



KILLINGLY VILLAGER

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Paws Cat Shelter hosts annual Holiday Bazaar

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

PUTNAM — Paws Cat Shelter hosted its annual Holiday Bazaar on Saturday, Dec. 6, raising money to fund several programs, most notably their spay and neuter efforts to help protect and control the local cat population.

The event included a room full of vendors at Putnam High School, the first time the event was held at the venue and continued a modern tradition that has spanned the entirety of the 2020s celebrating the holidays while also allowing visitors to play a part in helping local animals. Paws Cat Shelter is a volunteer-led nonprofit in Putnam that houses many cats and works to keep other animals



Jason Bleau

Volunteers help with the raffle which served as a big money maker during the Holiday Bazaar.

housed and lead initiatives to better control local animal populations.

Paws volunteer and Holiday Bazaar coordina-

tor Karen Crosby said the funds from the event help with medical care for animals in the shelter, including special food and med-

ication, but the primary goal is to use the money to support ongoing spay and neuter efforts in the new year. While Paws does ben-

efit greatly from physical donations and donated time and services, Crosby said that events like the Bazaar are still essential to helping

keep their programs afloat.

“We’re a non-profit. Everybody is a volunteer, so this is one of the biggest ways we get our money to help as many people and animals in the community as we can. We have a lot of vets that are stepping up to help us with a lot of big spay and neuter clinics in the new year. Events like this are how we’re able to keep things happen,” Crosby said.

Over the past year especially, Paws has put a major focus on spay and neuter programs which not only help control the cat population but also help with the health and safety of the kittens. The shelter itself has limited space, and an

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Grandelski elected Killingly Town Council Chair

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

KILLINGLY — The Killingly Town Council officially has new leadership in place following the 2025 municipal election that saw Democrats take control of the town’s leading elected body.

The Council held its organizational meeting on Dec. 1, where Democrat Ed Grandelski was named the new chair, succeeding Republican Jason Anderson who lost his reelection campaign in November. David Griffiths was subsequently elected Vice Chair succeeding Tammy Wakefield who was previously elected as a Republican but has since change to unaffiliated and was also not reelected after an unsuccessful write-in campaign.

Grandelski has a long tenure with the Council representing District 2, and at one point serving as the Council’s lone Democrat following the GOP’s dom-

inance in the 2019 election. Over the years, Democrats have gained momentum and took control of the Council during this year’s election in November. His longstanding service to the Council was rewarded with his election as Council Chair.

In his Chairman Address, Grandelski spoke about several issues facing the town in the coming years, including many lingering projects that have yet to be resolved. The towns sewer system remains the biggest issue as a moratorium continues to prevent new hookups due to capacity limitations.

“That’s affecting just about everything,” said Grandelski. “We can’t have any economic growth, we can’t have outside entities coming in; most developers for new industrial and commercial projects need to be connected to the town sewer. If they can’t, they won’t even consider Killingly as a site. Given the timeframe for the sewer

scenario that we have now, five years to who know how long, that’s a tough hit.”

Grandelski also noted the ongoing Killingly Memorial School and Community Center projects as ongoing priorities for the new Council as well as several environmental issues including town mills and the recently covered Old Killingly Pond Dam, and PFAS contaminations in private wells in Rogers.

Looking ahead, Grandelski wants to get more citizens involved in town processes. While he was pleased with the voter turnout in the November election, he feels the Town Council can do more to continue that momentum and do better to increase awareness of public meetings and forums.

“We need to get the public involved. We had good success at doing it this time

and I’m very encouraged by that,” said Grandelski.

At the Council’s prior meeting on Nov. 18, outgoing Chair Jason Anderson provided a farewell message reminiscing on his eight years on the Council and six as chair. Thanking his fellow council members, town staff, and the three town managers he has worked with while on the Council, Anderson said his time on the Council was rewarding.

“It’s a tough position to be here because we’re trying to maintain services. We’re trying to maintain the buildings. We’re trying to promote the community as best we can. We’re trying to encourage the right types of development, protect our parks, and protect our rural nature without handcuffing development at the

Turn To GRANDELSKI page A11

Putnam Library awarded grant from Pilcrow Foundation

PUTNAM — The Putnam Public Library is excited to announce it has been awarded a grant for \$400 from the Pilcrow Foundation’s Children’s Book Project, which was matched by the Friends of the Putnam Public Library for \$200, providing the library with 33 brand new children’s books worth approximately \$600. Additionally, the library was selected for two sponsor grants through the Pilcrow Foundation for 39 additional titles, bringing the grant total to 72 new children’s books worth over \$1,300 in retail value. Children’s Librarian Tina Aubin was very pleased by the quality of the books, and the children have been excited to take out the new offerings.

The first additional sponsor grant, provided by Mr. Hal Berenson and Mrs. Laura Ackerman of Colorado added 21 math and science books valued at \$401.55 to the collection. The second, from Drs. Bill Strawbridge and Meg Wallhagen of California contributed 18 health and wellness titles worth \$299.66. Combined with the original grant these generous contributions ensure that young learners in Putnam will have access to recently published, high-quality materials on a wide variety of topics.

Turn To GRANT page A11

Day Kimball Health expands use of ObservSMART technology in Emergency department to enhance patient safety

PUTNAM — Day Kimball Health (DKH) expanded the use of ObservSMART, a digital rounding tool designed to improve patient safety and staff accountability, into its emergency department on Oct. 20. The expansion followed the system’s successful use in DKH’s inpatient psychiatric unit since 2021.

ObservSMART combines Bluetooth-enabled beacons, mobile devices, and discreet patient-worn sensors to ensure staff are present and attentive during safety checks. The system documents, timestamps, and validates patient observations in real time, reducing the risk of incomplete or inaccurate records.


“Patient safety is at the center of everything we

Turn To OBSERVSMART page A10



Courtesy

From left to right: Terry Jax, emergency department clinical manager; Darlene Sheldon, emergency department UR/PCT coordinator; Crystal Lanning, emergency department associate manager and educator; Pete Neal, PhD, director of behavioral health, celebrate the successful implementation of ObservSMART in our emergency department.



Holidays make for early deadlines

The submission deadlines for our Dec. 26 and Jan. 2 editions will fall a bit earlier than usual in order to ensure that the paper arrives in subscribers’ mail boxes prior to the Christmas and New Year’s holidays.

Any press releases or letters to the Editor intended for publication the week of Dec. 26 should be submitted no later than 4 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 18.

For the week of Jan. 2, the submission deadline will be Friday, Dec. 26 at 4 p.m.

Submissions can be e-mailed to the Editor at brendan@villagernewspapers.com.



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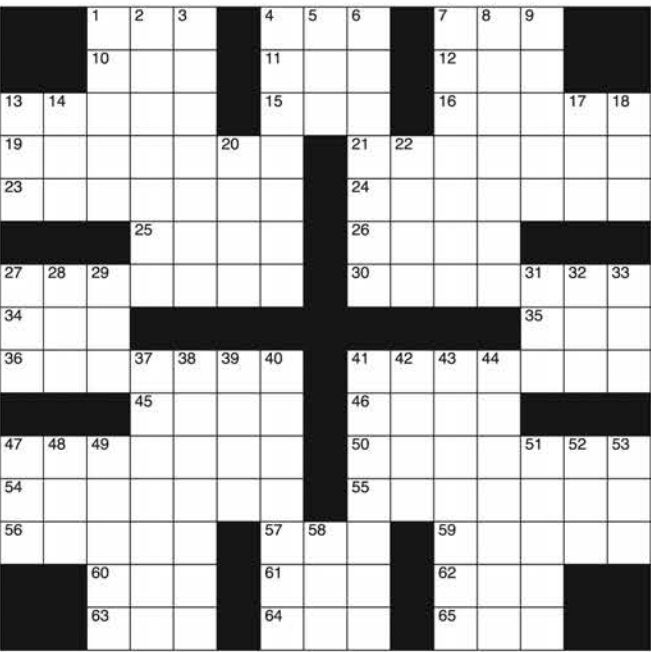
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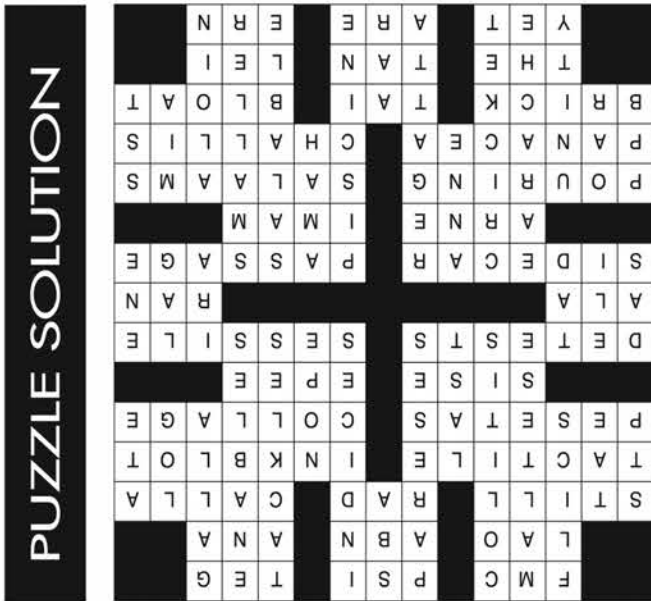


