



Courtesy

On Sunday, July 20, members of Cargill Council 64, Knights of Columbus, Putnam, held the council's annual memorial prayer service, for the repose of the souls of the council's deceased Knights and their families. Knights and members of their families gathered at St. Mary's Cemetery on Providence Street, where they held a prayer service at the grave of Edward M. Mullan, Cargill Council's first Grand Knight. He was elected when the council was founded 133 years ago, on July 26, 1892. The service was held at Mullan's grave, to serve as a symbol for all of Cargill Council's members down through the years. The prayer service was part of the celebration of the council's 133rd anniversary.

PUTNAM — Although much has changed in northeastern Connecticut since 1892, Knights of Columbus Cargill Council 64 remains a force for good in the community. That was recognized on Sunday morning, July 20, when Knights and their families celebrated the council's 133rd anniversary.

Observances began with Mass at St. Mary Church of the Visitation on Providence Street, followed with the blessing and dedication of the new St. Therese Parish sign on the church's front lawn. The sign was recently commissioned by, and purchased for, the parish by Cargill Council, with generous support

from St. Mary's Circle 543 of the Daughters of Isabella, which is based at St. Mary's.

Celebrations concluded with a memorial prayer service at St. Mary's Cemetery, at the grave of Cargill Council's first grand knight, Edward M. Mullan. The service was held for the repose of the souls of the council's deceased members and their families.

The Roman Catholic fraternal group was founded 133 years ago this summer; on July 26, 1892, only a decade after the international Knights of Columbus organization was begun in 1882. Continuously active since its founding, Cargill Council was the sixty-fourth local coun-

cil founded since the Knights' parent organization came into existence, hence it being numbered 64. It's one of only 47 local Knights of Columbus councils worldwide which has existed continuously since at least 1892.

Cargill Council's original members elected Mullan, who later served as Putnam's postmaster, as their leader, known as the Grand Knight. Elected to three annual terms, he served as grand knight from 1892 to 1895. He remained a member of the council until his death in 1916, at the age of 61. Council officials held the service

at his grave, to symbolize all the council's Knights down through the organization's first 133 years.

Although it may seem strange to some people to hold a celebration in a cemetery, the current Grand Knight, John F. Xeller, explained that there was an important thought behind the idea. "Cargill Council has had several homes here in Putnam since it started 133 years ago," he said. "Its first home was in the Bradley Theater, downtown. Later we spent decades in a large building off the lower end of Church Street. Since 1976, we've been on Providence

Street, in what used to be the Putnam Polish Club. Even though most current Knights identify with the Providence Street building, the grave of our very first Grand Knight is the perfect symbol for every member of Cargill Council, living and deceased, past and present."

Today, with almost 200 members, Cargill Council 64 serves the four churches of St. Therese Parish, including St. Mary's in Putnam, St. Joseph's in North Grosvenordale, St. Stephen's in Quinebaug and Most Holy Trinity in Pomfret.

In addition to support

for its members and their families, Cargill Council maintains a dedicated, strong, ongoing commitment to the parish. The council also sponsors or assists year-round with many positive, local programs, including, among literally dozens of events, its annual "Joe Bousquet Christmas Giving Appeal" for the needy in the area, food drives for the local poor, providing free winter coats for local children and adults, a year-round program for the widows of its deceased members, an annual council golf

Turn To **CELEBRATION** page **A9**

Woodstock BOE approves contracts with Putnam, Killingly

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

WOODSTOCK — The Woodstock Board of Education has approved a pair of contracts that will make Killingly High School a new option for students and extend a contract with Putnam High School.

Minutes posted by the Woodstock Board of Education confirmed on June 12 that contracts with both Killingly and Putnam had been finalized, and were prepared for board review. The minutes for a special meeting on July 9 later confirmed that the board voted to approve both agreements, which preserves Putnam as a high school option for Woodstock students and makes Killingly a district-wide option for the first time.

In addition to the meeting minutes, Killingly Public Schools solidified the deal in a public social media post on July 21.

"The Woodstock Public Schools Board of Education recently approved an agreement with Killingly Public Schools, designating Killingly High School as a school of choice for Woodstock students," the post read.

Woodstock, which does not have its own public high school, had previously approved an agreement with Putnam High School in 2020 to expand its school choice options. PHS is only miles away from Woodstock's town border. Negotiations between Killingly and Woodstock to make Killingly High School an official option for the entire district also date back to 2020 before talks were paused indefinitely. Negotiations recently resumed resulting in Killingly becoming an official option for Woodstock students. Killingly had previously only allowed Woodstock students to attend as part of the schools Agricultural Education program.

The agreements further increase the number of school choice options for Woodstock students to three. Until 2020, Woodstock Academy, an independent private school, was the sole designated high school although alternate options did exist. The Academy remains an official designated high school along with PHS and KHS. Other schools that will continue to service Woodstock students as alternative choices include the EASTCONN Art Magnet School in Willimantic and Harvard H. Ellis Technical High School and Quinebaug Middle College which are both located in the Killingly's Danielson borough.

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

KILLINGLY — Killingly Town Officials are seeking ways to help resolve some traffic issues in town, particularly around local schools. While a solution is far from determined, the Acting Town Administrator's visit to a recent traffic workshop did open the door for the town to take inspiration from other communities.

Acting Town

Administrator Francis "Buddy" Conroy provided a brief update to the Town Council on July 8 where he revealed that he attended a Road Safety Assessment Workshop where officials from across the region met to discuss traffic concerns and potential solutions. One of Killingly's biggest issues currently is school traffic and backups due to drop off and pickup. The Town of Wethersfield expressed similar concerns which Conroy said

allowed Killingly to glean some ideas for its own use, although not every solution was considered viable.

"There were a lot of ideas floated like traffic changing. The Town of Wethersfield is going to make a no-parking one of their priorities. The odd-est thing they wanted to do is give parents a cash incentive not to take their children to school and use the bus - They were seriously thinking about that," said Conroy.

The Council did not discuss any specific solutions they might explore. However, Conroy's report indicated some possible options discussed during the workshop such as no parking signs on surrounding streets of the schools, repositioning buses and parents' cars on school property, widening the parking areas, and the aforementioned concept of incentivizing parents to encourage

Turn To **TRAFFIC** page **A9**

Tri-Town Legion Baseball celebrates close of season



19U Players: Will Bushey, Ceydian Campos, Lucas Carita, Logan Coutu, Brady Devlin, Nicholas Devlin, Robert Dion, Robert Ellsworth, William Ellsworth, Gabriel Fuentes, Gabriel Girard (DR), Benjamin Gustafson (DR), Brayden Hamlin, Sebastian Hanshaw, Tyler Kouatly, Evan Mailloux, Jacob Turner, Trevor Turner. Head Coach - Jason Akana, Assistant Coaches - Brandon Carita, John Merrill.

NORTH GROSVENORDALE — The Tri-Town American Legion Baseball Team, from Putnam, Thompson and Woodstock, recently celebrated the end of their season with a banquet on Saturday, evening,

July 19 at American Legion Post 67 in North Grosvenordale.

According to Michael Merrill, the Chairman of the Tri-Town Baseball Team Executive Committee, "This banquet is an annual tradition where we celebrate



17U Players: Benjamin Boledovic, Ryan Collard, Matthew Dearborn, Gabriel Girard (DR), Joseph Girard, Jax Golden, Benjamin Gustafson (DR), Oliver Hayden, Noah Kipp, Elijah Laprade, William Magee, Carter Murawski, Noah Pillsbury, Blake Ward. Head Coach - Maxwell Racicot, Assistant Coaches - Ken Magee, Ben Kipp.

the end of a short but intensive season consisting typically of more than 22 games in six weeks. We also recognize the players, the parents, the sponsors, the volunteers, the team moms, and everybody else that makes it possible for us

participate in this great sport of baseball."

The event began with the posting of the colors by the American Legion Honor Guard, consisting of Frank Tremont and Christ Steinbrick.

Turn To **BASEBALL** page **A9**

Seminar inspires Interactors



Courtesy

From left: Anthony Beaudreault, Gabriell Cerasiello, Paige Perry, Rotarian and Interact Club Adviser Roberta Rocchetti, and Rotarian and IHSP president Karen Osbrey.



ARTHRITIS?

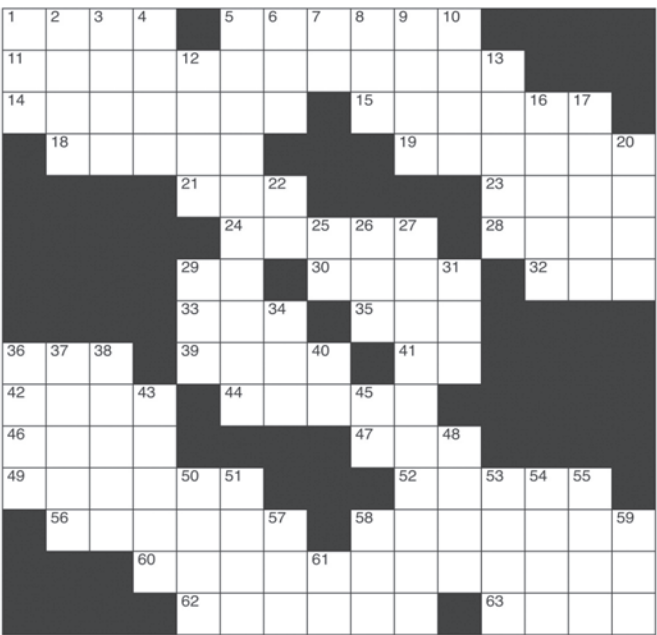
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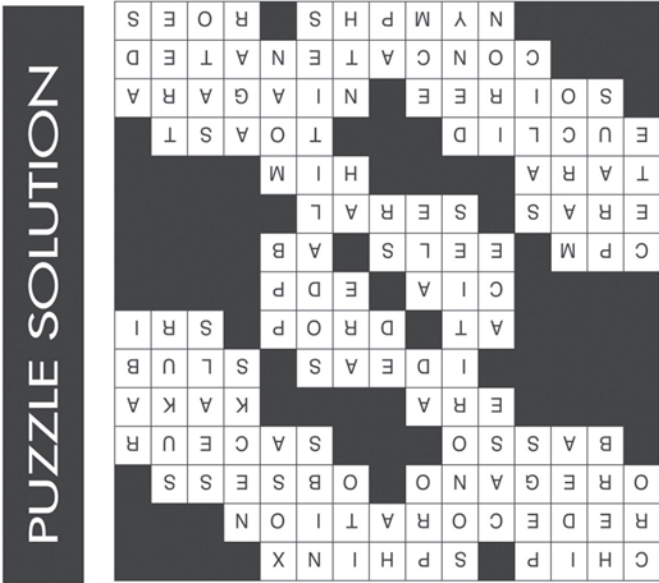


