



PUTNAM VILLAGER

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MuralFest Putnam secures 2028 for Walldog Mural Festival

PUTNAM — A historic public art project is coming to Putnam two years earlier than anticipated.

Community organizers of MuralFest Putnam, who requested the date change, learned at their regular monthly meeting on January 15, 2026, that the Walldog Public Art Movement agreed to move the date of their planned mural painting festival from 2030 to June 2028.

“The room erupted with joy,” said MuralFest Putnam Community Coordinator Elaine Turner. “We’ve been working hard to show the Walldogs that our community is well-prepared for this project. Fortunately, they saw what we saw and



Volunteer members of MuralFest Putnam celebrate the news that the Walldog Public Art Movement has moved the historic public art project coming to Putnam from 2030 to June 2028.

A “walldog” is a historical term for a professional outdoor muralist or sign painter who often worked on tall buildings. The Walldogs are an internationally renowned movement of present-day sign and mural artists. Selected communities organize an annual festival where hundreds of artists descend upon a town to paint an agreed-upon number of murals over three to four days.

Walldog Founder Nancy Bennett, Walldog Jay Allen, and MuralFest Putnam Walldog Coordinator Emida Roller joined the meeting via Zoom. The announcement was made following a presentation by MuralFest Putnam Marketing & Communications Chair Linda Colangelo, who took

Turn To MURALFEST page A11

CT Audubon to host Horizon Wings Live Owl Program



POMFRET — Owls have always been surrounded by an air of mystery, probably because most are nocturnal and not easy to spot. This is your chance to be only a few feet away from an Eastern Screech Owl, a Barred Owl, a Barn Owl, and a Great Horned Owl! Horizon Wings, a bird of prey rescue in Ashford, will bring its non-releasable owls to the Connecticut Audubon Society’s Center at Pomfret on Sunday, Feb. 1, at 2 p.m. Seating is limited. Admission is \$5 for CAS members; \$10 for non-members; children aged 10 and under free. Register online or call the Center at 860-928-4948. Center hours are Tuesday through Sunday, noon to 4 p.m.

Mary-Beth Kaeser founded the Horizon Wings Raptor Rehabilitation & Education center 25 years ago. It is a 501(c)3 non-profit wildlife rehabilitation center specializing in birds of prey or raptors, such as eagles, fal-

cons, hawks, owls, and vultures. The rescue typically takes in more than 60 birds of prey each year. They are often victims of vehicle strikes, severe weather, or rodenticide poisoning. Some have become entangled, for example in fishing line, barbed wire fencing, soccer nets, or garden netting.

While the goals of all wildlife rehabilitators are rescue, rehabilitation, and release, it is not always possible to get to the third step. Horizon Wings has treated birds that cannot be released because the nature of their injuries or their prolonged captivity makes it impossible for them to survive in the wild.

Fortunately, with a special permit, non-releasable birds can be housed and live out their lives with Horizon Wings and be used in educational programming. The rescue has 21 program birds featured on its website (horizonwings.org). Clicking on a bird’s photo brings you to a more detailed description of it. Four of the program birds are not raptors, but corvids, members of the crow family.

Kaeser talks about the mission of Horizon Wings.

“Yes, it is a raptor rehabilitation facility, but our rescue’s full name includes the word education. A significant part of our mission is educating the community to create a greater awareness of the environment,” she says, adding, “The Center at Pomfret is a great setting to engage with people of all ages to hopefully instill in them the desire to preserve the natural world. I am looking forward to a great afternoon.”

awarded us the 2028 date as affirmation of that hard

work. It’s a dream come true for us.”

Thompson seeks grant for green roof and rain gardens

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

THOMPSON — The Town of Thompson is seeking a grant to help support initiatives championed by students at the University of Connecticut’s Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR).