CLUES ACROSS

1. American automotive titan
4. Tire term
7. Two-year-old sheep
10. Indigenous people of Thailand
11. Anti-Soviet Cold War group
12. Actress de Armas
13. Not moving
15. Cool!
16. Plants of the arum family
19. Connected with touch
21. Pen stain
23. Monetary units
24. School kids' art project
25. Early Bell Canada executive
26. Sword
27. Hates
30. Fixed in one place
34. Pie __ mode
35. Moved swiftly on foot
36. Carrier on vehicle
41. A path to get through
45. "Rule, Britannia" composer
46. Spiritual leader
47. Flowing
50. Respectful compliments
54. Cure
55. Soft, lightweight fabric
56. Building material
57. Japanese delicacy
59. A way to cause to be swollen
60. One and only
61. You might get one in summer
62. Wreath
63. Thus far
64. They __
65. Employee reference number

CLUES DOWN

1. Policemen (French)
2. Toy dog
3. Intestinal condition
4. Muscular weaknesses
5. Helps little firms
6. Alphabetical lists
7. Takes down
8. Facilitates
9. Ethnic people of Ethiopia
13. Engine additive
14. Explorers group
17. Written account
18. Consumed
20. Opposite of first
22. No (slang)
27. Government lawyers
28. NY Giants great
29. Small amount
31. A way to save for your future
32. Fall behind
33. Midway between northeast and east
37. Head pain
38. Wildly popular sport
39. "Princess Diaries" actress
Hathaway
40. Boat race
41. About fish
42. Nursemaid
43. Able to be marketed
44. Not as large
47. Parts per billion (abbr.)
48. Paddle
49. Oneness
51. Bitter chemical
52. Not around
53. Very fast airplane
58. Main tributary of the Rhine



Worth celebrating

A young mother was frantically shuffling her two young children through the mall, trying to get her last few Christmas gifts. Her four-year-old daughter spotted an elaborate nativity set in the window of a home décor store and asked, “Mom, who are those two people and the baby in that barn?”

“That’s Mary, Joseph and Jesus at the first Christmas” she quickly explained.

“Where is Santa,” asked the girl, “isn’t Christmas about celebrating Santa and presents?”

That is when it dawned on the young mother that the celebrations of the season may have eclipsed the thing being celebrated. She had not taken time to explain the reason for this most-important celebration.

The true meaning of Christmas is important whether someone understands it or not, but it is only important to that person if they know the real story, so they can value it and celebrate it. Many people agree with the song written in 1963 by Edward Pola and George Wyle that says: Christmas is “The most wonderful time of the year.” But is it possible to focus on the celebration and forget the real meaning? How much of this world-changing, life-changing story do you know? Here is what some studies revealed about Americans.

In 2018 Lifeway Research found that only about 22 percent of adults said they could accurately retell the

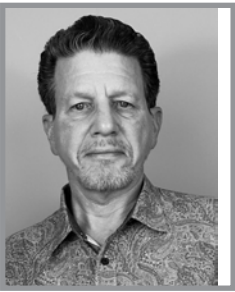
Nativity story from memory.

A n American Bible Society survey found that only 42 percent were able to correctly identify what the Bible says brought Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem for Jesus’ birth—reporting for a census.

A 2022 Ipsos poll reported three quarters of Americans agree that people have forgotten the real meaning of Christmas.

How is it that we can remember sports, movie or video-game details but can’t remember the most incredible event in history? This is how the prophet Isaiah foretold the birth of Jesus five hundred years before the Wise men saw His star: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: And the government shall be upon his shoulder: And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.” (Isaiah 9:6-7)

Not only was that child born, but He lived a sinless life, performed many miracles, and started a movement that would change the world. He was canceled and killed by the elite of His day, but His Resurrection and Ascension proved that He was everything Isaiah prophesied, and those events changed the lives of Jesus’ fol-



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

lowers to the point that they were willing to die as martyrs.

Believers who celebrate Christmas are celebrating

the Incarnation – God becoming flesh. It is incredible! The Mighty God lived in a body. That is why Jesus was called the “Son of God” and the “Son of Man.” He came to identify with us. He came to redeem us. He came to take the keys of death, hell and the grave.

Is there anything more important or more amazing than that? He changed the world so drastically that today one hundred sixty-eight countries use the Gregorian calendar which measures years according to the birth of Jesus. More importantly, millions of people now have a personal relationship with God through the life that He lived through Christ. The true story of Christmas is worth celebrating because it has done more to change the world than any other story.

Bishop John W. Hanson oversees Acts II Ministries where they will be celebrating Christmas with a musical titled “Promise... Fulfilled” on Dec. 21. For more information, please visit www.ActsII.org.

Christ Church Pomfret invites community to annual Christmas pageant

POMFRET — Christ Church Pomfret invites the community to its annual Christmas Pageant on Sunday, Dec. 21, at 10 a.m. at the P.Y. & Kinmay Tang Performing Arts Center at Rectory School.

This cherished event is a highlight of the Advent celebrations and allows children from the church and the greater community to take the stage to retell the Nativity story. Donna Bessette is directing this year’s performance in collaboration with Christian Formation Director Madison Day.

All were welcome to attend and witness this timeless story.

A vibrant church community since its founding in May 1828, Christ Church Pomfret, an Episcopal Church for northeast Connecticut, is a place where faith and real life intersect. From here, we are called to share God’s love in the Church and in the world through generous hospitality, serving one another, community involvement, and providing a safe place to explore a relationship with God. Whether you are a Quiet Corner native or have recently moved here, a committed Christian or someone inquiring about the faith for the first time, we want you to feel at home. Please know that you are invited to participate in all aspects of our worship. We are so glad that you’re here.

Trinity Episcopal Church invites community to Christmas Eve service

BROOKLYN — Trinity Episcopal Church, 7 Providence Rd. (corner Rtes. 6 and 169) invites area residents to the Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist Wednesday, Dec. 24 at 5:30 p.m., preceded by carols at 5 p.m., and the Christmas Day Thursday, December 25 Holy Eucharist with Joyful Noise at 10 a.m.

The Christmas celebration continues with the annual Lessons and Carols at Old Trinity Church, 60 Church Street to be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 27. Dress warmly and come to sing!

Services are held on Sunday at 10 a.m. in person and online at <http://www.facebook.com/trinitychurchbrooklyn>.

For more information, visit <http://www.trinityepiscopalchurchbrooklyn.org>.

VILLAGER ALMANAC

At CT AUDUBON

Bird sightings at the Connecticut Audubon Society Center at Pomfret and Wyndham Land Trust properties for the week of Dec. 12: Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Bald Eagle, Mockingbird, Red-winged Blackbird, Bluebird, Brown Creeper, Flicker, Canada Geese, Blue Jay, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Junco, Kestrel, Robin.

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Last minute antique and collectibles holiday gifts

If you typically are shopping at the mall on Christmas Eve or ordering one day delivery for gifts on Amazon on Dec. 23, you still may have time to buy that special gift for the collector in your life.



ANTIQUES, COLLECTIBLES & ESTATES
WAYNE TUISKULA

We run our auctions on LiveAuctioneers, so I'll start by discussing their platform. There are over 5,000 auction houses running auctions on liveauctioneers.com. No matter what you are looking for, you can probably find it there. As an example, I searched "oil lamp" and found 233 auction listings currently running. You can narrow your search to a 20-mile radius from your location or expand it to search around the world. Many auction houses allow local pick up so you can get the item right away. You can also search for auctions that are ending soon. You will want to check the auction house's shipping policy. Some auctioneers may ship in-house quickly after an auction, and others may contract outside shippers, and it can take longer.

Other online auction options include HiBid. Their website also touts having thousands of auctioneers on their hibid.com platform.

Invaluable is United Kingdom based with their website claiming "over 5,000 premier auction houses and dealers globally." If you search invaluable.com you will find many United States auction houses based there.

With time running out before the holidays you may want to attend a live local auction. You can find both live and online auctions on auctionzip.com. You can search for auctions in your area by entering your zip code in the search bar. The default is 30 miles but can be expanded further. You can also search by date and narrow your results down to auctions in New England and even to individual New England states.