CLUES ACROSS

1. Popular potato snack
5. Guards the Pyramids
11. Furnish anew
14. Herb
15. Preoccupy the mind continually
18. The lowest adult male singing voice
19. NATO commander (abbr.)
21. A major division of geological time
23. New Zealand parrot
24. Notions
28. Lump in yarn
29. Indicates position
30. Lose hold of
32. Hindu honorific
33. Former OSS
35. Electronic data processing
36. Cost per mile
39. Snake-like fish
41. They start the alphabet
42. Taylor Swift’s tour
44. Intermediate ecological stage
46. Scarlett’s home
47. Of he
49. Ohio city
52. Breakfast item
56. An evening party
58. ___ Falls
60. Linked together
62. Mythological spirits
63. Small Eurasian deer

CLUES DOWN

1. Earliest human form: ___
-Magnon man
2. Flavoring
3. Notion
4. Bundy and Fenwick are two
5. Qualities of sound
6. One who gets paid
7. Expresses surprise
8. O.J. trial judge
9. Pointed ends of pens
10. Shield bugs genus
12. Container for shipping
13. Upper body parts
16. Closes tightly
17. Nigerian World Heritage Site
20. Volcanic island in Fiji
22. Commercial
25. - _ : denotes past
26. They ___
27. Confraternities
29. A way to gain a point
31. Parts per billion (abbr.)
34. Brew
36. Badgers group
37. Sailing boat
38. ___ Polo, explorer
40. Elder citizen (abbr.)
43. Frankish law code
45. Exclamation of surprise
48. Groan
50. It presses clothing
51. Do not allow
53. Gelatinous substance
54. Common Japanese surname
55. Present in nature
57. Electronic countermeasures
58. Last or greatest in an indefinitely large series
59. Commercials
61. News agency



PUTNAM — Local students who attended the Rotary World Affairs Seminar told the Putnam Rotary Club the experience was “life changing.”

The Putnam Rotary Club sponsored the students who first attended the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA), a leadership development program for young people offered by Rotary International. The RYLA program aims to build the next generation of leaders by providing training in leadership skills, ethical decision-making, and community involvement. The RYLA program is one of the Putnam Rotary Club’s strong suits.

At RYLA, the local students were chosen by their peers to go on to the World Affairs Seminar (WAS) in Wisconsin.

Anthony Beaudreault, a senior at Woodstock Academy, talked about the project his team worked on at WAS, conservation. He feels strongly about

conserving our resources and has started collecting bottles for various causes, one being “Save Long Island Sound.” He said the encouragement at WAS was inspiring.

Paige Perry, senior at Putnam High and Interact Club co-president, also spoke positively about her experience at the WAS. Her team worked on a food drive project. Food insecurity/food drives are an important goal for this year’s Interact Club. The Interact Club intends to hold food drives in this area to support local food pantries.

Gabriell Cerasiello, a senior from Putnam High and Interact co-president, spoke about their upcoming Interact year. The Interact Club’s long-standing tradition of Salvation Army bell ringing fund-raiser near the holidays is near and dear to her heart. She also said Interact will be participating in the Scarecrows

contest, Ice Sculptures and Relay for Life, as well as the food drives.

Isabell D’Alieva-Bochain, a senior at Woodstock Academy, sent the Rotary Club a message with thanks for sending her to WAS.

The Interact students then presented Rotarian Karen Osbrey, president of the Interfaith Human Services of Putnam, a check from the Interact Club for \$200 for IHSP’s Daily Bread food pantry. Osbrey thanked the Interact Club on behalf of Daily Bread.

For more information about the Putnam Rotary’s Interact Club contact Roberta Rocchetti at: robertarocchetti4@gmail.com.

Local student graduates from Northfield Mount Hermon

MOUNT HERMON, Mass. — Beatrix Donovan of Woodstock was among 192 students, from 24 states and 25 nations, who graduated from Northfield Mount Hermon on May 25.

Alumni Mariah Calagione Draper, NMH class of 1989, and Sam Calagione III, class of 1988, co-founders of Dogfish Head Brewing, delivered the keynote address. The Calagiones, whose two children also attended NMH, are long-time, dedicated supporters of the school.

“Class of 2025, you are taking the NMH community with you from this hill, which is why you will naturally lean in, you will automatically roll up your sleeves, you will become a part of your communities without a second thought, you will be a part of bringing people together.” Mariah Calagione told the students. “It’s when we are together in community that we learn from each other. We build community with our actions, our human experiences, and by sharing our stories.”

“I am so excited for each of you as you embark on your own adult journeys nourished by the unparalleled community that is Northfield Mount Hermon,” Sam Calagione added. “The best of this school is now coursing through your heads, your hearts, and your hands, like the sweet sap running through the maple trees across this campus.”

Class Orator Shai Lipton-Ferguson of Westwood, Massachusetts, found inspiration for his Commencement address in the lyrics of the school song, William Blake’s “Jerusalem”: “I will not cease from mental fight, nor shall my sword sleep in my hand, till we have built Jerusalem, in every green and pleasant land.”

Over his four years at NMH, Lipton-Ferguson said, he and his classmates built their own Jerusalem. “I want each of us to think of the people in this class who have helped make this place your Jerusalem. The first few people that pop into your head: a roommate, a teammate, a classmate, a friend,” he said. “Think about what they have done for you, how they have made you feel. Capture that feeling. Capture their actions. Capture your emotions. That is what Jerusalem really is. That is how we have built Jerusalem. Jerusalem is how we have helped each other; how we have loved each other.”

VILLAGER ALMANAC

At CT AUDUBON

Bird sightings at the Connecticut Audubon Society Center at Pomfret and Wyndham Land Trust properties for the week of July 21: American Redstart, Yellow Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Veery, Eastern Towhee, Indigo Bunting, Baltimore Oriole, Red-eyed Vireo, Cedar Waxwing, Catbird, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, American Kestrel, Bobolink, Purple Martin

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Thompson veteran honored with Quilt of Valor

T H O M P S O N
—Thompson veteran Joe Blanchard was honored Saturday, July 26 with the National Quilt of Valor for his service in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam era.

The presentation was held at his home in Thompson. The quilt pieced by Charlton QOV Group, Quilted by Carol Coffin. The presentation was done by State Representative Teresa Perreault, pictured left to right:

Melissa Sinkis,
President Woman's
Auxiliary, Post 58,
American Legion
Oxford Mass., Tom
Gilfof American Legion
Honor Guard Rider,
Veteran Blanchard,
Teresa Perreaulp. Chris
Gilfof, American Legion
Woman's Auxiliary
and Joe Blanchard Jr.

American Legion Honor
Guard Rider.

Veteran Blanchard served five years on the Webster Police Department as auxiliary officer; five years as a volunteer on the Webster fire department, two years as chairman of the Webster town sturdy committee organizing the founding of the Webster D.P.W. Ten years as the Chairman of the Webster Planning Board. Former newspaper reporter for the local paper and ten years with the Webster Pop Warner Football League.

Veteran Blanchard was recently honored by the Town of Thompson as Veteran of the month. He received recognition at the selectmen's meeting and a plaque by the Veteran Service Officer, Rene J. Morin.



Richard Majercik named Thompson's Veteran of the Month

THOMPSON — Richard D. Majercik of Pompeo Road has been selected by the nominating committee to be recognized and honored as the August 2025 Town of Thompson Veteran of the Month.

Vietnam War veteran, Sgt. E-5 Richard (Dick) Majercik enlisted in the United States Army in July 1967 and received his honorable discharge on April 17, 1970. During his three-year term serving his country, Sgt. Majercik accomplished with honor and distinction a wide variety of assignments and deployments ranging from the dangerous and horrific Jungles of Vietnam; to Ft. Lee, Va., teaching at the Memorial Activities Quartermaster School for the United States Army.

Sgt. Majercik completed his basic training at Fort Jackson, S.C. He was then assigned to Fort Lee, Va. for his advanced training in Grave Registration before he was deployed to begin his tour of duty in Vietnam.

Upon his arrival in Vietnam, he was assigned to a grave registration point in An Khe, where he performed recoveries and identification of his heroic fellow fallen soldiers. The surroundings were a canopy of vegetation in the tropical jungle. Cobras and tigers posed as much of a foe as the Viet Cong enemy. His unit subsequently was reassigned, designation Dong Ha, and Phu Bai and while passing through Da Nang camped on China Beach he was pulled from his platoon, because of his extensive mortuary background to assist with mortuary work. Sgt. Majerick was needed for this work due to the enormous demands at that point in the ongoing war. This assignment came from the direct order of General William Westmoreland; the commander of the United State forces in Vietnam.