Tyra Penn-Gesek, Thompson’s Director of Planning & Development, confirmed during a meeting of the town’s Mill Sites Redevelopment Advisory Committee on Jan. 9 that an application has been submitted to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection for funding to cover green stormwater management activities on municipal projects. These would include initiatives proposed by UConn CLEAR, such as a rain garden at the public library, a green roof at the Town Hall, and rain gardens and water quality swales on the school campus.

Penn-Gesek said the town is seeking roughly \$350,000 through the no-match grant

program. The conversation leaned heavily on detailing the green roof concept which would essentially install plant life on the library’s roof for not only visual aesthetic, but also to manage storm runoff.

“The grant that I submitted included doing a re-roof of the flat roof first of all, and then you put a platform and, on that platform, you plant it. There are different ways you can plant it. There are companies that specialize in it, so I got some rough estimates and types,” said Penn-Gesek.

As Penn-Gesek noted, such a project would require the roof to be replaced on the

library to accommodate the greenery. Former Selectman and current MSRAC member Ken Beausoleil said this would essentially mean replacing a relatively young roof since the current one was installed within the last ten years. However, Penn-Gesek explained the work wouldn’t cost the town anything as she included that projected replacement in the grant as well as the cost of a structural engineer to determine weight limits.

MSRAC Chair Janet Blanchette said she found the green roof concept intriguing.

Turn To GRANT page A7

Killingly High School adds Broadcast Journalism and Illustration to curriculum

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

KILLINGLY — Killingly High School is adding two new courses with the confirmation of broadcast journalism and illustration to the district’s program of studies.

Both programs were approved by the Board of Education on Jan. 14 after being reviewed by the district’s curriculum committee. Both proposals were touted as enhancements to existing programs currently taught at the school.

Broadcast Journalism 1 was the first course dis-

cussed, adding to Killingly High School’s longstanding history of journalism and television-based offerings. Board of Education Vice Chair Meredith Giambattista explained how the new class will be folded into the Killingly curriculum.

“It’s going to take the place of a full semester of advanced effects editing, and it’s really going to strengthen the career path for journalism,” Giambattista said.

Diane Summa, who sits on the curriculum committee, also complimented the program as a well detailed proposal that she believes

will prove valuable for preparing students for their futures.

“It was a very in-depth curriculum. Well done. I think this will suit the high school very well. The students there will get a lot out of this course,” said Summa.

The second new course added was Illustration 1, replacing Painting 1, recommended by art teacher Elizabeth Bauman who Giambattista said made a good case for the course.

“Ms. Boman has a huge college background. It’s what she graduated with was illustration, so it would be a

nice introduction with somebody so knowledgeable that knows so much about this,” said Giambattista.

The program is seen as a valuable steppingstone for students seeking to pursue careers in fine arts.

Both programs were approved unanimously by the Board of Education, and neither new class is expected to add any additional costs to the budget. In the case of Illustration 1, the board noted the course would actually be less expensive than its predecessor, eliminating the need to purchase paint materials



Courtesy

The Putnam Clippers went on the road and knocked off Parrish Hill 63-54. Camden Kell led the Clippers with 23 points and 8 rebounds to move to 5-5 on the season. Nick Devlin and TJ Espinosa each recorded a double double. Devlin finished with 18 points, 13 rebounds and 5 assists and Espinosa ended with 15 points, 10 assists, 6 rebounds and 5 steals. Here, TJ Espinosa goes in for a reverse layup.

Putnam Area Foundation first major sponsor of MuralFest Putnam

FOUNDATION PLEDGES \$10,000 TO SUPPORT HISTORIC PUBLIC ART PROJECT

PUTNAM — MuralFest Putnam, a historic public art project planned for June 2028 in Putnam, received its first major donation from the Putnam Area Foundation (PAF), a local charitable organization that supports nonprofit organizations and community initiatives serving the Putnam area and northeast Connecticut.

PAF President Tom Borner was the first to pledge \$10,000 to the initiative when MuralFest Putnam planning launched

in May 2025.