If you want to purchase something online right away TIAS (The Internet Antique Shop) tias.com has been in business since 1995. I used to sell on there when they first went online. Ruby Lane (rubylane.com) offers antiques from around 1,500 dealers, according to their website. They were formed in 1998. Also, check individual sellers shipping policies with these sites.

You may also find that gift you've been looking for online locally on Facebook Marketplace. I did the same "oil lamp" search and found hundreds of listings throughout New England. There are also Facebook groups for people selling

antiques locally and you can also search on Craigslist.

An estate sale is another option. Estate sales may be listed in newspapers along with the websites estatesales.net and estatesales.org. Serious buyers get there early, sometimes the day before the sale to sign lists to be one of the first admitted into the sale.

Of course, there are plenty of local antique shops where you can search for gifts. You can walk in and buy a gift and make sure you still have plenty of time to wrap it for the holidays. Happy Holidays!

The single-collector Civil War auction is starting soon. Following that, we'll have a major auction with fine jewelry, sterling silver, art, and other antiques and collectibles. There is still time to consign items for that sale. Please visit our website <https://centralmassauctions.com> for links to upcoming events.

Contact us to consign items or for auction information at: Wayne Tuiskula Auctioneer/Appraiser Central Mass Auctions for Antique, Collectibles Auctions and Appraisal Services info@centralmassauctions.com or (508-612-6111).

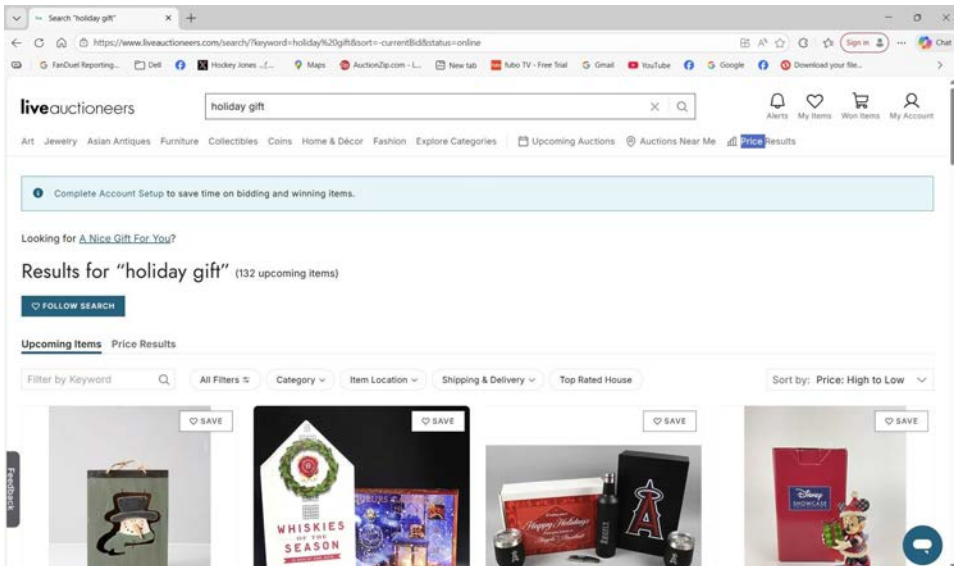
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New Al-Anon meeting in Pomfret

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

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

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

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

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PRESIDENT/PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

Christmas changes how we treat one another

Something subtle happens in the days leading up to Christmas, especially in small towns like ours. The change is not loud, and it is not announced, but it is noticeable all the same. People behave a little differently.

Lines feel shorter, even when they are not. Conversations last a few seconds longer. There is more eye contact, more patience, more willingness to bend. For a brief stretch of the year, expectations soften.

Christmas has that effect. It does not solve problems or eliminate stress, but it alters the tone of everyday interactions. Disagreements feel less urgent. Minor inconveniences are more easily forgiven. People seem to remember that everyone they encounter is carrying something unseen.

In Northeast Connecticut, that shift shows up in practical ways. Drivers give each other more room. Store clerks hear more thank-you's. Neighbors check in without a specific reason. These moments may seem insignificant, but they shape how a community feels.

What makes Christmas different is not tradition alone. It is permission. Permission to slow down, to let something go, to choose generosity over efficiency. For a few weeks, we collectively agree that being decent matters more than being right or being fast.

That mindset is worth noticing, because it raises an important question. If we can act this way in December, why not more often?

The answer, of course, is that life is demanding. Schedules tighten. Pressures return. The calendar fills. But Christmas reminds us that kindness is not dependent on perfect circumstances. It is a choice we are capable of making, even when things are busy or difficult.

The season will pass quickly, as it always does. Decorations will come down. The pace will pick up. But the way people treat one another right now is not an illusion. It is proof of what is possible.

As Christmas approaches, perhaps the best gift we can give our communities is to carry a bit of this spirit forward. Not in grand gestures or seasonal slogans, but in everyday interactions. The patience. The courtesy. The willingness to see one another clearly.

That is a tradition worth keeping, long after the holiday has ended.

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

Putnam will have its first Poet Laureate

To the Editor:
Poetry is often called “the art of emotion,” and for good reason. This singular art form dates back 3000 years BC, to lands of current day Iraq, as a method of telling the many stories of gods and human struggle, enduring through the times of Homer’s written epic poems of 8th century Greece, to the 20th and 21st century words of Eliot, Plath, Frost, Yeats, Cummings, Wordsworth, Snyder, and even Eminem.

In all cases and in all eras, poetry gives voice to the deepest human feelings beyond everyday language: grief, love, heartbreak, anger, joy, hope. Where prose explains, poetry expresses. And with the power of its unique structural rhythm, each pause between verse and word gives the reader the space to slow down, to reflect and process. Poetry is recognized to have cultural value, as well, capturing the spirit of a particular age; poems that challenge authority, champion equality, and voice dissent.

On a national level, our country has formally recognized poetry as a significant art form with the honorary position of United States Poet Laureate, originally known as Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress, since 1937. The State of Connecticut has appointed Poets Laureate since 1985, with the naming of Pulitzer Prize winner Stonington native, James Merrill, to that position. In early February 2026, the Town of Putnam will formally join the 50-plus cities and towns of our state with its first

Poet Laureate.
We are excited for this milestone, as it will highlight Putnam’s continuing commitment to artistic expression in all its forms. Our committee’s vision is for Putnam Poet Laureate to serve a two-year term, be a literary ambassador to the community, performing readings as requested, and receive guidance through quarterly meetings with the Putnam Arts Council. This opportunity is open to all members of the Putnam community eighteen-years and older, with a Thursday, Jan. 8 deadline for a five copy submission packet to include application information, and at least three one-page poems submitted either by email to maryann.chinatti@putnamct.us, or hard-copy hand-delivered to the Economic Development office, Rm. 206, Putnam Municipal Complex. Please visit putnamctartscouncil.com for application details.
After candidate interviews by our committee during January 2026, the Town of Putnam’s first Poet Laureate will be announced at the first Board of Selectman meeting in February. We hope for robust interest in this endeavor, and look forward to joining our entire community in welcoming Putnam’s first Poet Laureate in the year 2026.

TOWN OF PUTNAM POET LAUREATE SELECTION COMMITTEE
CARMINE ANGELONI
ANNE LAMONDY
KATIE JAMBARD
GLORIA MARION

We should be very afraid

To the Editor:
In a recent statement, Donald Trump asserted that individual should states have no say in regulation of AI (Artificial Intelligence).
This letter is not intended to discuss the relative merits of AI or its regulation; this is about what Trump did and said next. Trump is trying to preempt state AI laws via an executive order. The Trump administration is seeking to challenge state laws regulating the artificial intelligence industry via an executive order to circumvent state and local regulations. He is threatening to withhold federal rural broadband funding from states whose AI laws he disagrees with. He

claims that these laws must be the same across all states and align with his (and Project 2025’s) view of the world.
Now for the frightening part. In Trump’s own words: “We have to be unified,” said Trump. “China is unified because they have one vote, that’s President Xi. He says do it, and that’s the end of that.”
Trump has, on many occasions, intimated that he wants to be a dictator. He has just come out and said that with this statement. Is this really what you want? Yes, we should be very afraid.
BRUCE P. SHAY
POMFRET CENTER

Thank you, Woodstock

To the Editor:
For over 250 years, the Town of Woodstock has had an elected Town Treasurer. I have held the position for the past several years. It has been an honor to serve, and I appreciate being elected three times.
I had planned on continuing to serve for the current term that I was elected, but in an effort to reduce spending, the position became appointed commencing post election. As I end my service to the town, I realized that this creates two historic events. I am the last Woodstock Town Treasurer

to hold the elected position, and, in what must be a rarity, elected to an position that was appointed to another.
I love the Town of Woodstock, and I am hopeful for the town’s future. Thank you for the honor of being your Treasurer. I hope that everyone enjoys the holiday season and all the best for 2026!
BARRY SHEAD
WOODSTOCK

When will the toddler be reined in?