Sgt. Majercik, along with his Mortuary Team during the TET Offensive of 1968, proceeded to embalm and prepare well in excess of 8,700 U.S. Military casualties killed in action for their return home to the United States and to their final resting place. There were more than 17,000 soldiers there from 1967 to 1968. Most of this tedious and tenacious work was accomplished under anything but perfect conditions. With Sgt. Majercik's leadership and assistance, the remains of the largest number of casualties to ever occur during the Vietnam conflict over a 60-day period, were able to be returned back to their homes in the United States. Sgt. Majercik was the first military embalmer to be assigned to embalming duties in the Vietnam war, and was so recognized by numerous letters of appreciation and commendation on behalf of the U.S. Government for answering the call for volunteer embalmers. He also received commendation from the French Government for preparing a French civilian plantation owner with the minimal supplies for doing restorative work. Of note, one of the thousands of casualties that Sgt. Majercik prepared for return the U.S. was an Army soldier from Thompson, Sgt. David A. Provost. Sgt. Majercik insisted that he personally accompany Sgt. Provost's body home to his family, and to a Webster Funeral Home and to personally bring some comfort to the Family as best he could.

“You never forget that horror, and you never look back,” he stated. “You just did your job. If I was called today, there would be no hesitation, God and Country!”

Majercik further stated he was "blessed with the honor of preparing to bring many of his brothers and sisters' home."

Upon return to the States, Sgt. Majercik was assigned to Fort Lee, Virginia to be an instructor in their Quartermaster School. He taught finger printing, dental and anatomical charting and instructing on the legalities of operating a military mortuary system. At Ft. Lee, he not only taught but was the NCOIC of the burial squad for the State of Virginia. As a result of his preparation and presentation of instructions, he was bestowed a Letter of Commendation for his impressive performance as an instructor and noncommissioned officer with the Memorial Activities Branch, Special Subjects Division and Support Services Department of the United States Army Quartermaster School. Major Ramon Fournier, in a letter presented to Sergeant Majercik, stated that his performance had been unquestionably superior; and that his knowledge,

willing attitude, and application to the task at hand had caused his superiors and contemporaries to regard him with high esteem, and that his dependability has been vigorously demonstrated. He further stated that his manner of performance reflects credit upon himself, this department, the Quartermaster School and the United States Army.

For his exceptional and extraordinary service, Sgt. Majercik was been presented The Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, The Vietnam Service Medal, The Vietnam Campaign Medal with dev. 60, The Vietnam Counteroffensive Phase 111, 1V, V and V1 and the TET 69 counter offense medals by the United States Government. In addition, Sgt. Majercik was recently awarded the coveted "Quilt of Valor" by the Quilt of Valor Foundation after being nominated for this National Award by one of his fellow Mortuary Service Members Phil Jeffries of Pennsylvania. Jefferies served with Sgt. Majercik throughout their 3 years of service to our Country. Jefferies stated that he nominated Majercik for this award because of his calmness in terrifying situations in Vietnam and his professionalism throughout his time in service.

Sgt. Majercik was born in Dudley, Mass. in 1947 to parents Anthony P. Majercik and Lena (DeFusco) Majercik. He was educated at St. Anthony Grammar School and Dudley Elementary School. Dick graduated from Bartlett High School Class of 1965. He went on to study at the New England Institute of Funeral Directors and Embalming in Boston. Dick has one brother Dr. Col. Donald Majercik who is a surgeon in Vermont, and retired member of the Air National Guard. Dick has a son Richard Majercik II, and his daughter-in-law Vien who reside in Oxford, Ma. and a daughter the late Lisa-Beth Majercik of Chicopee, Ma. In addition, Dick is the proud grandfather of 5 adult grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren.

Dick is a Life Member and a Board of

Directors and House Committee member of the Valley Springs Sportsman Club in North Grosvenordale. He is a Past President of the Webster Exchange Club, past venerable of the Sons of Italy, past Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus and fourth degree knight of the Cardinal Wright Assembly, a life member of the Clydesdale Breeders Association of America and the Friesian Horse Association, Life member NRA, VFW of Webster, Life Member of the Auburn Elks, NRA certified safety officer, certified Judge for the Kansas City barbeque society and the New England barbeque society, and a Member of the Danielson Veterans Coffee House. He is also a Webster Reserve Police, and has served as a Captain and Commander, Deputy Sherriff for Worcester County, served as a Webster deputy moderator, Webster School Committee and Board of Health. Past President of Worcester County Rehab and Board member, Board of Directors of Tri-Valley Elder Services, NRA safety Officer, Board member of Synkinetics, in Natick and has served on New England Schools and Colleges accreditation teams, past president of the Webster Downtown Business

Association, and has chaired the Fund-Raising Campaign for the Webster Band Stand. He has also served on the Board of the Office of Community Development, and chaired the search committee for the past Town Manager.

in the ownership of Smith Stationers in Webster; and the original partner of Dal-Ma in Webster and a partner of TRM Realty Trust.

Dick's hobbies include trap shooting, showing his Clydesdale horses, competing in driving competitions, collecting horse drawn vehicles, old cars, pocket watches and clocks. A long-time passion and his love of cooking, has had him teaching several Italian cooking classes, making sausage and breads, many various types of Italian pastas for his family and friends, all of which he learned from his great aunts and uncles. Dick has always had a passion for travel, and has had the opportunity to travel all over Europe, in particular Italy and the Caribbean.

Our August Veteran of the Month is a long time resident of his beautiful Pompeo Road Farmhouse along with his partner, Debra Pierce Durant, and their cherished Clydesdales.

Sgt. Richard D. Majercik will be recognized and presented a plaque at the Aug. 6 Board of Selectman Meeting as has all previous Thompson Veteran of the Month recipients.

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The soundtrack of our lives

You’re driving home late one night, tired but wired, and then it happens. That one song — your song — comes on the radio. Maybe it’s Whitney, or Nirvana, or A Tribe Called Quest, or that one-hit wonder from your senior year. Suddenly, you’re not in traffic anymore. You’re back in your first car, windows down, summer air thick with possibility. You’re 16, or 18, or 21, and for a moment, you feel it all again. That moment is science.

According to neuroscience research, the music we listened to in our adolescence and early adulthood (roughly ages 12 to 25) gets deeply embedded in our emotional memory, thanks to the way our brains are wired during those formative years. It’s a phenomenon sometimes referred to as the “reminiscence bump” a window of time where memories are more vivid, and experiences (especially those connected to emotion and identity) leave a lasting imprint.

When music enters the scene during that stretch of life, when you’re first falling in love, figuring out who you are, and building your independence it becomes more than just background noise. It becomes part of your personal identity. So, decades later, when you hear that track again, it doesn’t just spark a memory, it lights up the emotional centers of your brain, releasing dopamine, triggering nostalgia, and often bringing comfort and joy.

Nostalgia gets a bad rap, like it’s some kind of wistful indulgence. But it’s actually good for you. Studies show that nostalgic experiences (including music-based ones) can increase feelings of connection, meaning, and optimism. They act as a psychological time machine, reminding you of who you’ve been and helping you reconnect to the parts of yourself that still matter.

Your favorite music from your youth isn’t just “old school.” It’s a form of self-preservation. A reminder of your wildness. Your hope.

So, when you hit play on that mixtape in your mind, know this: you are not stuck in the past. You are drawing strength from it.

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

Setting the record straight

To the Editor:

This letter is to address a recent online accusation that Thompson’s Board of Finance Chair has not consulted with the Town Assessor on the correct interpretation of data related to the revaluation and its effects on the annual budget.

To provide absolute clarity on this issue, the Chair and the Assessor are submitting this letter as a joint statement. We will refute the incorrect and disingenuous claims made by a person who has given himself the online title of “financial expert.” This individual, a non-resident taxpayer, also advocates gutting the town surplus to drive down the mill rate to 17.5, which would benefit him directly but would put the town in jeopardy of state intervention. It is impossible to align such a suggestion with any claims of financial expertise. The primary tool of this destructive campaign is a particular social media forum where he and the other admins whip up local anxiety and selectively censor dissenting voices. Given the harm that is often done by allowing false claims to go uncontested, we would like to share the following accurate information.

First, it is important to identify the information which is accurate, and where we all agree. The exact same raw data was provided by the Assessor both to the Chair and to the private individual making the accusations. The average assessment across residential property went up 60 percent due to the revaluation and at the start of the budget process, the mill rate was lowered or normalized from 28.11 to 19.29 baseline as a result of the revaluation. Additionally, taxes paid across motor vehicles will go down an average of 51 percent.

It must be emphasized that the individual leading the charge against the budget does not live in Thompson. He is an out-of-state resident whose vehicles are registered to his primary residence down south. Because of this, he would not personally benefit from the significantly reduced taxes on motor vehicles in the new assessment formula. One of his rather odd talking points is that he represents the “average” taxpayer in Thompson. The average taxpayer is not an out-of-state resident who maintains a summer home in Thompson. Rather, the average taxpayer in Thompson is someone who owns one residential lot, lives here year-round, has vehicles registered in town and has a vested interest in the future of our community.

A recent online post veers into an interpretation of the raw data which is not supported by responsible statistical practice. It claims that the Assessor concluded that only 20 percent of homeowners would see a tax reduction at the prior proposed mill rate of 19.29. However, at the public presentation and Q&A on June 25 before the third referendum, the Assessor and the Chair were in agreement that, at that rate, 59 percent of homeowners would have paid lower taxes when both residential property and motor vehicle taxes were considered. For those who did not

attend, the recordings are available online, for verification.

To be absolutely clear: throughout this process, the Assessor has worked closely with the Finance Chair on how to present the information in a clear and precise manner. The methodology applied to refining and narrowing the data shows how the grand list data specifically impacts the average Thompspon homeowner. To clarify the data and turn it into useful information and knowledge, we carved out the impact to homeowners with motor vehicles (about 85 percent of the tax base), since the vast majority of taxpayers own homes and motor vehicles. Within homes, we looked at like-for-like homes from this year versus last year, meaning we excluded new homes (valued as raw land last year) and other homes with significant increases in value like a new garage or building addition (or loss of value, as is the case in a tear down or loss by fire). The Chair was criticized for “cherry picking” by doing this, but best practices for statistical analysis omits special cases or outliers that would skew the numbers.