“I was excited from the moment I learned of the project, and we are pleased to be a lead sponsor,” he commented. “We look forward to Putnam hosting the many artists from all parts of the country who will celebrate our long and rich history with educational and engaging murals that will have a lasting impact for years to come.”


Borner recently presented MuralFest Putnam Community Coordinator Elaine Turner with a check

for \$3,400, representing the first installment of the \$10,000 pledge.

“We are grateful for the leadership of Tom Borner and the Putnam Area Foundation,” said Turner. “We are proud of the close relationships we share with the members of our business community and appreciate their generosity and kindness. Muralfest Putnam 2028 is taking shape one donation, one meeting, one volunteer at a time...and these early donations help to jump-start our efforts.”



Putnam Area Foundation President Tom Borner presents MuralFest Putnam Community Coordinator Elaine Turner with a check for \$3,400, representing the first installment of a \$10,000 pledge to the historic public art project.

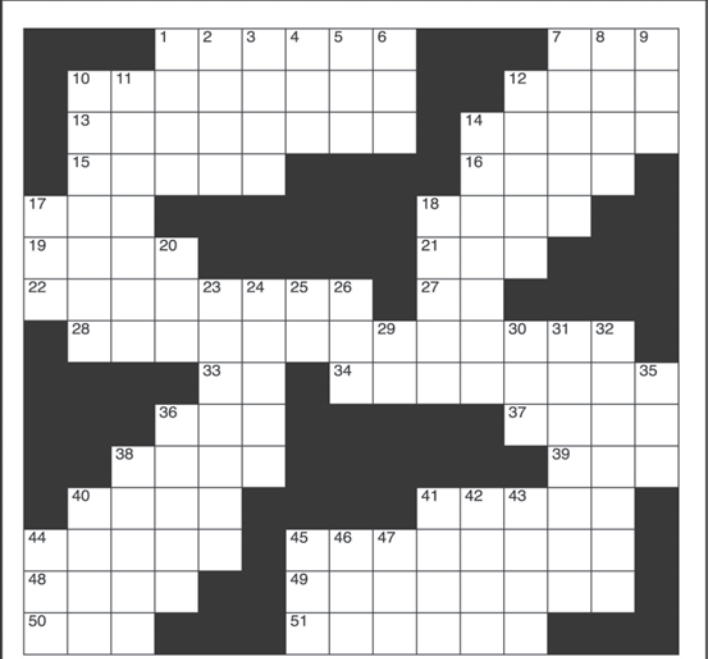


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CLUES ACROSS

1. Mechanical lever

7. Rocky peak

10. Leave a country

12. Discount

13. D.C. ballplayer

14. Partner to “oohed”

15. Engine sound

16. Japanese ornamental box

17. Fido is one

18. Amounts of time

19. DiFranco and Phylo are two

21. Yearly tonnage (abbr.)

22. Make secret plans

27. “Tiny Bubbles” singer

28. “His Airness”
33. Morning

34. Perfected

36. Winger guitarist Beach

37. Abba __, Israeli politician

38. Self-immolation by fire ritual

39. A way to save money

40. Pulpit

41. Make ecstatically happy

44. Once more

45. Works on

48. Nocturnal S. American rodent

49. State again

50. Expression of disappointment

51. Type of door

CLUES DOWN

1. Yugoslavian communist leader

2. Exchange rate

3. High school dance

4. Peter’s last name

5. When you anticipate arriving

6. Israeli city __ Aviv

7. Goat-like mammals

8. Margarine

9. End-of-the-spectrum color

10. Make poisonous

11. Popular beverage

12. Actress Lathan

14. Where planes land and depart

17. Political fundraising entity

18. The distinctive spirit of a people or an era

20. Buffer used in microbiology

23. Light, open carriage

24. Metrical feet
25. Email subject line feature

26. A street with lots of nightmares

29. Rapper Rule

30. River in Scotland

31. One who settles a dispute

32. Most chummy

35. We all have our own

36. Arab tribe

38. Slap

40. Ottoman military commanders

41. Scottish or Irish Gaelic language

42. Emit coherent radiation

43. Sun or solar disk (Egyptian mythology)


44. Inclined to

45. Olfactory reference syndrome

46. Chest muscle (slang)

47. Body part

PUZZLE SOLUTION



Quinebaug Middle College recruiting students for School Year 2026-27

DANIELSON — EASTCONN’s Quinebaug Middle College (QMC), a regional, public magnet high school, is currently recruiting academically motivated students for the 2026-2027 school year. Application deadline is Feb. 28. Students who seek a more independent learning environment tailored to their academic and career goals are encouraged to apply.

Located on the campus of CT State College-Quinebaug Valley (CTSC-QV) in Danielson, QMC offers high school students a middle college experience that enables them to earn a high school diploma while also earning free, transferable college credits from CTSC-QV. The school’s unique partnership with CTSC-QV provides students access to college facilities and opportunities for meaningful collaboration with college faculty and resources.