To the Editor:
We are being destroyed by Donnie Despot, a person with the intellect and emotional capacity of a three-year-old. This is not whimsical thinking but the obvious conclusion of anyone who has raised children. Like a toddler, he and his supporters have shown no consideration of the consequences of what they do. Consider the probably illegal and completely unjustified tariffs, a brilliant economic and diplomatic piece of excrement without foresight. To wit, Canada, a huge supplier of lumber, has canceled all US contracts, and has also signed a \$20 billion contract with South Korea for building a submarine, and German automakers who are talking about withdrawing operations from the US.
Donnie and his fellow conspirators do not know how to govern but only to rule. Like a child, if Donnie Toddler does not get his way or if someone doesn’t agree with him, he throws a screaming tantrum. Then respond to every situation with the blunt instruments of bombastic venom and

coercion. There is no effort, desire or capability to consider the survival of or the welfare of our population.
Most children are pretty much held in check by parents and social norms. The problem here is, there is no parent to punish him or to hold him accountable. If Congress or the courts try, which is a rarity, he and his cabal simply ignore them and invoke non-existent presidential power.
It will take years and a lot of money to undo all the damage, especially rooting out all the far-reaching and hidden tendrils of his actions. The overwhelming tragedy and threat is that once a person has seized an element of power, it is almost impossible to have the next incumbent to give it up. The Congress, the Supreme Court and his many voters have the intelligence to understand this, but they have been cowards in letting Donnie Toddler get away with these outrages.
STEPHEN ETZEL
PUTNAM

The infection will go away

To the Editor:
Watching the news can be mind-numbing. The endless garbage coming from Donald Trump is so bizarre and vile that you have to remind yourself this lunatic is (unfortunately) our President. Add to that all the crazy rhetoric coming from tough-guy wannabe Pete Hegseth, and the totally insane RFK Jr., and it’s hard to imagine what’s next. The rest of Trump’s “Cabinet of Misfits” have been known to spew nonsense also, but mainly serve as apologists for all the madness.
It’s very easy to feel hopeless and depressed, but I believe there’s reason to be optimistic. Just like in the first Trump presidency, dissension among the ranks is starting to show. When a hardcore MAGA wacko like Marjorie Taylor Greene decides to exit, it signals the start of rats jumping off a sinking ship. As the midterm elections get closer

and Trump’s approval ratings continue to tank, his loyalists in Congress will be more concerned about their own job security. It’s also obvious that Trump’s physical and mental health are questionable, so a lot could happen over the next few years. The Trump Administration is like a nasty stomach bug that has infected our nation — miserable for now, but it will eventually go away.
TODD PATRIE
POMFRET CENTER

Light and darkness



NANCY WEISS

At the end of my exercise class at the Y, the group presented a gift to the instructor. She is remarkable as she makes us laugh while we push ourselves a bit harder on strength, cardio and balance skills. Three other staff members will also get presents as they help members work out on other days of the week. As classmates we know each other by sight and first names and we share a bond of lifting and bending, bicep curls and lunges to stay or get fit as we age.

Although I volunteered with the committee that established the Y, I am still amazed that it came to be. There was opposition based on all the things change engenders in people. It wasn’t easy to find the land, raise the money, select the best building to fit local needs, get a bridge over the Quinebaug, actually construct the place, hire the right staff and open the doors. Who would have guessed that today one of the knottiest issues is that the parking lot is too small on busy days?

Some mornings, as I turn into the Y and jockey carefully behind giant trucks filled with ash hauled from distant places, I consider it a bit of a miracle that it came to exist and be so successful. At this time of year, it is possible to consider many things miraculous.

It is the possibility of the unexpected actually happening that is the essence of winter and the holidays we celebrate. From the stories of the birth of Jesus to the Hanukkah saga of light overcoming darkness, to the Druids welcoming the return of the sun at the Solstice, we look for ways to elevate the hardships and the beauty of life. From the dazzling red cardinal visiting our birdfeeder to the ethereal pinks and blues of winter dawn, we need to be on the lookout for the remarkable, even in the predictable.

In her book “Wintering,” author Katherine May writes about her young son, who was unhappy at school. She writes “Happiness is the greatest skill we’ll ever learn. It is not a part of ourselves that should be hived off into a dark corner.” Later she says: “Happiness is our potential, the product of a mind that’s allowed to think as it needs to, that has enough of what it requires...” She decided to homeschool her child to help him experience happiness and sadness.

This week we are caught in the middle of terrible news of the shootings at nearby Brown University and far away Australia. Both stand in sharp contrast to what surrounds us in our area. We have volunteers collecting food and toys for the less fortunate and excellent music wafting across our towns from local choruses and schools. Beautiful natural materials decorate homes and buildings and whimsical characters inflate on front lawns. A dusting of snow made everything twinkle. Holiday parties provide a reason to wear festive clothes and spend time with our friends. On one hand we are in a bubble of good will and yet violence and sadness are not far away in miles or via media.

I suppose it is the nature of being human to balance happiness and sadness, hope for peace and wonton violence in our minds at the same time. There is the miracle of the Y and all that happens there for health and community and the special activities that characterize the holidays. We can flex our desire for happiness with our empathy for those who suffer and look for the light that follows the darkness.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Project 2025 is ahead of Hitler’s timetable

To the Editor:

I will not try to convince you of the desperate state of American democracy, of the loss of its law and principles or of the danger of this authoritarian takeover. You see it, or you won’t.

If you see it, have voted when you could, gone to the streets with us and maybe even written for this page and realize how fast the Project 2025 plan is taking over, I have a tactical suggestion: Join the ACLU, both the national and Connecticut groups.

I’ve recommended other fine patriotic, environmental and spiritual groups on these pages. I will again, but right now, no group understands so well and is fighting so hard and effectively against this carefully orchestrated destruction of “of the people, by the people and for the people,” as is the American Civil Liberties Union.

This attack isn’t coming from Trump. He isn’t smart enough. He’s only interested in his own status. It’s an

historically-based, proven campaign to turn a democratic republic into an oligarchy, run by and for the richest people on the planet. They are following the Project 2025 plan. It has seven stages to full control and they’re working on the sixth right now.

First: question all our democratic institutions: courts, media, colleges.

Second: blame immigrants, trans and minorities.

Third: bend laws to attack all dissenters, colleges, blue states.

Fourth: weaponize the military and the Dept. of Justice.

Fifth: criminalize freedoms of speech and assembly

Sixth: silence the opposition - buy, control all media

Seven: Control all branches of government and media.

The autocrats have been pushing these tactics hard since Trump’s inauguration, putting them in place before the awakened American public can vote in the mid-terms. Public sentiment is running against them but time is on

their side.

Hitler destroyed German democracy and took over in less than a year. The Project 2025 Plan is ahead of that.

Don’t wait. Get connected and involved now. We have many allies and we are a majority. Start by joining the ACLU and understanding how all these Federal campaigns are part of an effective plan to eliminate your Democracy.

And, friends, we are so fortunate to have the Villager Newspapers at a time when local print news is dying everywhere. Ask your friends and allies to claim their free subscription by calling 860-928-1818, ext. 303. Mention the Villager when you patronize the local businesses in the paper or in the advertising supplements. There’s no alternative to the Villager.

G. LESLIE SWEETNAM
WOODSTOCK

AI data centers: An economic promise or community burden?

To the Editor:

AI (Artificial Intelligence) data centers are often sold as an economic windfall. Supporters promise jobs, innovation, and growth. But the reality is more complicated, and for many communities, far less appealing.

Data centers do create jobs, but not many. These facilities rely on a relatively small number of highly skilled workers in operations, maintenance, and security. Once construction ends, permanent employment is limited. The economic payoff often falls short of what residents are led to expect.

At the same time, the costs are substantial. The rapid growth of data centers in the U.S. is beginning to strain the country’s energy grid. Experts and watchdog groups warn that state-level policies may be inadequate to manage the massive strain data centers place on state electrical grids. Connecticut is considering building AI data centers in our state. Yet we are already dealing with high energy costs and a stressed power system. Adding facilities that consume as much electricity as a small city will only compound the problem and raise electric bills even more.

There is a political push to accelerate development. A group of senators, including Connecticut Democrat Richard Blumenthal and Vermont independent Bernie Sanders, accused the Trump administration of cozying up to the tech industry by fast-tracking data center approvals. Republicans argue that accelerating AI development is an economic and geopolitical necessity in the race against China.

We always seem to be racing. The nuclear arms race. The space race. The renewable energy race. Now the AI race. The race to be first instead of getting it right can have serious consequences, not just for local communities but

for the human race. It may sound far-fetched, but some experts say it could lead to the extinction of humanity. Time will tell.