This brings us to where we are now. The fourth referendum in Thompson is scheduled for Aug. 13. A mill rate of 19.00 has been proposed. On average, a staggering two out of every three Thompson homeowners with motor vehicles will pay less in taxes versus last year if the budget passes. Since the average home is increasing \$341 and the average motor vehicles per home is decreasing \$411, the average home with motor vehicles will pay \$70 less than last year at the proposed 19.00 mill rate.

We are no longer at level funding. The proposed 19.00 mill rate will return less to the Town than last year in tax revenue. The lack of an accepted budget prior to June 30th caused the town to make temporary cuts to valuable services, in the

interest of keeping the town solvent as a stop-gap measure ahead of the next referendum. Many residents have been vocally upset about these temporary cuts, but further reduction of the budget below 19.00 mill rate will likely mean permanent cuts to many of these same services.

In closing, we would like to leave you with a thought: every person employed by the town or elected to serve on its behalf is obligated to be truthful and transparent. The budgets developed by the Board of Finance with assistance from the Assessor and other professionals on the staff, are put together with concern and care for the good of all residents. Be cautious because no such obligation exists in any online forum.

Please reach out directly to the Assessor to find out what the budget means for you, and please keep that information in mind when you vote on Aug.13.

ROBERT WERGE
CHAIR, BOARD OF FINANCE
PAUL HOPKINS
ASSESSOR
THOMPSON

What happened to America’s sense of empathy?

To the Editor:

We’re now into six-plus months of the Trump administration. Let’s look at what he’s accomplished.

Half the staff of the Department of Education has been fired as a start to dismantle the entire department. This agency’s main role is to distribute federal money to schools and to regulate services for children with disabilities and low-income children. Where do you suppose the deficit will come from? That’s right, your state and local taxes. Don’t be under the illusion that your federal taxes will be reduced correspondingly. That won’t happen. So who gains from this? Right again, the rich. Trump is also determined to cut off federal funds to colleges that teach critical race theory, racial history and trans-gender issues while hypocritically accusing them of racist policies.

“One Big Ugly” bill was passed recently which will cut funding for infants and children of low-income families by more than \$1 trillion over the next decade. Cutbacks on funding for SNAP (food stamps) recipients was also included in this bill which means more burden on the state level that we will pay for. And by the way, this doesn’t go into effect until December 2026, after the mid-term elections next year. Gee, do you think that was planned?

We’ve listened to Trump spout off about tariffs as high as 145 percent and down to 10 percent. No one can keep track on any given day to which tariffs will actually stick. There are two things we do know, however; economists agree that the consumer always bears the brunt of tariffs, and no matter where they end up, Trump will crow about what a great job he did, regardless of who pays the price.

More goals achieved: insinuating himself into the judicial system as well as congress to make sure that there are no longer checks and balances in place as set up by the original founders, interfering with the press because he doesn’t like what they say about him. Poor Donald, the oppressed. I’ve got “news” for him. Most past presidents had a love/hate relationship with the press (mostly hate) but they didn’t interfere because they knew that

Gathering ideas for next year’s garden



GARDEN MOMENTS
.....
MELINDA MYERS

Summer is a time when many gardeners begin making plans for new additions to next year’s gardens. You may already be doing ongoing evaluations of your own plantings and may want to include tours of others’ gardens.

A walk around your neighborhood can provide inspiration and a chance to observe plants thriving in the same or similar conditions that exist in your landscape. Local garden tours allow you to take a closer look at both front and backyard gardens filled with plants, garden art and more.

Whether you tour alone or with a group of friends, it is a great opportunity to meet the gardener, gather ideas, exchange gardening secrets, and get inspired. Many of the garden tours are sponsored by garden clubs, libraries, beautification groups and other similar organizations. The proceeds from the event usually support a worthy cause in the community. You’ll find local garden tours promoted online, in local publications, garden centers, botanical gardens and other similar venues.

The Garden Conservancy’s Open Days program is a one-of-a-kind private garden tour. Participating gardens are located around the country in small and large lots that feature a variety of styles, plants and features. All you need is a little time and a ticket to participate in the self-guided garden tours. A listing of the Open Days gardens, their location and dates for each garden is listed on their website.

Visit your local or nearby public botanic gardens and arboreta. They feature plants in gardens and natural settings with similar growing conditions to nearby home gardens. They often feature new and unique varieties, traditional favorites and garden designs, providing inspiration to all who visit.

All-America Selections’ (AAS) Display Gardens are another valuable resource for gardeners. AAS is a non-profit organization that trials and evaluates plants for outstanding qualities suitable for the home garden. They have been helping gardeners grow award-winning flowers and vegetables since 1932.

New never-before-sold plant varieties bred for home gardens are planted, observed and evaluated at various trial gardens throughout North America. Trial gardens are located at public gardens, seed companies, or universities. The potential plant introduction is observed and its performance evaluated throughout the growing season. Volunteer judges rate the plants on improvements in characteristics such as aesthetics, performance and productivity as well as pest and disease tolerance. A plant must have significantly improved qualities to be considered for an AAS award.

Display gardens feature the newest AAS winners in a well-maintained setting where you can view the winners. There are nearly 200 display gardens in the United States and Canada located in public botanical gardens and arboreta, municipality gardens, garden retailers, university gardens and more. Some locations also offer related educational opportunities, open houses or field days during the growing season.

Take some time to enjoy and evaluate your gardens. Then set aside some time

JEAN McNALLY
WOODSTOCK

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Why are sports team names a presidential priority?

To the Editor:

President Donald Trump is threatening to block a new stadium deal for Washington's NFL team unless it restores the name "Redskins." He's also demanding Cleveland's MLB team bring back its former name "Indians."

"Our great Indian people, in massive numbers, want this to happen. Their heritage and prestige is systematically being taken away from them," Trump says.

According to studies, Native Americans, a.k.a. Indigenous Peoples, find the use of their names and imagery by sports teams, detrimental to their identity and culture as well as offensive and derogatory, as it perpetuates harmful stereotypes and reinforces oppression. "Academic studies undertaken to study the psychosocial effects of these mascots demonstrate either direct negative effects on Native Americans or that these mascots activate, reflect, and/or reinforce stereotyping and prejudice among non-Native persons." (Race, Ethnicity and Education Journal)

The historical facts are that the U.S. government's treatment of Native Americans has been brutal: forced removals, broken treaties, murderous conflict bordering on genocide and policies that refuse to respect basic human rights. Indigenous Peoples have lost 99% of their ancestral land in the United States.

The Native American population in the U.S. is estimated to be between 3.1 million and 8.7 million, with around 20 percent living in designated American Indian areas or Alaska Native villages. If Trump truly wants to protect "their heritage and prestige," perhaps the focus should be on justice, equality, and respect for Native American rights. Native Americans want and have been

advocating for policies that focus on improving access to resources, health-care, education, and economic opportunities.

So, why is Trump threatening to block deals of sports teams? And is this really a Presidential priority?

Maybe it's to distract from the fact that Trump's name is all over the Epstein files where underage girls were sex trafficked to the rich and powerful elite. Or a likely presidential pardon that is said to be in the works for Ghislaine Maxwell, an Epstein co-conspirator. There are more than 1,000 sex trafficked victims according to federal investigators. Fox News. These victims deserve justice, but it looks like Trump is going to block them from getting it.

Or perhaps it's to distract us from the Modern Worker Empowerment Act (H.R. 1319), a Republican-backed bill that, if passed, "narrows the definition of 'employee,' which would allow corporations to reclassify millions of employees as independent contractors, stripping away wage protections, unemployment insurance, collective bargaining rights, and job security, all under the guise of 'flexibility.'"

We have a federal government pushing policies that will hurt working Americans and strip justice from victims, and yet here we are, caught in a sideshow talking about team names.

Want to know what your government is really doing? Go to Congress.gov. Every bill, every vote, every proposed law is there. You can also read the Executive Orders on the White House Web site. These sites are public. Questions to think about: What are our government's priorities and what are Americans paying attention to?

LISA ARENDS
BROOKLYN

The real threat to our constitution is sitting in the White House

To the Editor:

Fake News" — Donald Trump's label for anything negative or unflattering about him or his policies. A little ironic coming from someone who spends so much time lying and distorting the truth. Trump can't handle criticism or being made fun of, so he's trying to silence his detractors by attempting to control the press and entertainment media. That's always the first step with authoritarian regimes; it only gets worse from there.

As Americans, we enjoy the freedom to voice our opinions without fear of retribution. But history shows us that nothing should be taken for granted. The U.S. wouldn't be the first democracy to be dismantled by a thin-skinned egomaniac. We need to look beyond the usual "Republican vs Democrat" nonsense to recognize that the greatest threat to our constitutional rights is sitting in the White House.

TODD PATRIE
POMFRET CENTER

Earth – The man who sold the world

To the Editor:

Apologies to David Bowie for borrowing his song title.

This marks the 20th article in my "Earth" series for the Villager, and I have to admit—it's been the hardest one to write. For those of us who follow the science of what keeps our planet alive under ballooning environmental stress, it now feels as though we've been caught in the gravitational pull of a Black Hole—one we fear we may not escape.

For over half a century, climate scientists have sounded the alarm, pleading with humanity to change course before tipping points are reached. Progress has been slow but real momentum was building—until now. In just six months, Trump-47 has not only reversed that course, but floored the throttle, and we are all along for the ride.