Students select from one of our six distinguished learning pathways: Liberal Arts and Humanities, Education, Business/Leadership, STEM Engineering, STEM Manufacturing, and STEM Health Sciences. Core academic and elective courses, along with industry mentorship opportunities, are carefully aligned to each pathway.

“QMC provides a small, personalized learning environment where students embrace our core values of Inspiration, Kindness and Respect,” said Principal Edward Keleher. “Through access to college- level coursework, our students can explore their interests while families benefit from significant college cost savings. QMC creates opportunities for every student to thrive. We welcome students seeking an engaging, supportive high

school experience that prepares them for future success.”

Housed in a modern, state-of-the-art facility, QMC offers distinct advantages including small class sizes, a personalized competency-based approach, rigorous curriculum, and a collaborative school governance model. QMC students have access to advanced technological laboratories, comprehensive career and vocational resources, public service opportunities, and innovative learning experiences.

The program emphasizes real-world experience in project management, public communications, and community leadership. Service leadership is integrated into the daily schedule, enabling students to actively participate in meaningful community service projects and initiatives.

QMC serves approximately 160 students in grades 9-12 from 18 towns across northeastern Connecticut. The school is administered by EASTCONN through a partnership including CTSC-QV and seven northeastern Connecticut towns. While primarily serving northeastern Connecticut, enrollment is open to students from other regions. Transportation is provided for students within the EASTCONN service area.

For enrollment information and applications,

visit www.eastconn.org/qmc. Contact QMC Principal Edward Keleher at ekeleher@eastconn.org for additional information.

EASTCONN is a public, non-profit Regional Educational Service Center that has served the educational needs of northeastern Connecticut communities since 1980. Learn more at www.eastconn.org.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR JANUARY 23-30

- Friday, Jan. 23

Thompson: NECCOG meeting, 9 a.m.

Monday, Jan. 26

Putnam: Arts Council meeting, 5:30 p.m., Community Room

Putnam: Library Board meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Putnam: Board of Finance meeting, 7 p.m., Conference Room

Thompson: Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, 7 p.m.

Woodstock: Agricultural Commission meeting, 1 p.m.

Woodstock: Zoning Board of Appeals meeting, 6 p.m.

Woodstock: Conservation Commission meeting, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 27

Putnam: Recreation Commission meeting, 5:30 p.m., Community Room 113

Brooklyn: Economic Development Committee meeting, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Brooklyn: Agricultural Commission special meeting, 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Pomfret: Winter Film Series, “Ocean with David Attenborough,” 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Woodstock: TEEG Mobile Market, 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Woodstock: Commission on Aging meeting, 5 p.m.

Woodstock: Water Pollution Control Authority meeting, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 28

Thompson: Transfer Station Advisory Committee meeting, 7 p.m.

Brooklyn: Board of Education budget workshop, 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Brooklyn: Board of Education meeting, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Brooklyn: Water Pollution Control Authority meeting, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Pomfret: Conservation Commission meeting, 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Woodstock: Board of Selectmen special meeting, 4 p.m.