AI data centers are resource-intensive by design. Former energy engineer Carol Obando-Derstine warns that communities could face water and power outages while taxpayers shoulder the long-term costs for billion-dollar industries. These facilities can use enormous amounts of electricity and millions of gallons of water each year to cool heat-generating equipment. In drought-prone regions, that water use raises serious concerns about supply and water rights. The strain on local infrastructure is real. Large data centers also require vast amounts of land, removing it from other potential uses such as agriculture, housing, or traditional industry. Nearby residents often contend with noise pollution from cooling systems and backup generators that run day and night.

Elon Musk’s AI data center in Memphis significantly increased pollution levels in the surrounding communities. Boxtown residents report higher rates of asthma and respiratory disease and environmental concerns due to emissions from gas turbines used to power the facility. Children in neighboring communities are facing missed school days and long-term health consequences.

Recently, President Trump signed an executive order aimed at blocking state-level AI regulations, limiting the ability of states to set their own rules for data centers. Whatever happened to his idea of less federal interference and more local control?

States and municipalities frequently compete for large developments by offering tax breaks and other incentives. That competition can push communities into deals that look attractive on paper but leave residents paying the price for decades. Economic development should never

mean asking taxpayers to subsidize massive private profits without clear public benefits.

Before approving data centers, residents deserve answers to many questions. For example: What are the true environmental impacts? Should utility commissions require tech companies to pay for the increased energy demand they create? Should data centers be required to generate their own power? Where will the water for cooling come from? How much input will local communities actually have? How do town planning, zoning, and local governance factor into these decisions?

Beyond infrastructure and economics, there are ethical concerns about AI itself. A growing number of lawsuits allege that AI chatbots have encouraged violence, suicide, and murder. A quick internet search shows a growing list of global concerns. Technology marketed as progress can carry unintended and sometimes deadly consequences.

No matter where you stand on artificial intelligence, understanding the realities of data centers is essential. According to CT Mirror reporting in February 2025, Waterford, Fairfield, and Stratford were floated as potential sites. The Hartford Courant reported in June 2025 that Hartford, New Haven, and Stamford were competing for an AI data center. It’s only a matter of time before an AI center is built in Connecticut.

When that happens, communities should not be rushed into decisions driven by hype, fear, or a sense that we must keep up at any cost. Economic development should serve the public interest, not overwhelm local resources or silence community voices. Asking tough questions is the only way to avoid paying for potentially bad decisions later.

LISA ARENDS
BROOKLYN

The kindness of taking our time

I have come to believe that winter teaches us patience in places we least expect it. Not on the back roads after a storm or while waiting for the heat to kick on, but in the everyday places where people briefly cross paths and then move on.

The grocery store is one of those places.

In the warmer months, it feels hurried. Carts move faster. Conversations are clipped. People drift in and out with lists and phones and places to be. But once

winter arrives, something shifts. Coats slow us down. Boots scuff the floor. Gloves get tucked into pockets and forgotten. And suddenly, nobody is in quite such a rush.

I see it at the checkout line. Someone fumbles for a wallet and instead of sighs, there is a pause. A quiet wait. A remark about the weather that actually means, “Take your time.” The line still moves, but it

moves together.

There is a courtesy that comes with cold weather, one born of shared inconvenience. We all know what it took just to get here. We scraped windshields. We navigated slick driveways. We layered up. That effort earns a little grace.

Winter also changes how people talk. The questions feel more sincere. “How are you holding up?” “You staying warm?” These are

not greetings. They are check-ins. They acknowledge that the season asks more of us, and that everyone is answering in their own way.

I notice it in parking lots too. Doors held a second longer. Someone pointing out a patch of ice. A cart returned without being asked. Small gestures, but deliberate ones. In winter, thoughtlessness has consequences, so consideration becomes instinct.

There is something comforting about that. Winter

narrows our focus. It reminds us that the world is not always smooth or easy, and that moving carefully matters. The pace slows not because we want it to, but because it must.

I think that is why winter kindness feels different. It is not performative. It is practical. It shows up in the form of patience, awareness, and quiet cooperation. No speeches required.

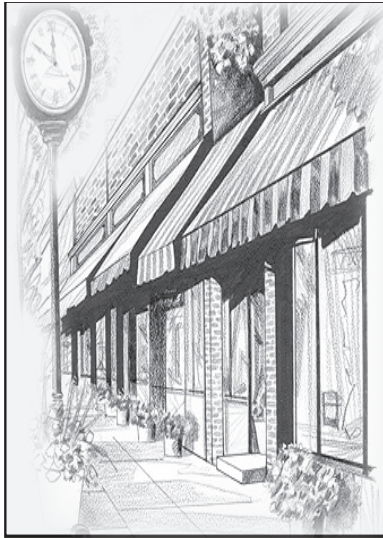
When spring arrives, we will speed up again. We always do. The coats will come off. The carts will

roll faster. The pauses will shorten. But for now, winter gives us permission to take our time and to give others the same courtesy.

That may be its greatest gift. Not the snow. Not the stillness. But the reminder that decency does not have to be loud to be felt, and that kindness often looks like simply waiting without complaint.

In our little corner of the state, that lesson arrives every year right on time.

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Our most popular pieces of 2025 and what they reveal about the year ahead

Every December, we like to look back – not just at market performance or policy shifts, but at what mattered most to the people we serve. And one of the clearest barometers of that is which of our articles get read, shared, and talked about the most.

When we reviewed WHZ’s most popular pieces of 2025, something interesting emerged. At first glance, the topics seemed all over the map: gifting strategies, inheritance psychology, presidential policy changes, healthcare costs, and even the new FICO credit-scoring models. But when we stepped back, a pattern came into focus: every one of these themes points to a deeper shift occurring in the financial lives of Americans—and especially in the lives of people preparing for or navigating major financial transitions.

Here’s what the collective story of our top five pieces tells us.

We’re thinking differently about when to transfer wealth—and what it means emotionally.

Our most-read article of the year, “Gifting vs. Inheritance: Which Is Better for Your Beneficiaries?” told us something important: families are asking more questions about timing, taxes, and strategy, but also about what’s healthiest for their kids and what creates the strongest legacy.

Right behind it was “The Psychology of

an Inheritance Windfall.” And that pairing was telling. It wasn’t just the technical side of wealth transfer that people were eager to understand; it was the emotional side.

That makes sense in a year when conversations about the Great Wealth Transfer have reached a fever pitch. Whether or not the incoming \$84 trillion in assets is as evenly distributed as headlines imply, one thing is true: families want to get this right. Not only the mechanics, but the impact. Not only the tax savings, but the stewardship. This shift toward intentional, emotionally informed wealth transfer is going to define the next decade.

We’ll be launching a special series on our podcast, You & Your Money, in early 2026 focused on “Getting Ahead of The Great Wealth Transfer.” We’ll cover all the key points you need to know to begin positioning your family for success through this transition – watch for it on our website and on major podcast platforms!

Policy change took center stage, and people wanted clarity, not noise.

Another top-performing piece was “Financial Impacts of Trump’s First 60 Days in Office.” It’s not surprising that our readers gravitated toward straightforward, apolitical guidance about what shifting policy

FINANCIAL FOCUS
• • • • •
HOLLY C. WANEGAR
INVESTMENT ADVISER

actually means for portfolios, taxes, and long-term planning.

The lesson we took from this is simple: In moments of political noise, people crave calm, credible interpretation more than ever. And 2026 will likely demand even more of it. With monetary policy in transition, global fractures altering supply chains, and regulatory agendas shifting, informed perspective—not sensationalism—is what clients are seeking.

Rising costs—and rising complexity—are reshaping retirement planning.

One of our most practical and widely shared posts explored a worry we hear every day: healthcare costs eating into retirement security. The fact that “How to Keep Rising Healthcare Costs from Killing Your Retirement” became a top article and podcast this year wasn’t just about fear – it was about empowerment. People want a plan. They want to know how to navigate the most unpredictable major expense of their later years.

At the same time, our piece on Buy Now, Pay Later and the new FICO credit-scoring models underscored another trend: complexity in personal finance is growing, not shrinking. Credit behavior is changing. Debt is changing. Risk is changing. And that means the old rules of thumb don’t always apply.

Together, these two topics signal something we expect to see more of in 2026.

People are looking for financial guidance not only on investments, but on the broader ecosystem that influences financial health: borrowing, spending, longevity, healthcare, and policy.

