTNAM — Paws Cat Shelter is holding a Can and Bottle Drive on Saturday, April 11 from noon – 3 p.m. at the shelter located at 74 School St. in Putnam. Please separate two-liter bottles. Pet food and donations are always welcome and greatly appreciated.

Paws is a non-profit, all volunteer organization caring for the cats of our communities. For more information or to make a monetary donation, contact Paws at 860-315-1228.

Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser to benefit Quinebaug Valley Senior Center

BROOKLYN — Quinebaug Valley Senior Center will be hosting a Spaghetti and Meatball Dinner which will include salad, bread, coffee, tea, and bottled water. The event will be held on Saturday, April 18 from 5 to 7 p.m. at the senior center located at 69 South Main St., Brooklyn.

Tickets are available for 15 per person, eat, in or take-out. Tickets can be purchased in advance at the senior center or at the door.

Call QVSCC at (860)774.1243 for more information. Please come out to support us so we can continue to help the seniors in our communities.

ANGELS

continued from page A1
still grows. The house still needs cleaning. The dishes and laundry keep piling up — and those things can feel just as overwhelming as the treatments themselves. Letting them go can feel irresponsible. Asking your family for help can feel just as difficult, especially when they are already carrying so much. This is where my family could have used help, and this is exactly where Christy's Angels steps in.

I established Christy's Angels, a 501 (c) (3) organization in December 2024 as a community-based organization designed to help Windham County cancer patients and their families. We provide services like lawn care, housekeeping, and other services so they can focus on treatments, time together, and simply getting through each day.

On Sunday, March 29, more than 100 people gathered at Grill 37 in Pomfret for an afternoon of music and purpose. Felix and Fingers Dueling Pianos filled the room with energy. People sang, laughed, and for a few hours, allowed themselves to feel something lighter. Thousands of dollars were raised, and more than 90% of those funds will go directly to services that support these families — but the true goal was bigger than the money. It was about awareness. It was about community. It was about reminding families facing cancer that they are not alone. It is about reminding their neighbors that they can help.

At the event, we heard from families who have been supported by Christy's Angels. One family shared that during their loved one's final months, they stopped having visitors. Not because they didn't want the company, but because they were embarrassed. They hadn't been able to keep up with the house. They didn't have the energy. And so they closed the door during a time when connection may have mattered most. No family should ever have to



Felix and Fingers Dueling Pianos.



Attendees who signed up to be monthly donors received our flagship t-shirt. It was originally designed by Christy and her daughter, Kinsley, as a family crest.

make that choice. We also heard from Melissa Barnes, owner of Melly's Sparkle & Shine, who partners with Christy's Angels to provide cleaning services for patients. She spoke about what it means to walk into these homes and restore a sense of normalcy — not just cleaning, but creating a space where families can breathe again.

And sometimes, the need is even more immediate. This past winter, during one of the season's biggest snowstorms, we coordinated plowing services for a patient who needed to get to a chemotherapy appointment. The roads were covered, the driveway was blocked. But cancer doesn't wait for the weather. Because someone showed up to clear that path, that patient made it to treatment.

These are the moments that define the work we do at Christy's Angels.

When we can take everyday burdens off a family's shoulders, we are able to give something back that is far more meaningful than a clean home or a freshly cut lawn. We give time. We give dignity. We give families the ability to let people

in and we give our community the opportunity to help their neighbors.

Christy's Angels was created in Christy's memory, but it continues because of a community that understands something simple and powerful: the smallest acts can make the biggest difference, and showing up for a family in crisis can be its own form of medicine.

I'm incredibly proud of this organization, our Board, volunteers, donors, and service providers. And I know Christy would be too. Thank you to Sadie Dutremble and Grill 37 for hosting a fantastic event, Rachel Christie of Rachel Ann Light & Lens for taking photos, Felix and Fingers Dueling Pianos for the entertainment, and all the volunteers and attendees who made the event possible. It truly does take a village.

Cale Ferland is the founder of Christy's Angels, a 501(c)(3) providing assistance to cancer patients and their families in Windham County. If you or someone you know has been diagnosed with cancer, visit christysangels.com to learn more or request services.