Woodstock: Historic District Commission meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Killingly: Board of Education special meeting, 6 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 29

Putnam: Public hearing, 5:30 p.m. to 5:45 p.m., Putnam Municipal Complex, 200 School St., Room 109

Putnam: Special Town Meeting, 5:45 p.m. to 6 p.m., Putnam Municipal Complex, 200 School St., Room 109

Brooklyn: Special Town Meeting, 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.



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Madison McCracken earns Westview’s November Employee of the Month Award



Madison McCracken

DAYVILLE — Madison McCracken rose to recognition in November 2025 as Westview’s Employee of the Month. McCracken is a Preschool Teacher at Westview Child Care Center, where she thoughtfully educates students in the Pre-K “Jellyfish Room.” Since the opening of Westview Child Care Center in autumn 2023, she has helped nurture the growth of the program with the same attentiveness she brings to the individual growth of each student in her care. Known affectionately as “Miss Maddie” to her students, she excels at being many things at once: a confident ally in new pursuits, a steady resource in daily routines, and a fun-loving friend at all times.

McCracken has been part of the Westview Child Care Center team since its opening. Familiar with Westview’s high standards, she felt drawn to the opportunity to help establish the “Westview way” within early childhood education. Having graduated from high school and gaining experience by working in area elementary schools, she understood the excitement of starting fresh with new students. She holds herself accountable to ensure that Westview Child Care Center stands apart through excellence, consistency, and care. Throughout the day, McCracken maintains unwavering enthusiasm; wearing a smile on her heart. Her students hold a special place there, and the connections she builds with families are equally meaningful.

Westview Child Care Center’s Pre-K “Whale Room” is where McCracken marked her first opportunity to lead students. Working closely with Director Katy Holzer, she helped to nurture and refine the center’s programing from their beginning. That early trust and encouragement fostered Madison’s growth as an educator; strengthening her confidence and deepening her understanding of what young learners need most. She presently teaches in Westview Child Care Center’s “Jellyfish Room,” where the Pre-K experience often represents students’ very first introduc-

tion to school. She has helped guide two graduating classes in her time thus far—moments she considers the most emotional and rewarding of her teaching career. Standing before students, families, and colleagues during graduation ceremonies, Madison finds a confidence she treasures.

Family plays a central role in McCracken’s life. Her mother, Bronwyn, currently works alongside her at Westview Child Care Center. Bronwyn McCracken has worked in the past with Westview Sports Medicine as a Licensed Massage Therapist, and is

an ongoing inspiration for Madison’s pursuits at Westview. She is closely-bonded with her three sisters: Nicole, Mariah, and twin sister Meagan. Traveling is one of Madison’s favorite pursuits, especially the annual fall trip she plans to New Hampshire with her twin sister Meagan to take in peak foliage at fall. In every endeavor, she treasures her time spent with family and friends. Madison enjoys creative ventures that mirror her thoughtful approach to teaching. She likes to paint with acrylics (often gifting her artwork to loved ones) and finds the process grounding. She also operates a service of installing “permanent jewelry” for clients. These clasp-less bracelets are welded together at the ends and are designed to symbolize lasting connections—an endeavor that certainly reflects Madison’s values of friendship, family, and meaningful bonds.

Katy Holzer, Director of Westview Child Care Center, praised Madison’s exceptional impact on both students and staff. “If you looked up ‘preschool teacher’ in the dictionary, Ms. Madison would be the picture! She brings the magic every day with her creativity, joyful energy, and thoughtful lesson plans that keep children excited to learn.” Director Holzer underlined her praise for

Madison: “We are so lucky to have her on the Westview team—our classrooms (and kids!) are better because of her.”