And here’s the bigger truth tying all of this together:

These five topics – inheritance, psychology, policy, costs, and credit – aren’t isolated. They’re the pillars of a new era in wealth management where technical strategy and human experience carry equal weight. What our audience engaged with most this year reveals three big shifts that will shape 2026 and beyond:

1. Wealth is becoming more multi-dimensional. Clients aren’t just planning for returns anymore – they’re planning for values, transitions, family readiness, and legacy complexity. The emotional side of financial decision-making is finally getting the attention it deserves.
2. Risk is being redefined. It’s no longer only about market volatility. It’s: healthcare inflation credit-model disruption debt behavior long-term care risk and policy uncertainty

In other words, risk is sneaking in through the side door, and clients want help

spotting it early.

3. Adaptability is now the new core competency. With global growth expected to remain modest, monetary policy evolving, and innovation (particularly AI) accelerating across industries, the financial environment is becoming more fluid. Clients don’t just want a plan; they want a plan that can move with the world around it.

What this means for you in 2026

Looking ahead, the themes that rose to the top in 2025 offer a roadmap for how to approach the coming year:

If you expect to give or receive wealth, start early and be thoughtful about both structure and communication.

If you’re nearing retirement, deepen your focus on healthcare and long-term cost planning.

If you’re managing credit, know that lenders are looking at you differently today than they did five years ago.

And if you’re worried about policy or markets, stay focused on fundamentals—the noise will always be loudest near inflection points.

Most importantly: continue to view financial planning as a lifelong conversation, not a series of transactions.

Closing thought

The most-read pieces of 2025 weren’t simply popular, they were telling. They

revealed where people are anxious, where they want clarity, and where they’re ready to grow.

And more than anything, they revealed this: people today don’t just want wealth management. They want partnership, perspective, and a strategy that evolves as they do.

That is exactly what we strive to provide to each and every one of our clients: “Absolute Confidence. Unwavering Partnership. For Life.” Schedule a complimentary discovery session now on our website at whzwealth.com or give us a call (860) 928-2341.

Authored by Holly C. Wanegar, CFP®, Vice President at WHZ Strategic Wealth Advisors. AI may have been used in the research and initial drafting of this piece. Securities and advisory services offered through Commonwealth Financial Network®, Member FINRA/SIPC, a Registered Investment Adviser. 697 Pomfret St., Pomfret Center, CT 06259 and 392-A Merrow Rd., Tolland, CT 06084, 860-928-2341. <http://www.whzwealth.com>. These materials are general in nature and do not address your specific situation. For your specific investment needs, please discuss your individual circumstances with your financial advisor. WHZ Strategic Wealth Advisors does not provide tax or legal advice, and nothing in the accompanying pages should be construed as specific tax or legal advice.

The Twelve Days of Christmas

H o l i d a y Closings: The Killingly Historical & Genealogical Center will be closed Wednesday, Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve) through Wednesday, Dec. 31 (New Year’s Eve). It will reopen on Saturday, Jan. 3 at 10 a.m. Merry Christmas & Happy New Year to everyone.



KILLINGLY AT 300 MARGARET WEAVER

I n c l e m e n t Weather: In case of snow, freezing rain or mixed precipitation please listen to WINY for notices about the Killingly Historical Center closings. You may also call the Center’s phone about 10:15 or later and see if anyone answers.

BUY A SPECIAL GIFT FOR A LOVED ONE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON! The Killingly Historical & Genealogical Society has books, maps, postcards, photos, tote bags, gift memberships and gift certificates for sale. Shop Wednesday and Saturday 10-4 during the Historical Center’s regular hours. Images of America Killingly and Images of America Killingly Revisited are also available at Pourings and Passages bookstore in Danielson during its regular hours of operation.

The Gertrude Chandler

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

Calling all Artists: Third Annual Tiny Art Show at Putnam Public Library. “Remembering the Revolution” (Optional Patriotic Theme). Stop in to register and pick up a 3” by 3” canvas, paint and brush. Return by Jan. 31. Art will be exhibited in the library beginning Feb. 2. Call 860-963-6826 for additional information.

Now showing on the large TV at the Killingly Historical Center: Mr. Christmas, Mervin Whipple, and his Christmas Wonderland. Stop in during our regular hours to view postcards of his wonderful displays and reminisce about the past. Mervin’s decorations began in 1967 with a Nativity and 225 lights in memory of his stepson Edmond. Through the years he expanded the exhibit and attracted more and more visitors to this rural section of northern Killingly (Pineville). Many years he averaged 50,000 visitors between the first Sunday of December and the

Sunday near New Year’s Day. He delighted in greeting each of his guests as they entered the indoor displays. They included a variety of Santa and Mrs.

Claus figures, sheep, angels, Victorian carolers, and much more. A tall pine was adorned with lights as were the small chapel and nearby bridge. By the time he

ended his reign on Jan. 1, 2003, Mr. Christmas had 112,000 lights and 350 animations. A lack of volunteers and the prohibitive electricity bill were the main

reasons he gave for discontinuing the attraction. Mervin Whipple had a small granite chapel erected on the property in 1978 and over the years conducted over 3000 weddings there. (Perhaps yours was one of them).

Have you been listening to the modern Christmas songs or some of the old traditional ones? I know during Advent I prefer to hear the older songs. My daughter-in-law Ashley Weaver suggested that I look up the history of Here We Come A-Wassailing so I did. According to Wikipedia “The song dates from at least the mid 19th century, but is probably much older. The a- in ‘a-wassailing’ is an archaic intensifying prefix; compare “A-Hunting We Will Go” and lyrics to “The

Twelve Days of Christmas” (e.g., ‘Six geese a-laying’). According to Reader’s Digest, ‘the Christmas spirit often made the rich a little more generous than usual, and bands of beggars and orphans used to dance their way through the snowy streets of England, offering to sing good cheer and to tell good fortune if the householder would give them a drink from his was-sail bowl or a penny or a pork pie or, let them stand for a few minutes beside the warmth of his hearth. The wassail bowl itself was a hearty combination of hot ale or beer, apples, spices and mead, just alcoholic enough to warm tingling toes and fingers of the singers’”. Mead was of itself another alcoholic beverage being a combination of fermented honey and water. (Oxford Language online Dictionary).

I love the song “The Twelve Days of Christmas,” but usually can’t remember all the verses. I found its history quite interesting. The song, “The Twelve Days of Christmas” is an English Christmas carol. From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning: the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of the Church.

Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality which the children could remember. To fit the number scheme, when you reach number 9, representing the Fruits of the Holy Ghost, the originator combined 6 to make 3, taking the 6 fruits that were similar: the fruit in each parenthesis is the that was not named separately. There are actually Twelve Fruits of the Holy Ghost. The ‘True Love’ one hears in the song is not a smitten boy or girlfriend but Jesus Christ, because truly Love was born on Christmas Day. The partridge in the pear tree also represents Him because that bird is willing to sacrifice its life if necessary to protect its young by feigning injury to draw away predators.

According to Ann Ball in her book, “Handbook of Catholic Sacramentals”:

The two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments. The three French hens stood for faith, hope, and love. The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The five golden rings represented the first five books of the Old Testament, which describe man’s fall into sin and the great love of God in sending a Savior. The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation. Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit--

---Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy. The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes. Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit---Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience [Forbearance], Goodness [Kindness], Mildness, Fidelity, Modesty, Continency [Chastity]. The ten lords a-leaping were the Ten Commandments. The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful Apostles. The twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in The Apostles’ Creed. ([https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resource/55904/the-history-of-the-twelve-days-of-christmasApostles’ Creed](https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resource/55904/the-history-of-the-twelve-days-of-christmasApostles’%20Creed). Original Source: Fr. Calvin Goodwin, FSSP, Nebraska. Margaret M. Weaver Killingly Municipal Historian, December 2025. Special thanks to Ashley Weaver. For additional information email me at margaretmweaver@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. Information about Christmas Wonderland first appeared in the 12-1-17 Villager.

ALL WE KNOW IS LOCAL ~ VillagerNewspapers.com





Courtesy

Danielson Martial Arts Academy hosted the Cheezic Tang Soo Do Federation on Sunday, Dec. 7 for a Black Belt Grading ceremony. At this time, five time Martial Arts Hall of Fame inductee and current USA Karate Team Member, 7th Dan Master Daryl Laperle announces promotion of Jackie Reali from 2nd Dan Black Belt to 3rd Dan Black Belt; Dan Walsh, Elizabeth Walsh & Hunter St. Jean from 1st Dan Black Belt to 2nd Dan Black Belt. For more information regarding classes, please call 860-779-0699 or visit their Web site at danielsonmartialarts.com.



Courtesy

Destination events Co. is a DJ and Photo Booth company who just opened on Providence Street in Putnam. A ribbon cutting was held. Pictured are Selectman Mike Bogdanski, PBA President Kate Cerrone, Mayor Barney Seney, and Tim and Andrea O'Shea (owners).

Rain no deterrence to Interact bell ringing

PUTNAM — A little snow or rain won't stop the Putnam Rotary Club's Interact Club and their friends from ringing for the Salvation Army.