OBITUARIES

Lorraine L. LeClaire

October 22, 1928 - February 24, 2026



Dayville - Lorraine (Poulin) LeClaire, 97, of Primrose Village, Dayville, passed away on Tuesday, February 24, 2026. She was the loving wife of the late Raymond A. LeClaire. Born in Putnam, CT,

she was the daughter of the late Charles and Bella (Beausoleil) Poulin.

Lorraine worked for Southern New England Telephone company as a company cook at Hales Manufacturing for many years. However, her primary role was as a homemaker for her late husband, Raymond, and their four children. As her family grew older and had their own children, Lorraine took great pride in visiting and seeing her grandchildren, getting involved in her children's sporting events and even great-grandchildren. She will be missed greatly by her large family and extended family.

She was a member of the Women's Auxiliary for many years. She found comfort in many activities such as cooking, completing puzzles, reading, crosswords, cross stitching, watching her favorite game shows the Boston Red Sox, and of course trips to the local casinos. Lorraine created many lasting memories and impressions

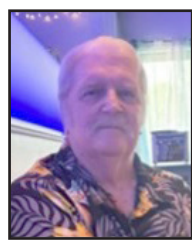
with her family and friends over the years.

Lorraine is survived by daughter, Lori Peabody of Eastford, CT; three sons, Bruce and Debbie LeClair of Scituate, MA, Kevin LeClaire of Fairbank, AK, Wayne LeClaire of Cape Coral, FL; six grandsons, Jonathan and Diana Peabody of North Haven, CT, Michael and Laura LeClaire of Milton MA., Patrick and Kristin LeClaire of Ravenel SC, Christopher LeClaire of Scituate MA., Dylan and Andrew LeClaire of Cape Coral FL; four great-granddaughters, Mackenzie, Ella, Vivian, Kinslee; two great-grandsons, Connor and Timothy; great-great-granddaughter, Kairi; three sisters, Rose Marie, Corrine, Sandra; and brother, Maurice.

She was predeceased by her granddaughter, Melissa; four sisters, Barbara, Shirley, Jackie, Lucille; six brothers, Richard, Edward, Paul, Leonard and David, and Michael.

Relatives and friends are invited to visit Lorraine's family from 6pm to 8pm on Tuesday, April 21, at Gilman Funeral Home, 104 Church Street, Putnam, CT 06260. A Funeral Mass will be held the following day, April 22, at 11am at St. Mary Church of the Visitation, 218 Providence Street, Putnam, CT 06260. Burial to follow in St. Mary Cemetery. For memorial guest-book visit www.GilmanAndValade.com.

John David Bardsley, Jr.



John David Bardsley, Jr., familiarly known as Dave, of Port St. Lucie Florida, passed away on March 29th, 2026. Dave was born on October 3, 1950, in Bridgeport, CT, residing for a brief period in

the White Mountains of New Hampshire, until his family moved to Killingly, CT, where Dave spent his formative years including graduating from Killingly High School, where he achieved a Varsity Letter in football.

Dave's collegiate years were spent at Shepherdstown (College) University where he earned a bachelor's degree before attending graduate school in communication at UMASS - Amherst. Following his UMASS experience Dave returned to Northeast, CT where he resided in Canterbury CT, worked as a Director of Marketing, while also achieved a black belt in Tang Soo Do (Korean Karate System), and became the founder of a Tang Soo Do school in Clinton, CT.

Dave later moved to the Treasure Coast of Florida as an independent business owner, making his residences in Fort

Pierce/Port St Lucie. As an avid tennis player Dave shared his passion and teachings with others as the coach of John Carroll High School, where his teams (both Boys & Girls) won several divisional championships. Dave's coaching experience, at John Carroll, coupled with the sale of his business, provided the path to become a full-time faculty member in the English Department. Dave later accepted the position as the Chairperson of Centennial High School, teaching English, Speech, and coaching boys and girls bowling to championship level. He retired in 2016. David obtained his Open Water PADI certification to join his wife, a certified PADI Rescue Diver, to enjoy many beautiful Caribbean Islands and beaches after retirement.

Dave is survived by his wife Patricia Bardsley of Port St. Lucie, Fla., her son, Keith Vogelsong (Frances) of Brooklyn, NY and a granddaughter, his brother Corey Bardsley of Brooklyn, CT, his brother Steven Bardsley of Stamford CT, and his three nieces, grandnieces & grandnephews. David's sister Diane Bardsley predeceased him.