Where to even begin? The Trump administration's environmental policies are an all-out assault not only on science and the human ingenuity it represents, but on the foundations of planetary life itself. These policies serve one master: short-term profit—particularly for the fossil fuel industry. According to The Guardian, that industry gave Trump and the GOP nearly half a billion dollars during his last campaign. And for that, he sold them the world.

Climate science, with its roots stretching back 250 years, is one of humanity's greatest intellectual achievements. Long before AI and supercomputers, scientists the world over were gathering data and building the foundations of what would become modern climate science. By the late 1950s, a clear scientific understanding was coming into focus. By the 1970s, scientists from around the world began to raise the alarm and solutions were displayed by the Carter administration. In 1988, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was formed to organize global scientific research on climate change. By 2007, the IPCC's 4th assessment report concluded that climate change was "unequivocal" and that "there is a more than 90 percent chance it is caused by human emission of greenhouse gases." By 2023, the IPCC 6th assessment report concluded that to limit global temperature increases to 1.5 Celsius, a level above which our world begins to drastically fall apart, requires emissions to peak by 2025 and be cut in half by 2030. The Biden Administration's Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 sought to meet these goals. And, yet here we are—lead by Donald Trump, who chooses ignorance over wisdom, short term profit over long term sustainability, excess and greed over restraint, responsibility.

Why? Why does Trump and the GOP continue to ignore the overwhelming evidence? Well, we all must admit that we embraced the likes of Amazon and Facebook almost overnight—platforms that quickly made their founders the second and third richest people on Earth. Humanity seems wired for instant gratification and material excess, not restraint or long-term thinking. Continuing to play that hand, prioritizing our tee times and myopic focus on wealth building, we disregard the warnings, avert our eyes to the planetary plunder and sacrifice our children's livable world.

As if to prove my point, as I write, Trump is in Scotland visiting one of his golf courses, just as he was visiting his New Jersey golf courses when Texas flooded on July 4 and 120 Americans died from a climate change driven weather event.

Below is a partial list of the environmental destruction Trump 47 has just set in motion:

Withdrew the U.S. from the Paris Climate Accord—again—joining a disgusting group that includes only Iran, Syria, and Russia. For real—this is the group of nations Trump sees as the best fit for America!

Dismantled the Inflation Reduction Act, derailing the transition to clean energy that was well underway in the U.S., thus sending billions in green investment to China and the EU while continuing billions in subsidies to fossil fuels, a mature, highly profitable industry that does not need them.

Gutted essential federal agencies that serve to protect the citizens, businesses, economy and security of our country, as follows:

National Park Service: Fired thousands of park rangers who average a meager salary of \$36,000 a year, while handing tax breaks to billionaires.

Bureau of Land Management: Opened national monuments and public lands to mining and drilling, privatizing profits into the hands of his donors for the sale of the "public" resources they extract.

EPA: Its mission so distorted under Trump, it might as well be renamed the PPA (Petroleum Protection Agency). In keeping with that, it just announced the closure of its scientific research arm.

NOAA & National Weather Service: Gutted, thus weakening storm forecasting and climate data collection to the great detriment of the health and safety of all Americans, U.S. businesses and national security.

FEMA: Gutted, just as natural disasters become more frequent and intense, limiting FEMA's capacity to respond to weather emergencies like the Texas floods, Florida hurricanes and western wildfires.

NASA: Undermined and gutted its Earth science division, which helps all humanity understand and prepare for climate change.

Yes, science itself is under attack—mocked, dismissed, sidelined. Imagine that: in a nation founded on Enlightenment ideals, the legacies of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Edison, Jonas Salk, and Albert Einstein are being sacrificed on the altar of short-term profit and bigger yachts for the billionaires. The rest of the world (except for Iran, Syria and Russia) now prepares for the inevitable green energy future and recruits America's best and brightest—our scientists, engineers, and clean-tech innovators—to build that future for themselves without us.

So here we are, faced with the greatest crisis humanity has ever known, and the world's most powerful nation has just stuck its head in the sand! Trump's second term doesn't just undo decades of environmental progress; it weaponizes ignorance and greed against the Earth and its living systems that support humanity and the modern world we depend upon. But this isn't our destiny. It's a choice. And choices can be changed.

We need to remember that science is not the enemy; it's our compass out of the complex mess we've made of our living world. The solutions exist. The knowledge exists. What remains missing is wisdom and willpower. That must come from us—from voters, consumers, communities, and yes, even the reluctant politicians who still have time to rediscover their spines.

It's not too late to step away from the black hole. But we are dangerously close to the event horizon, from which there is no return. If we want a future worth living in—for ourselves, for our children—we need to start acting like it. Now.

KEN WOLSLEGEL
WOODSTOCK

GARDENING

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to visit local gardens for ideas and inspiration.

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



Melinda Myers

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Stocks conquer a wall of worries

The stock market has climbed a wall of worry this year, ascending to new heights despite a long list of scary news headlines. Concerns about tariffs, wars, deficits, stock valuations and Chinese tech competition sent stocks swooning at various points this year. But earnings continued to improve, supporting the S&P 500's 5.5 percent gain year-to-date through June 30.

Let's take stock of the worries that the market has managed to move past as it managed to hit record levels recently. Trump's tariffs

One of the largest concerns investors have had this year are the tariffs President Trump has threatened to impose on foreign countries. Historically, tariffs have led to inflation and there's always the possibility that foreign countries will retaliate with their own tariffs on US exports. Tariffs might also lead some exporters to ship their goods to other countries with lower tariffs, leaving US shelves empty. So far, none of these concerns have come to pass.



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Inflation has remained well behaved and store shelves are still stocked. Perhaps most importantly, President Trump and his team have started to strike trade deals with major exporters, like China and Vietnam. That said, there are many more countries that have not agreed to a trade deal and the market remains on edge, selling off when trade deals don't come fast enough for investors' liking.

Wars break out
This has not been a very peaceful time in the world with Israel fighting Gaza and Iran, the US bombing Iran's nuclear facilities and the war between Ukraine and Russia in its third year. There is always the fear that these regional conflicts will spread, pulling in Russia or China which

would then require greater US involvement. But so far, the wars have remained contained between individual players.

Growing US deficits
President Trump recently signed his Big Beautiful Bill into law. The legislation increases federal government spending by more than \$3 trillion over 10 years by some estimates. It extends the tax cuts from his first administration, gives newborns \$1,000 to invest for their future, increases spending on defense and border security and boosts the deduction on state and local taxes from \$10,000 to \$40,000. The law eliminates most taxes on tips and overtime and gives seniors a tax break.

There were some spending cuts on clean energy projects, Medicaid, and food stamps. But overall, the new law will sharply increase the federal deficit, forcing the US government to sell many more Treasury bonds. So far, the bond market is taking the ballooning deficit in stride. But this potential problem

remains outstanding.

Lofty valuations
Worries are easier to overlook when the market's valuation is low. But that wasn't the case earlier this year, when the S&P 500's forward P/E bounced around 22. During the spring stock market downdraft, forward multiples collapsed to roughly 18, but they've quickly rebounded back to the 22 area. It's a situation to watch.

DeepSeek threatens US tech
The introduction of China's DeepSeek AI program caused a sharp correction in US technology stocks earlier this year. China's AI competitor reportedly uses much less electricity and was developed more quickly and inexpensively than popular US AI offerings. The stocks of US companies in AI-related areas, including chip designers, cloud providers and electricity generators, all fell sharply on the risk that China would dominate the AI trade and cause prices to tumble. Those fears have since dissipated, as investors realized

that developed countries will likely shun Chinese AI offering for fear that it will offer censored content and give the Chinese government access to users' computers and systems. After falling sharply, US technology shares came roaring back and are once again leading the market higher.

An eye on earnings
At the end of the day, the stock market can absorb a lot of bad news and continue to forge ahead as long as earnings are improving. So far, that's the case. Companies in the S&P 500 are expected to grow their earnings by 9 percent this year and 14 percent in 2026, according to Wall Street analysts' consensus estimates.

The stock market will always find something to worry about, but investors should also consider positive developments that might spur stocks to rise. A strategic plan, developed in conjunction with a WHZ Strategic Wealth Advisor, can help you evaluate the risks and opportunities in the markets. To discuss our

"Plan Well. Invest Well. Live Well.™" process contact us for a complimentary consultation at whzwealth.com or call (860) 928-2341.

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Summer reads

Indoor & Outdoor Yard Sale. Killingly Grange #112, corner of Dog Hill Road and Route 101. Open to the Public. Saturday, August 2 & Sunday, Aug. 3 from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Rain or shine. Table rent \$20 for the weekend. Refreshments available. Contact Terry about a table at tmbartonkillinglygrange@gmailcom or call 860-884-1813. Limited free school supplies available.

Putnam Library & Aspinock Historical Society: Wednesday, Aug. 20, 6-7 p.m. Author Talk and Book signing. Patricia Suprenant, "Behind the Scarlett Letter." "Based on a True Story. Inspired by the 1820 trial of Rev. Ammi Rogers, the novel unearths a scandal that not only shaped early American views on morality and justice, but also influenced the 19th century 'reverend rake' genre—including Nathaniel Hawthorne's the Scarlett Letter. This remarkable case also laid the groundwork for Roe vs. Wade. Patricia will share insights from her extensive research, explore the craft of historical fiction,, and introduce the real-life Eastern Connecticut figures behind the story."