Westview Child Care Center is part of the Westview family, along with Westview Health Care Center and Country Living at Westview Commons. Westview Health Care Center is a 103-bed inpatient skilled nursing facility, which includes a distinct and self-contained 28-bed sub-acute short term rehabilitation unit and outpatient physical, occupational and speech therapies including: Sports Medicine, Adolescent/Pediatric, Adult, and Aquatic Outpatient Centers, all dedicated to providing outstanding quality health care services. The Dayville facility is consistently ranked among the top nursing facilities in the nation, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services as well as U.S. News and World Report, consecutively for the past 18 years.

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Le Moyne College names Rachel Lynch to Fall Dean’s List

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Rachel Lynch, a Freshman Business major from Putnam, has been named to the Le Moyne College Fall 2025 Dean’s List. To make the list, students must achieve a GPA of 3.5 or above. Located in a suburban setting on a picturesque 160-acre campus in Syracuse, N.Y., Le Moyne College is one of only 27 Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States. Offering more than 30 majors, Le Moyne provides a values-based education that helps students explore their potential through academics, experience and service. In 2025, for the 13th consecutive year, Le Moyne was ranked by The Princeton Review as one of the nation’s best institutions for undergraduate education, an honor achieved by only 15 percent of the colleges and universities in the nation. A Le Moyne education provides students with the intellectual skills necessary to succeed in the world and the will to use their abilities to promote a more just society.

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FRANK G. CHILINSKI
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EDITOR

Bring back the art of showing up

In Northeastern Connecticut, it is easy to forget how much our everyday lives depend on small, ordinary moments that do not make headlines. Not the big moments like elections or storms or ribbon cuttings. The smaller ones: a quick chat in the checkout line, a familiar face at the post office, a few minutes of patience when someone is moving slowly at an intersection, or a neighbor holding a door without making it a performance.

Lately, it feels like many of us are living at a faster pace than our towns were built for. The roads are the same. The downtowns are the same. The parking lots are the same. But the tempo is different. We are busier, more distracted, and often more tired. We carry our work in our pockets. We scroll through other people’s lives while ignoring the one happening right in front of us.

There is a cost to that, and it is not measured in dollars. It is measured in frayed nerves, shorter conversations, and the gradual loss of what used to make our quiet towns feel like places where you belong, not just places where you sleep.

The irony is that our communities still offer the cure, if we choose it.

A town meeting notice, a library film night, a mobile market, a commission session, a school board workshop. These are not glamorous. They are not supposed to be. They are the sturdy beams behind the walls. They are also, in a quiet way, social anchors. Not because everyone needs to have a strong opinion on every issue. Most people do not. But because being physically present in the same room as your neighbors changes something in you. It is harder to assume the worst about people you have actually met. It is harder to be careless with words when you know the person across the aisle might be the same one who coached your kid, fixed your furnace, or rang up your groceries.

This is not a plea for people to take on more obligations. Most households are already juggling enough. It is a reminder that community life is not only built by major decisions. It is built by repeated, modest acts of presence.

Presence can be as simple as turning your phone to silent for an hour and looking around you. It can be choosing a local event once in a while and sticking it on the calendar the way you would a doctor appointment. It can be staying two extra minutes after a meeting ends to ask a question, or to thank someone who has been doing the unglamorous work that keeps things running.

Presence also matters at home. Families are busy. Teens are busy. Parents are busy. It is tempting to let everyone retreat to separate rooms, separate screens, separate noise. But the best parts of life here have always been built around shared space: the kitchen table, the front steps, the car ride, the walk into a building together. Those are the places where you learn what is really going on in someone’s day.

When people talk about the strength of small towns, they often talk about tradition. But the real tradition is simpler than that. It is the habit of being reachable. Of being known. Of being willing to stand in the same room with the same people and accept that we are all trying to get through the week.

If that habit is fading, it does not require a grand plan to revive it. It requires a choice, repeated. Show up once, then again. Say hello first. Let someone merge. Hold the door. Ask a question in person instead of letting frustration simmer in private.

The world will keep accelerating. That is not likely to change. But our little corner of the state still has something powerful: places where people can see each other plainly, speak to each other directly, and remember that community is not a slogan. It is a practice.