Just a very private farewell will be scheduled.

SMITH AND WALKER
Funeral Home and Cremation Service
148 Grove Street, Putnam, CT 860-928-2442
www.smithandwalkerfh.com

GAGNON AND COSTELLO
Funeral Home and Cremation Service
33 Reynolds Street, Danielson, CT 06239 860-774-9403

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LEGALS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF

David John Longo (26-00095)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated April 3, 2026, 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 Clerk
The fiduciary is:
Kevin J Longo,
680 Providence Pike,
Putnam, CT 06260
April 10, 2026

NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF

Paul Girard Blanchette (26-00117)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated March 31, 2026, 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 Clerk
The fiduciary is:
Stephanie Nugent & Jill Blanchette

c/o BRIAN J MURPHY, BRIAN J. MURPHY LAW, LLC, 945 MAIN ST., STE 304, MANCHESTER, CT 06040 April 10, 2026

NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF

Lester L Hull (26-00072)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated February 25, 2026, 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:
c/o CARL ANDREW GLAD, AHLBERG & GLAD LLC, 2885 MAIN STREET, STRATFORD, CT 06614 April 10, 2026

TOWN OF KILLINGLY/BOROUGH OF DANIELSON/SOUTH KILLINGLY TAX COLLECTORS LEGAL NOTICE

Payments will be received in the Revenue Office, 172 Main Street Killingly CT 06239, as follows: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 8:00-4:30pm, Tuesday 8:00-5:30pm, and Friday 8-11:30am. Also by mail, online, or in

our drop box. The fourth quarter installment of real estate and personal property taxes becomes due on April 1, 2026 and becomes delinquent on May 1, 2026 and subject to interest from the due date. Interest will be charged at the rate of 1.5% per month with a minimum interest charge of \$2.00. Please visit our website for full details and online payments www.killinglyct.gov. April Lamothe, CCMC Revenue Collector Town of Killingly March 27, 2026 April 10, 2026 April 24, 2026

NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF

Howard Ray Paine, AKA H. Ray Paine, AKA H. Ray Howard (26-00121)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated April 3, 2026, 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 Clerk

The fiduciary is:
Eileen Paine
c/o JAMIE DA VIS ALEMAN, LAW OFFICE OF JAMIE DAVIS ALEMAN, LLC, 33 BROAD STREET, DANIELSON, CT 06239 April 10, 2026

NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF

Mary V Santerre (26-00101)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated April 1, 2026, 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 Clerk
The fiduciary is:
Roger B Santerre & Daniel W Santerre
c/o ALYSSA R ALEMAN, BORNER SMITH ALEMAN HERZOG & CERRONE, LLC, 155 PROVIDENCE STREET, PO BOX 166, PUTNAM, CT 06260 April 10, 2026



Courtesy
 Cub Scout Pack 21 of Putnam held its 2026 Easter Egg Hunt the day before Easter, on Saturday, April 4, in Putnam. The Cubs collected plastic eggs with candy inside, drank cocoa and roasted 'smores over an outdoor fireplace. This is just one of the many fun and challenging activities Cub Scout Pack 21 does throughout the year. Pack 21 welcomes boys and girls ages five through ten. To join, call John Ryan, at (860) 928-5873.

RUNNING WITH WESTVIEW SPORTS MEDICINE

Whether you're a seasoned runner or just starting your journey, physical therapy can play a crucial role in optimizing your performance.

Seeking the expertise of a physical therapist can be immensely beneficial for runners of all levels. Whether you're looking to prevent injuries, improve performance, or recover from an injury, a physical therapist can provide personalized care and guidance to help you achieve your running goals safely and effectively.

Meet Mike Rutt, P.T., DPT.

As a lifelong runner, Mike has worked to incorporate his love for running into his physical therapy career at Westview Sports Medicine.

A brief listing of his top accomplishments include the following:

- Member of Team USA 2012 World Championship in Istanbul, Turkey;
- University of Connecticut's varsity track team;
- All-American in all 4 years at the University of Connecticut;
- Went on to become a running coach at the Division 1 Collegiate Level.



*Back in the Game...
 by Way of Westview!*



If you are interested in working with Mike for your recovery, please call us at 860-774-8574, and we will do the rest.