The weather Dec. 6 was cold with snow and rain showers, but the donations kept pouring into the kettles with more than \$2,000 in donations. Ninety percent of these donations stay right here in the northeast corner to help those in need.

Interact Club advisor Roberta Rocchetti thanked Calleigh Levesque, Estela Freitas, Billie Lewis, Matthew Rybacki, Joshua Tackson and Tyler Parkin from Tourtellotte Memorial High School. Also: Paige Perry, Gabby Cerasiello and Kaylee Borders from Putnam High School; Isabel D'Alleva-Bochain, Lilly Morgis, Ivan Lin, Vivian Bibeau, Kaylee Saucier, Elise Coyle, Isabelle Tedisky, Sam Greene, Gianna DiCola-Keddy and Melanie DiPippo from Woodstock Academy. She also thanked Rotaract members Kyle Derosier and Matthew Gardiner who assisted along with Rotarians, Charlie Puffer, Deb Hoft, Mike and Roberta Rocchetti and Marc Archambault.

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Courtesy

Ivan Lin, Lilly Morgis, and Isabel D'Alleva-Bochain.



Vivian Bibeau, Kaylee Saucier, and Elise Coyle.

Home cooking for the holiday season



Versatile risotto is an ideal option for busy holiday hosts

Risotto is a versatile dish that can be prepared with a wide range of ingredients. That versatility makes risotto a particularly useful option to consider when hosting loved ones during the often hectic holiday season. Because risotto can be made with just about any add-ins, hosts won't have to worry about coming home empty-handed during a last-minute trip to the grocery store. With that in mind, hosts can look to this recipe for "Risotto With Sweet Potatoes, Peas and Green Beans" from Lines+Angles when the need to whip up something flavorful in a flash arises.

Risotto With Sweet Potatoes, Peas and Green Beans
Makes 6 servings

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, chopped



- 1 2/3 cups arborio rice
- 4 cups low sodium vegetable broth
- 1 tablespoon white wine
- 1 large sweet potato, peeled, chopped and par boiled
- 1 tablespoon packed brown sugar
- Kosher salt, to taste

- 1 cup blanched green peas
- 1 cup blanched green beans

1. Heat olive oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion and saute until slightly translucent, about 3 minutes. Add the garlic and cook another minute, stirring.
2. Add the rice to the pan and stir well to coat with the oil. Cook until slightly toasted, about 3 minutes.
3. Stir in 3/4 of the broth and the wine. Bring to a boil and then cover. Reduce heat to low and cook for about 5 minutes.
4. Add the sweet potato, brown sugar and salt and simmer for about 15 minutes, until the rice is tender. Stir about every five minutes, adding more broth, if necessary.
5. Add the peas and green beans and the remaining broth and stir gently. Serve hot.

Home cooking is a big part of the holiday season, when families and friends gather around the dinner table with greater frequency than they might at other times of year. The convivial nature of holiday gatherings is made even warmer when families and friends break bread together, and this recipe for "Ossobuco con la Gremolata" from Lines+Angles is a delicious take on a classic dish from the Italian region of Lombardy.

Ossobuco con la Gremolata
Makes 6 servings

- 6 veal shanks, 2 inches thick, sawed through, including the bone marrow
- Salt, to taste
- Pepper, to taste
- 1/2 cup unbleached all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 rib of celery, finely chopped
- 2 carrots, finely chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 28 ounces crushed Italian tomatoes
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 cup veal or beef stock

For Gremolata:
2 tablespoons flat Italian parsley, minced
1 tablespoon lemon zest
2 cloves of garlic, minced
1 pinch saffron

1. Season the veal with salt and pepper. Dust the veal pieces with flour, shaking off any excess. Heat olive oil and butter in a Dutch oven. Increase the heat to medium-high and brown the veal in the oil and butter for about 5 minutes on each side or until well browned. Transfer the veal shanks to a plate; set aside.
2. Add the onion, celery and carrots to the Dutch oven. Cook the mixture, stirring frequently, until the onions are soft and translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and thyme. Continue cooking until the vegetables begin to brown, an additional 5 to 10 minutes.
3. Place the veal shanks back in the pan. Add the wine, tomatoes, bay leaf, and stock. Cover and bring to a simmer; cook until the meat is fork tender, about 60 to 90 minutes.

For Gremolata:
Combine all ingredients in a small bowl.
To serve: Divide veal shanks among plates. Sprinkle with gremolata.



Fried foods are often characterized as guilty pleasures. Though frying might not be the healthiest way to make a meal, it's hard to argue against the flavor profile of fried foods. Air frying can produce meals that call to mind the

familiar flavors of fried foods and do so in a far healthier way. This holiday season, hosts can look to air frying as a means to crafting flavorful meals without a lot of the negatives of traditional frying. That's even possible with

traditional family staples like roast beef. With that in mind, hosts can try their hands at this recipe for air-fried "Roast Beef" courtesy of Lines+Angles.

Roast Beef
Makes 4 to 6 servings

- 1 2-pound beef roast, trimmed
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Flaked sea salt
- Freshly ground mixed peppercorns

1. Preheat air fryer to 360 F. Rub beef roast with olive oil and liberally season with salt and mixed peppercorns.
2. Tie at intervals with kitchen twine to secure.
3. Spritz air fryer basket with cooking spray. Place beef roast in basket and cook for 45 minutes for medium-rare; cook for additional 5-minute intervals for more well-done meat.
4. Remove beef roast from air fryer and cover loosely with aluminum foil, letting it rest for at least 10 minutes before slicing and serving.

Baked brie is a cheese-centric crowd pleaser

Cheese is beloved all over the world. While cheese features more prominently in some cultures than others, its popularity still knows no bounds. That popularity is something hosts can keep in mind as they plan to welcome loved ones into their homes during the holiday season. Couple the popularity of cheese with a little spice, as this recipe for "Baked Brie With Blackberry Compote and Spicy Candied Pecans" from Lines+Angles does, and hosts are sure to have a crowd pleaser on their hands.

Baked Brie With Blackberry Compote and Spicy Candied Pecans
Makes 4 to 6 servings

- For the compote:
- 3 cups blackberries
 - 1/2 cup sugar
 - 2 tablespoons water
 - 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

- For the pecans:
- 1/2 cup sugar
 - 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
 - 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
 - 1 pinch chilli powder
 - 1 small egg white
 - 1 tablespoon water
 - 2 cups pecans

- For the cheese:
- 2 Brie wheels
 - 2 tablespoons olive oil
 - 1 pomegranate, seeded
 - Fresh thyme sprigs
 - Multigrain crackers

the Brie wheels. Place the Brie on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Drizzle with olive oil before baking for 25 to 30 minutes until melted and bubbling. Remove from the oven and let cool briefly before

topping with the blackberry compote, spiced pecans, pomegranate seeds, and thyme sprigs. 10. Serve with the multigrain crackers and any remaining compote and pecans on the side.

1. For the compote: Combine blackberries, sugar, water, and vanilla extract in a heavy-based saucepan.
2. Cover and cook over a medium heat, stirring from time to time, until the blackberries are soft and jammy, about 12 to 15 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool to one side.
3. For the spicy candied pecans: Preheat the oven to 250 F. Stir together sugar and spices in a large mixing bowl.
4. Whisk egg white with water in a separate bowl until frothy. Toss pecans in egg white mixture before removing and tossing in the spiced sugar to coat.
5. Spread out on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake for 1 hour, turning over every 15 minutes, until dry and crisp.
6. Remove from the oven and let cool to one side. Increase oven to 350 F.
7. For the cheese: Remove the tops of the rinds from



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The Week in Sports at Woodstock Academy

Girls Basketball

Coventry 52
Woodstock Academy 50
The Centaurs re-opened their Alumni Fieldhouse gym with a thriller on Dec. 12, as they came up just short against defending Class S state champion, Coventry.

The Woodstock Academy gymnasium was damaged by a water pipe burst back in August but a new floor was installed and was ready for the first game of the winter athletic season.
The Centaurs led the Patriots by as many as nine points in the first half but Coventry rallied in the second half and won the game in the closing seconds.
Sophomore forward Hailey Mayo (14 points tied the game with a basket with 32 seconds to play.
Coventry got the ball back and with eight second left, senior Jiana Foran hit a pair of free throws which proved to be the game-winning points.

Isabel D’Alleva-Bochain scored 17 points and fellow senior Vivian Bibeau added 12 as the Centaurs evened their overall record at 1-1 and picked up their first Eastern Connecticut Conference Division I win of the season Dec. 15.
D’Alleva-Bochain scored 11 of her points in the first half when the Centaurs rallied from a 10-7 deficit to lead, 19-17, at the break.
Bibeau, who had a big second half in the season-opening loss to Coventry, did the same against New London as she poured in nine points.
Junior guard Jaidelis Rivera led the Whalers (0-1,0-1) with 16 points including four 3-pointers.