Thank you to

the woman who called the Killingly Historical Center about my article on remembering businesses on the lower end of Main Street in Danielson. She pointed out that I had forgotten to include ZIP'S. Killingly Historical Society President Bernie Mitchell and Archivist Lynn LaBerge explained that ZIP'S Curtaintown Diner (also called ZIP'S Dining Car) was near the junction of Main and Maple Streets on the little piece of land before the old bridge to Brooklyn. There were numerous entries in the Killingly Business Encyclopedia by Natalie Coolidge. Owner Henry C. "Zip Zehrer was on pins and needles as he waited for his 101-ton baby to arrive in September, 1946. The September 26th Windham County Transcript described the occasion. "The diner, in two sections on separate trailers, with complete police escort, made its way through town at 9:48 o'clock Saturday morning. With all cars removed from one side of Main Street, the 32'6" wide structures squeezed through very nicely, attracting hundreds of spectators. 'It is one of the largest and most completely modernized din-



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WEAVER

ers ever built. The Jerry O'Mahoney Company of Elizabeth, New Jersey is responsible...(It) has a seating capacity of 61... Mr. Zehrer is doing his utmost to have the place sufficiently complete to be ready to serve at least coffee, sandwiches and doughnuts to the big crowd expected in Danielson for the Elks' parade next Sunday. See Images of America Killingly by Natalie L. Coolidge and Robert A. Spencer (p.59) for a photo. That photo also shows ZIP'S Atlantic Service Station adjacent to the diner. Pauline Zehrer and Henry owned both businesses. According to Images of America Killingly, "When the traffic circle for Routes 6 and 12 was built, the diner was moved to the city of New London, across from the Gold Star Bridge" and the present one was located in Dayville at the junction of Routes 101 and 12. Bernie commented that it was a wonder all the gas stations in the Danielson

area in the early 1950's were able to support themselves. In addition to ZIP'S the 1954 Danielson Directory listed the Gulf Oil Station at 13 Main and Jack's Texaco Service at 25 Main (now the oil change). The Killingly Business Encyclopedia noted Jack's grand opening in the August 3, 1950 Windham County Transcript. "The New white and green modernistic cinder block building is located on the old Goldwater property on Main Street and is managed by Lionel Jack Bouley,a life-long resident of Killingly...The garage mechanic is Ernest Deloge." Then there was Langlois Atlantic Service Station at 45 Franklin St., Ray's Esso Service Station at 34 Furnace Street (photo p. 64 Images of America Killingly Revisited); Danielson Oil Company, Inc. (Shell) at Commerce Square (photo p. 62, Images of America Killingly Revisited) Jerry's Service Station at 2 Mechanic Street, Wells Mobil Service at 129 Main (where the small park is adjacent to the Killingly Town Hall), Ingraham's Service Center at 221 North Main and Wayside Dairy Bar & Filling Station on North Main. Bernie didn't recall the Dairy Bar so I again checked the Business Encyclopedia. Eric V. Johnson, owner, was also listed as manufacturing and distributing Johnson's Ice Cream which was later associated with H.P. Hood & Sons. (WCT 11/29/1951). How many of these do you remember?

I am a voracious reader, and have been using these hot, summer afternoons to delve into a variety of fiction and history books. Some of you might find them interesting.

What do you know about the Dutch settlement of Manhattan and how it became English? Russell Shorto's "Taking Manhattan" was most

enlightening. I learned almost nothing about the Dutch when I was growing up and had never heard of the Anglo-Dutch Wars between England and the Dutch. Apparently in the 1600's with the gains from the East and West India Companies, economically the Dutch were far ahead of their neighbors across the Channel. The English were jealous! Sad to say, slavery was becoming a profitable trade and the Dutch had a number of "slave" ports along the African coast. Shorto noted in the 1660's "the (latest) War quickly escalated into a transatlantic slugfest, ranging from western Africa to the Caribbean, a furious fight for control of slaving posts and for the dream of future wealth—involving sugar, tobacco, cotton and salt—that would rely more than ever before on the labor of captive Africans" (p.279). Manhattan (as New York was called before the English takeover) had a diverse make-up of residents, religions, occupations, and connections and was a hub of lucrative trade so, of course, England wanted that too. Read the book yourself and enjoy!

The DAR book club at Killingly Public Library recently read "First Ladies of the Republic: Martha Washington, Abigail Adams, Dolley Madison and the Creation of an Iconic American Role" by Jeanne E. Abrams. The discussion was open to the public so I joined them—and learned quite a lot. Here were yet more female trailblazers! The Iconic role mentioned in the book's title was that of First Lady, which they had to slowly define. These wives had to contend with changing capitals—New York, Philadelphia, and finally Washington, D.C. — each with its own social environment., or lack thereof. How would the wife of the President be addressed? How would she dress? How would she socialize?

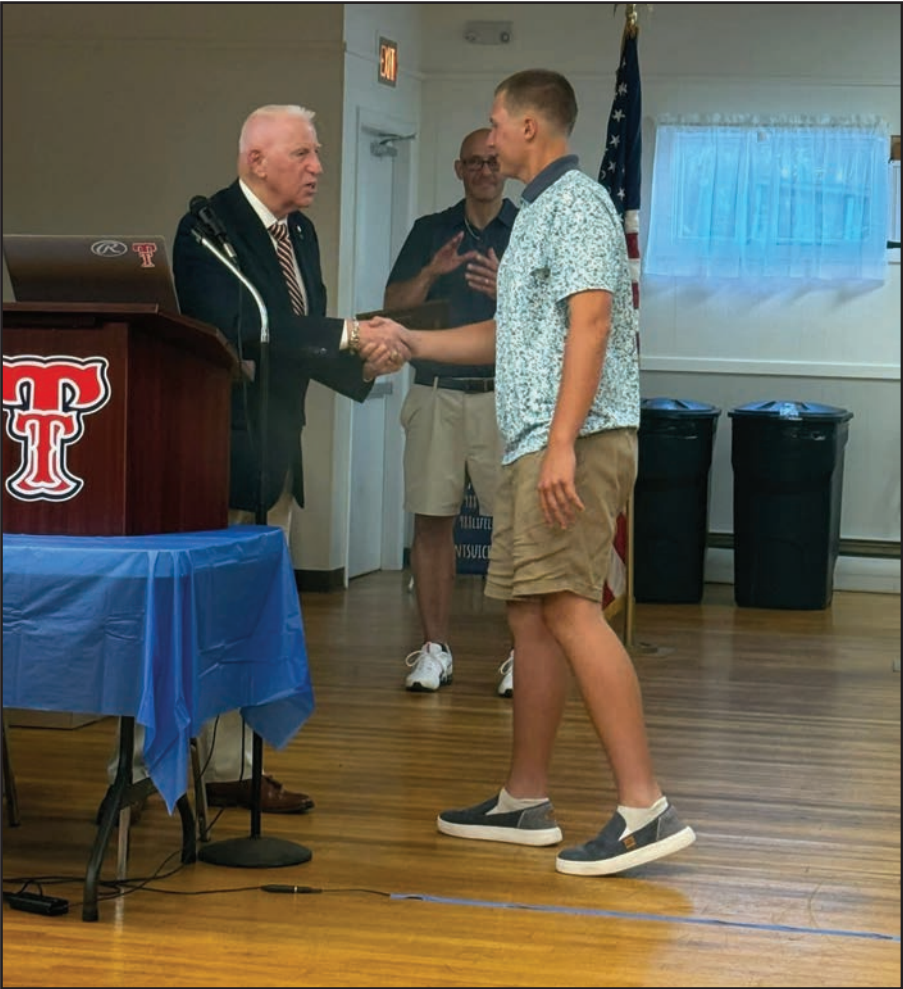
Heaven forbid that she should look or act like the British Royalty! Each woman brought her background, experience, and personality to the role as it evolved. Wealthy Martha Washington had come from a Southern background full of protocol and welcoming hospitality. This formality would be carried over into her weekly "drawing room" where she sat on a dais, and guests were presented to her. Abigail Adams, the daughter of a Massachusetts Congregationalist minister continued to entertain but on a much less lavish scale. She had been to both Paris and London when John served as a foreign minister so had seen those courts first-hand. She was the financial manager of their properties in Massachusetts; Abigail abhorred debt and was not about to spend, spend, spend because John was President. At one point during his term as President, Abigail went home to Massachusetts so John could live in a boarding house which was certainly much cheaper than trying to run the President's house, which had only six rooms, and was unfinished. Dolley Madison, wife of James Madison, had occasionally served as hostess for the widower President Thomas Jefferson. However, when her husband became president, she came into her own. Her vivacious personality drew throngs to her drawing rooms. She delighted in the newer fashions and frequently sent to friends in France asking them to purchase clothing and turbans for her. She was a hit as First Lady long after her husband left office. I thoroughly enjoyed the book and learned so much that I am sure with America's 250 upon us, I will pick it up again and again. Give it a try. You'll find it most interesting!

Margaret M. Weaver Killingly Municipal Historian, July 2025. Special thanks to the woman who called about ZIP's, Bernie Mitchell and Lynn LaBerge for sharing memories. For additional information email me at margaret-mweaver@gmail.com or visit the Killingly Historical Center at 196 Main St., Danielson, Wednesday or Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. or call 860-779-7250. Like us at Facebook www.facebook.com/killinglyhistoricalsociety.

Quiet Corner Al-Anon group meets Wednesdays

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

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



Courtesy

Putnam High School graduate and TriTown American Legion standout Evan Mailloux (right) is congratulated by Ronald P. Coderre for being selected the recipient of the Ronald and Donna Coderre Scholarship. Mailloux will be attending Porter & Chester Institute in Worcester, Mass.

CELEBRATION
continued from page A1

tournament and continuing work to end abortion and assisted suicide and to otherwise support the “Culture of Life.”

Led by Grand Knight Xeller, he and the council’s other elected officers run Cargill Council. The organization does its own

fundraising, using the net proceeds to pay for its programs.

The Knights of Columbus is the world’s largest Catholic lay organization, a fraternal benefit society made up of Catholic men and their families. It was founded in New Haven, Connecticut, on March 29, 1882, by a parish priest, Father Michael

J. McGivney. Looking at the problems being suffered by Catholics in and around New Haven in the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century, he founded the society so that members could support each other religiously, morally, socially and financially.

Since then, the organization has grown to

over two million members and their families in almost 17,000 active, local councils in fifteen countries worldwide, including the United States, Canada, Mexico and the Philippines, among others. Since 2005, the Knights of Columbus have expanded into Poland, Cuba, Ukraine, Lithuania and South Korea.

Council 64 and the world’s other K of C councils provide members and their families with volunteer opportunities in service to the Catholic Church, their communities, families and young people. Worldwide in 2024, the Knights of Columbus donated more than 47 million volunteer hours and more than 190

million dollars to charity.

Father McGivney, a Waterbury, Connecticut, native who died in 1890, was declared as blessed by the Roman Catholic Church in 2020. If he is canonized as a saint, McGivney would become Connecticut’s first Catholic saint and the first American parish priest to be so honored.

TRAFFIC
continued from page A1

utilizing bus transportation. Town Council Chair Jason Anderson said the issue is real in town as he has been contacted with concerns about the school traffic. Examples of students not getting picked up and inconsistencies of the bus drivers have left officials seeking answers to create a better system for everyone involved.

For his part, Conroy, who also serves as Killingly’s Public Safety Administrator, said he knows firsthand after working with the schools that the bus fleet is understaffed and it’s not uncommon for drivers to take on multiple routes. Parent transportation has also become more popular in recent years especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic which has created increased traffic at the schools as a result.

BASEBALL
continued from page A1

The recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Jax Carita. The invocation was given by Christie Akana, and opening remarks were made by Michael Merrill, the Chairman of the Tri-Town American Legion Baseball Executive Committee. In his remarks Merrill thanked the team’s sponsors including the American Legion Posts from Thompson, Putnam, and Woodstock. He also thanked sponsors including Linemaster Switch, the O’Brien Group, The Merrill Family, the Mayhew Family, the Carita Family, Ron & Donna Coderre, the Thompson Lions Club,

the Putnam Rotary Club, the Putnam Lodge of Elks, ERW Precision Sheet Metal Inc, Dan & Kathy Durand, John Sherman, and Everett & Pat Shepard.

After a roast beef dinner, Merrill introduced the guest speaker – Mr Sean Trindall, the coach of the Framingham State University Baseball Team from Framingham MA. Coach Trindall offered sage advice to the young men from the Tri-Town Team who aspire to play collegiate baseball. Afterwards the coaches made some remarks – including the 19U team coach Jason Akana, and assistant coaches Brandon Carita and John Merrill, as well as the 17U team coach Maxwell Racicot and assitant

coaches Ken Magee and Ben Kipp.

The awards were then presented. The Louis Francis Bates Memorial Award went to Benjamin Gustafson. The Joe Lindley Memorial Award went to Noah Kipp. The Stan Lesniewski Award went to Brady Devlin & Jacob Turner. The Executive Committee Award went to Robbie Dion. The Rene “Doc” Desaulniers Award went to Nicholas Devlin. The Coach Tom Auclair Award went to Lucas Carita. The Everett G. Shepard Community Service Award went to Evan Mailloux, and the Ronald & Donna Coderre Scholar/Athlete scholarship went to Evan Mailloux.

According to Michael

Rocchetti, Putnam’s American Legion Post Commander, “The American Legion Baseball program was established in 1925 – so this years marks its 100th year. It’s a great program and baseball is such a great sport. The lessons these young men learn playing baseball, such as commitment, dedication, teamwork, discipline, diligence, sportsmanship & fair play, and the importance of developing your skills, will serve them well in almost any other future endeavor. We are proud of the players and we are especially proud of our coaches. They put a lot of time and effort into this. They are making a big difference in the lives of these young men.”

Killingly High School Class of 1970 Alumni awards scholarship

STERLING — This year’s recipient of the Killingly High School Class of 1970 Alumni Scholarship is Ivan Tang of Sterling.

Tang graduated in the top 10 percent of his class, and is a member of the National Honor Society. He was very actively involved throughout high school, including participation in FFA, Model UN, Robotics, and Student Council. Outside of school, Tang volunteered for Sterling’s Family Fun Day, helped set up the town flea market and tutored other students.

When Covid caused the cancellation of the class 50th reunion five years ago, they decided to commemorate the anniversary by starting the Killingly High School Class of 1970 Alumni Scholarship. Since then, donations from alumni have made it possible to give a \$2,000 scholarship yearly to graduates heading to college who show a willingness to help those around them and improve their communities, as well as advancing their own education.

Tang said his work outside of school has been educational also.

“At first, I wanted to help prepare their events, lending a hand wherever needed. However, I didn’t realize I was about to grow alongside the organizations I supported,” he said.

Reflecting the new KHS “Trailblazer” slogan, Tang will be a first generation college student, and is heading to Texas A&M this fall to study chemical engineering.

The Scholarship Fund is administered by the non-profit Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut. Please note, no reunion funds are involved. If you should like to make a tax deductible contribution to help continue and expand the KHS Class of 1970 Alumni Scholarship, that can be done by contacting the Foundation at www.cfect.org.

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Sometimes there comes a moment when you realize life isn’t just happening to you. You’re interpreting it and reacting to it. You’ve been living inside a story your past wrote for you—before you knew you were the one telling it.

That’s not your fault. It’s your default. But the moment you see it—you can change everything.

Modern psychology has shown us that the brain is less a camera and more a courtroom—building stories, assigning blame, rewriting memory, all in service of keeping your ego comfortable or your fear pacified.

Psychologists like Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky spent decades studying how we form judgments, and their research uncovered a gallery of mental shortcuts—cognitive biases, emotional filters, and distorted beliefs that make us feel right, even when we’re not. But often, what feels true is just what feels familiar.

And once you begin to see the stories you’re telling yourself, something else becomes clear: there are parts of your life you won’t even narrate.

Things you won’t face. Conversations you won’t have. Feelings you won’t feel. You tell yourself it’s not the right time, that it’s not a big deal, that you’ll deal with it later.

But in truth—what you avoid ends up shaping you more than what you confront.

Avoidance feels like relief. At first. You push something away—pain, responsibility, vulnerability—and for a moment, your body thanks you. The pressure drops. But behind that false peace, something dangerous grows. Each time you dodge discomfort, you quietly teach your nervous system that the discomfort was too much—that the fear must be obeyed.

Psychological studies on exposure therapy conducted by Joseph Wolpe and later David Barlow show again and again: the only way to reduce fear is to face it. The only way to weaken shame is to bring it into the light.

Healing doesn’t come from feeling safe all the time. Success doesn’t come from playing small. Growth begins when you learn to walk toward what makes you uncomfortable—on purpose.

And what we avoid doesn’t just shape our behavior—it quietly shapes who we become. Because here’s the deeper truth: you are not who you think you are. You are who you practice being.

Identity isn’t fixed. It’s not a core you discover—it’s a pattern you reinforce. You are a feedback loop of habits, emotional reactions, routines, roles, and stories you tell yourself. What you repeat becomes familiar. What becomes familiar becomes comfortable. And what becomes comfortable becomes “me.”

Psychologists and behavioral scientists have long known that we don’t rise to our highest beliefs—we fall to our most repeated actions. You may wish to be bold, steady, at peace—but wishing doesn’t shape you. Repetition does.

The research on neuroplasticity, from pioneers like Donald Hebb and Carol Dweck, confirms: your brain reshapes itself based on what you do consistently, not what you hope is true.

So if you want to change your life, stop asking, “Who am I?” Start asking, “What do I repeat?” The real “you” isn’t found in your reflec-

tion. It’s built in your rituals.

Even the strongest habits can fall apart when emotions hit. You might know what to do—but then emotion clouds your thinking. Emotions don’t care how much you’ve practiced—they test whether you can stay present when it counts.

To see yourself clearly—not as a fixed identity, but as a living pattern. Not as a passenger, but as the narrator holding the script. Yes, your brain plays tricks. Yes, fear wants the wheel. But you are not at the mercy of old wiring. You are the architect of what comes next.

Take the pause. Challenge the thought. Face the thing. Move, even when you tremble. Speak the better story, even if your voice shakes at first.

You don’t need to be perfect. You need to be present. You don’t need to know who you are. You need to start becoming who you were meant to be—on purpose.

Life isn’t asking you to get it all right. It’s asking you to participate, to show up, to choose the next true step. And repeat it, until it becomes you.



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L'Apres Midi club celebrates 125th anniversary

REGION — In September 2024, L'Apres Midi officially celebrated its 125th anniversary. Founded in 1898, the purpose of this women's club has always been charity and sociability. The club is composed of 24 female members residing in northeast Connecticut towns, as well as Dudley and Webster, Mass. There are four divisions of six members within the club and they are titled the Woodstock, Dudley, Quinebaug, and New Boston divisions.

From its inception, the club has raised money for charitable causes such as Day Kimball and Webster hospitals, TEEG, women's shelters, summer camps like the 4H camp and Thanksgiving and Christmas donations of food and gifts. This has been done primarily through the col-



lection of annual dues, bake sales and member auctions.

Each month, one of the divisions hosts the meeting which is held in a members home or other gathering places like churches and meeting rooms. Each meeting begins with tea and coffee and a delicious dessert prepared by the hosting group, as well as the traditional nuts and can-

meeting, and then an informative presentation of some kind.

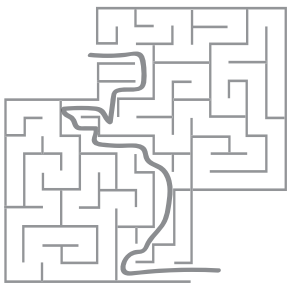
Early on, the members were often young women who were instructed in sewing and cooking and housekeeping. It evolved over the years into a club that consists of mature women gathered to be sociable, learn about topics of interest, including history, and help others via charitable giving.