Woodstock Academy 42
New London 33

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.

Killingly hoop girls lose to Coventry

KILLINGLY — Killingly Girls Basketball (0-1) was led in a loss against Coventry (2-0) behind 13 points and 8 rebounds from Amaya Spadola! Final Score Coventry 67 – Killingly 28.
Catrina Turgeon added 5 points and Reese Ritchotte added 4 points.



Crossword Puzzle

1				2			3
4							
5				6			
	7						

ACROSS

- 1. Chocolate powder
- 4. Fruit growing areas
- 5. Outside of a place
- 7. Eats

DOWN

- 1. Handheld desserts
- 2. Not at home
- 3. Sweet treats
- 6. Fish eggs

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



1777: The Continental Army goes into winter quarters at Valley Forge.

1924: The last Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost is sold in London, England.

1941: Adolf Hitler appoints himself as head of the Oberkommando des Heeres.

NEW WORD

CHIP

a small piece of solid chocolate

Food FACT:

This dessert is made from dough that is either rolled, cut or pressed into shape.

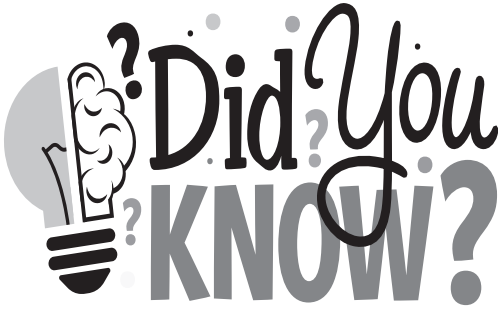
Answer: Cookie

Answers:

1. Cookies 2. Away 3. Desserts 6. Roe
- Down
1. Cocoa 4. Orchards 5. Exterior 7. Ingests
- Across

“How they say that in...”

- English:** Dough
- Spanish:** Masa
- Italian:** Impasto
- French:** Pâte
- German:** Teig



Twisting the cookie cutter when cutting out the cookie dough can prevent the dough from rising properly and create inconsistent shapes.



Get the PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Rolling pin

OBSERVSMART
continued from page A1

do,” said Kyle Kramer, CEO of Day Kimball Health. “Bringing ObservSMART to our Emergency Department allows our staff to spend more time directly engaging with patients while ensuring the highest levels of accountability and accuracy in safety rounding.”

The decision to bring ObservSMART to the emergency department comes at a critical time, as hospitals nationwide were seeing an increase in patients with behavioral health needs. Unlike traditional paper or electronic clipboards, ObservSMART enables rapid verification of each patient’s safety status and environmental checks using beacons and strategically placed QR-coded stickers. Staff also receive reminder alerts when observations are due, helping them focus on patient care rather than administrative tasks.

Staff members in DKH’s inpatient psychiatric unit report positive outcomes with the system, including less paperwork, more time spent at the bedside, and greater insight into performance and patient behavior trends. Clinical leaders say the data collected through ObservSMART helped track patient moods, behaviors, and sleep patterns to better inform treatment planning.

Implementation of the system was led by Kramer, John O’Keefe, chief nursing officer, and Pete Neal, director of behavioral health services, who oversaw the initial adoption in the inpatient psychiatric unit. The project required close collaboration with DKH’s information technology department and InvisALERT Solutions, the system’s developer, to ensure seamless integration with the emergency department’s electronic medical record system.

“Bringing ObservSMART into the Emergency Department required extensive planning and IT integration, but the payoff will be tremendous,” added Neal. “It will make our team more efficient and will help us strengthen

patient safety during what can often be the most challenging moments of care.”

DKH joins a growing list of healthcare organizations, including UCLA Medical Center, Sharp Healthcare, Kaiser Permanente and Houston Methodist that have successfully adopted ObservSMART to improve safety rounding and patient care.

Looking ahead, hospital leadership notes that recent IT upgrades will make it possible to expand ObservSMART into other areas of the hospital in the future.

For more information about Day Kimball Health, visit daykimball.org.

About Day Kimball Health
Day Kimball Health is a nonprofit community healthcare system composed of Day Kimball Hospital, Day Kimball Medical Group, Day Kimball Healthcare 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.

About InvisALERT Solutions
InvisALERT Solutions provides innovative software solutions that allow healthcare organizations to improve outcomes through better patient care and safety. Among those solutions are technologies like ObservSMART and SMARTsense. ObservSMART is a proximity-required rounding technology for high-acuity patients. The tool allows staff to round on patients within the appropriate distance and time interval. Used in more than 425 healthcare organizations, ObservSMART remains one of the best patient safety tools. For additional information, visit the Web site: <https://www.observsmart.com/>.



The holiday season and cookies go hand-in-hand



The holidays are synonymous with many things, including various foods and beverages. Foodies know the holiday season is a time when baked goods, and cookies in particular, take center stage. Celebrants can keep that in mind and prepare a batch of these “Iced Cinnamon Star Cookies” from Lines +Angles this holiday season.

Iced Cinnamon Star Cookies

Makes 24 Servings

Decorative cookies Santa can’t resist

Kids know that cookies are a vital component of the holiday season. Come bedtime on Christmas Eve, youngsters want to make sure Santa Claus gets all the nourishment he needs to continue delivering presents to kids all over the globe. That sustenance is often provided in cookie form. With that in mind, families who want to be certain Santa won’t leave their homes hungry this Christmas can whip up a batch of these “Chocolate Star Christmas Decorations,” courtesy of Lines+Angles.

Chocolate Star Christmas Decorations

Makes 4 dozen

- 2 cups flour
 - 1/2 cup Dutch processed cocoa powder, unsweetened
 - 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
 - 1/2 teaspoon salt
 - 1 cup unsalted butter, softened
 - 3/4 cup sugar
 - 1 large egg yolk
 - 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
 - 1 large egg white
 - 1 pinch cream of tartar
 - 2 cups confectioners’ sugar
 - Sprinkles, for decorating
- Whisk together flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, and salt in a bowl.
 - Beat butter and sugar in a separate bowl with an electric mixer until pale and fluffy, about 2 minutes, then beat in yolk and vanilla. On low speed, beat in flour mixture just until a dough forms.
 - Divide the dough in half, flatten each piece into a disc and then chill them, wrapped in plastic wrap, until firm, for 2 to 3 hours.
 - Preheat oven to 350 F with racks in top and bottom thirds. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Roll out 1 piece of dough between sheets of parchment paper into a 14-by-10-inch rectangle (1/8-inch

- For the cookies:
- 2 1/2 cups almond flour
 - 1 1/4 cups powdered sugar
 - 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
 - 1/4 teaspoon salt
 - 2 large egg whites
 - 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

- For the icing:
- 1 cup powdered sugar
 - 3 tablespoons milk, more if needed
 - 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

- For the cookies:
- In a large bowl, whisk together almond flour, powdered sugar, cinnamon, and salt. Add the egg whites and vanilla and mix until a soft dough forms.
 - Wrap dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes.
 - Preheat oven to 300 F. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper.
 - On a surface dusted with powdered sugar, roll the dough to 1/3-inch thickness. Cut out stars using a 3-inch star cookie cutter and transfer to the prepared cookie sheet.
 - Bake for 12 to 15 minutes until edges are lightly golden. Let cool on baking sheets for 5 minutes, then transfer to wire racks.

- For the icing:
- Using a fork, combine the powdered sugar, milk, and vanilla. Use a whisk to continue to stir the icing, adding more milk, in teaspoon increments if needed, to reach desired consistency.
 - Once cookies are completely cooled, spoon the icing on top of each star and spread with the back of the spoon or a toothpick. You also can use a squeeze bottle or piping bag. Enjoy cookies immediately or let icing set at room temperature 6 to 8 hours.



- thick). Cut out as many stars as possible, reserving and chilling scraps, then quickly transfer cookies to the baking sheet, arranging them 1/2-inch apart. (If dough becomes too soft, return it to the freezer until it is firm.)
- Bake until firm and slightly puffed, about 10 minutes. Cool cookies on baking sheet for 5 minutes, then transfer to a rack to cool completely. (Cookies will crisp as they cool.) Make more cookies with remaining dough and scraps, rerolling scraps only once.
 - To make the icing, in an electric mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat egg white and cream of tartar until foamy. Sift in half the sugar and beat until smooth, about 1 to 2 minutes. With mixer running, gradually add remaining sugar and beat on high speed until icing is smooth and thick. Icing should be thick, but not too thick to be pressed through a pastry bag. Adjust consistency with more confectioners’ sugar or water.
 - Transfer icing to a pastry bag with a small round tip. Pipe icing onto cookies and add decorations of your choice before icing hardens.

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