The 125th anniversary was celebrated on a lovely September day outdoors at the pavilion at Roseland Park in Woodstock, and featured a salad bar luncheon followed by anniversary cake. The presentation that day featured interesting excerpts from meeting minutes from the many decades of the club's existence. A grand time was had by all!



Maze Craze

Find your way through the center of the maze.





HISTORY

2009

The Olympic torch arrives at Parliament Hill and is carried into the House by Barbara Ann Scott.



World FACT:

This beach in the U.S. Virgin Islands was ranked #1 on the list of the "World's 50 Best Beaches."

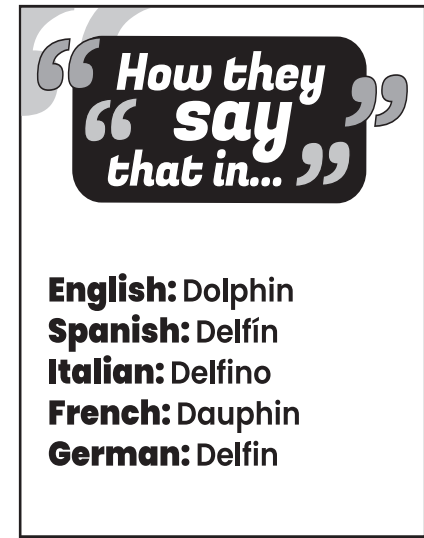
Answer: Trunk Bay



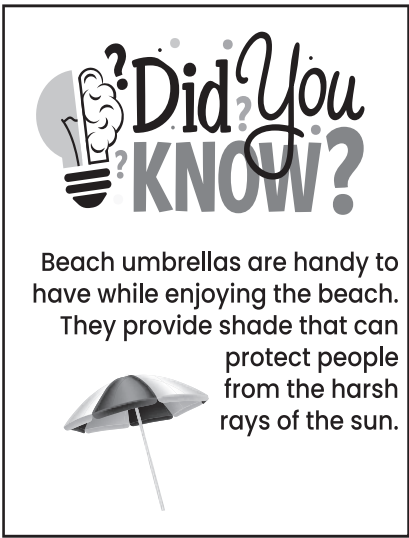
NEW WORD

KELP

large brown algae or seaweeds



English: Dolphin
Spanish: Delfín
Italian: Delfino
French: Dauphin
German: Delfin

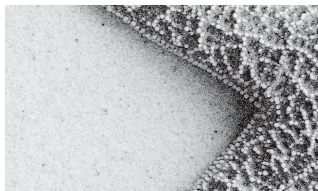


Beach umbrellas are handy to have while enjoying the beach. They provide shade that can protect people from the harsh rays of the sun.





Can you guess what the bigger picture is?



Answer: Starfish

New Al-Anon meeting in Pomfret

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

Al-Anon is a worldwide program for people just like you, who are worried about someone with a drinking problem. This Pomfret group will also welcome folks concerned about someone suffering from drug addiction.

Utilizing the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, the group will discuss the Steps, Concepts, and Traditions as well as offer support for your specific situation. No advice is given; understanding and support in a confidential setting are the largest benefits of membership in the group.

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

Local residents named to Clark University Dean's List

WORCESTER, Mass. — The following local residents were named to Clark University's Spring 2025 Dean's List:

Katie A. Ben of Brooklyn was named to first honors. Ricky Jessurun, of Pomfret Center was named to first honors. Collin D. Hamilton, of Pomfret Center, was named to first honors. Clayton Warren Singleton, of Eastford, was named to first honors. Sarah T. Lucas, of Woodstock, was named to second honors.

Students must have a GPA of 3.8 or above for first honors or a GPA between 3.50 and 3.79 for second honors.

Founded in 1887, Clark University is a liberal arts-based research university that prepares its students to meet tomorrow's most daunting challenges and embrace its greatest opportunities. Through 33 undergraduate majors, more than 30 advanced degree programs, and nationally recognized community partnerships, Clark fuses rigorous scholarship with authentic world and workplace experiences that empower our students to pursue lives and careers of meaning and consequence.

Concert to benefit Horns for Kids

POMFRET — Join the East Woodstock Cornet Band Friday, Aug. 22 for a concert benefitting Horns for Kids at Pomfret School's Clark Memorial Chapel beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Horns for Kids is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that donates refurbished musical instruments to Connecticut schools. Monetary donations for the organization will be gratefully accepted at the door.

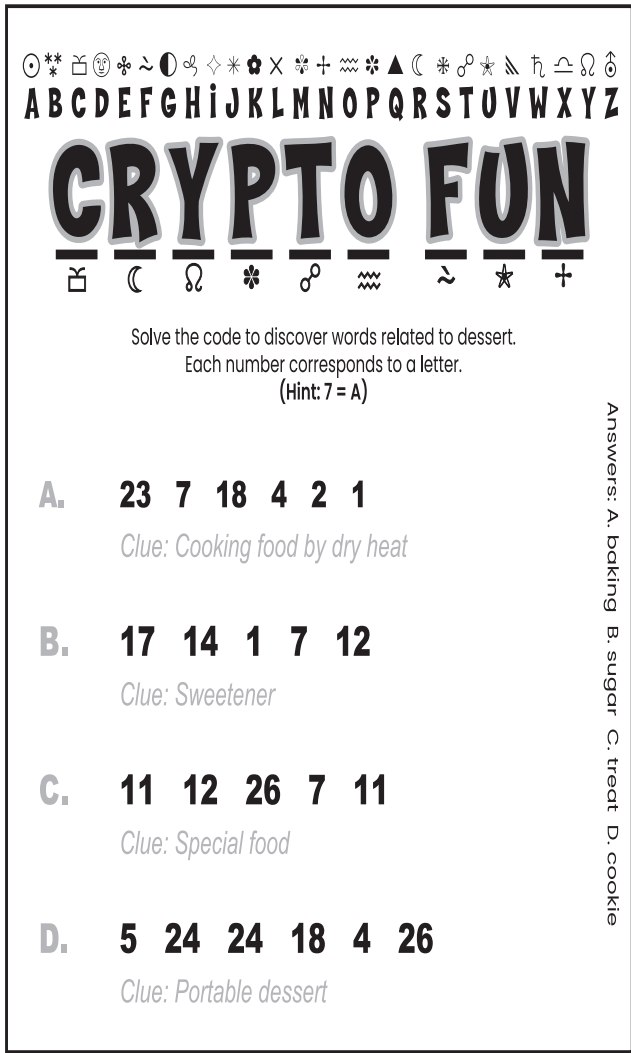
Putnam Elks hosting 19th Annual Cruisin' For Chris Poker Run

PUTNAM — The 19th Annual Cruisin' For Chris Poker Run will be held on Aug. 16, with sign in at 10 a.m. and KSU at 11 a.m., festivities start at 1 p.m. Tickets, priced at \$25 per person, Include chicken dinner. There will be raffles, 50/50 face painting fun for the whole family.

If you don't have a bike, you can still come out to support a great cause.

Location: Elks Club, Edmond Street, Putnam. Tickets available at the door.

For Advertising Information
Call 860-928-1818 Ext. 326
email: mikaela@villagernewspapers.com



Solve the code to discover words related to dessert. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 7 = A)

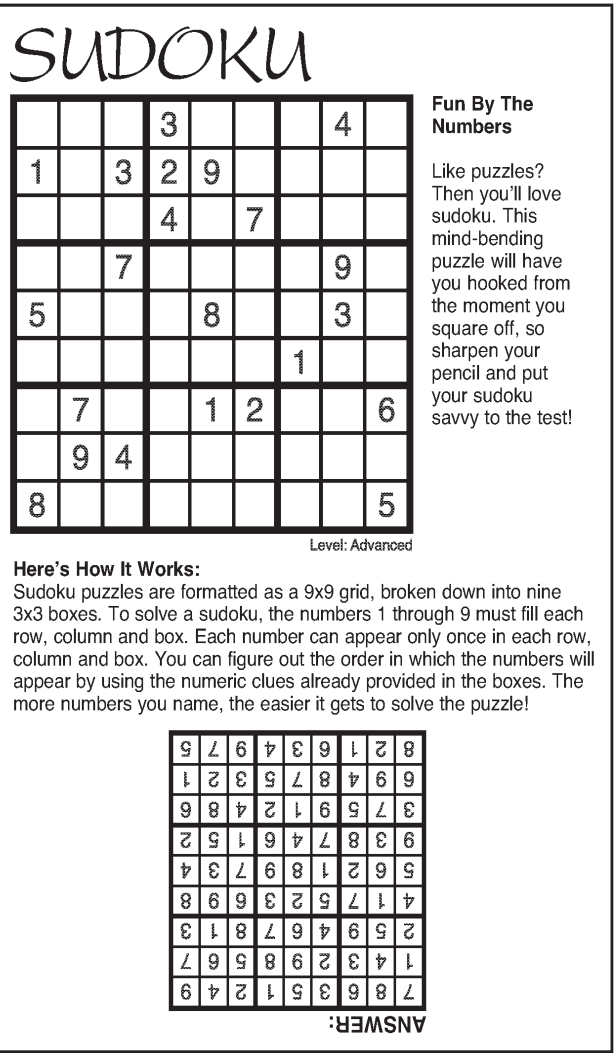
A. 23 7 18 4 2 1
Clue: Cooking food by dry heat

B. 17 14 1 7 12
Clue: Sweetener

C. 11 12 26 7 11
Clue: Special food

D. 5 24 24 18 4 26
Clue: Portable dessert

Answers: A. baking B. sugar C. treat D. cookie



SUDOKU

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Level: Advanced

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

ANSWER: 7 8 6 3 1 2 4 5 9

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

The fiduciary is:
Nancy J Jean,
27 August Drive,
Brooklyn, CT 06234
August 1, 2025