OPINION

Opinion and commentary from the Quiet Corner

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unfit to serve

To the Editor:

Trump’s recent acceptance of Maria Corina Machado’s Nobel Peace Prize, grinning from ear to ear like one who has gotten back what was rightly theirs, is yet another example of his phenomenally shallow character. Several political commentators have stated that this is evidence of a delusional mind. I concur, and think that in Trump’s interpretation, Machado realizes that he is more deserving of this award.

The obvious motivation for Machado is political. She is desperately trying to curry favor in the interest of Venezuela. The sane world’s

interpretation is that this is indicative of Trump’s continued, deep-seated, psychological need for praise and reward regardless of merit. And, when not received, how he, like a spoiled child, reverts to minimizing or denying the worth of the other.

This is yet another of the many character flaws of our President. It is embarrassing, infuriating, and, most troubling, frightening to witness this behavior. Add it to the many other concerns about Trump’s presidency and “leadership,” and you arrive at one conclusion - unfit to serve.

PATRICIA SUSLA
WOODSTOCK

Who pays when nursing home staffing rules are repealed?

To the Editor:

The Trump administration has repealed minimum staffing standards for nursing homes, a decision that affects nearly 12 million residents nationwide. Advocates warn this move will accelerate a long-standing trend: for-profit chains lobbying for looser rules that put profits ahead of patients.

These staffing standards grew out of reforms begun in 2022, after the COVID-19 pandemic exposed severe understaffing, burnout among frontline workers, and dangerous lapses in care across America’s 15,000 nursing homes. The rule was a response to real harm, not regulatory overreach.

Nursing homes need standards grounded in the realities of modern elder care, not the wishful thinking of industry lobbyists. If policymakers spent even one evening shift inside a nursing home, they might not have repealed this rule. They might have strengthened it.

Our population is aging, and nursing homes are caring for residents who are sicker and more medically complex than ever. Families already struggle to trust facilities with histories of understaffing and underreporting. When the incentive becomes “operate with fewer nurses,” quality declines. When standards become optional, the worst actors take advantage, and safety becomes negotiable.

The staffing rule was meant to ensure safe, quality elder care. This repeal does the opposite. Families should closely monitor the care their loved ones receive, because the federal government is abandoning the elderly. They should also demand that Congress act in the best interest of the elderly and restore meaningful staffing standards. We are all going to be elderly one day. If this matters to you, let your legislators know.

LISA ARENDS
BROOKLYN

Taking stock of Trump 2.0

To the Editor:

We’re at the one year mark with Trump 2.0; let’s take a look. A good place to start is with Trump’s fantasy of ending eight wars and deserving a Nobel Peace Prize (???). Meanwhile, his schizophrenic foreign policy includes kidnapping the leader of Venezuela to take their oil, blowing up fishing boats alleged to be trafficking drugs, and threatening several nations (including a NATO ally) with invasion and military action. Ending the Russia/Ukraine war “in one day” was just a bad joke, as he continues to kiss Putin’s south end. And his big Middle East peace plan is stalled (at best) as innocent Palestinians continue to suffer and be killed.

focused on expensive White House renovations, putting his name on the Kennedy Center, and anything else he needs to stroke his fragile ego. His cabinet of unqualified knuckleheads continue to mismanage and dismantle government agencies, putting our nation’s health and wellbeing in jeopardy. Let’s not forget the pardons for the convicted criminals who attacked the Capitol (and any other felons Trump likes), as his D.O.J. pursues endless indictments against political enemies and tries to bury the Epstein Files. All that while ICE goon squads attack and kill civilians across our country.

Make America Great Again — yeah, right.

Todd Patrie
Pomfret Center

Bravery

To the Editor:

Has it occurred to any of you MAGA’s just how brave these demonstrators are? They are not wearing ballistic vests, helmets, masks or guns. Their only weapon is yelling at ICE thugs. Their only shields are their ski jackets and the Constitution. They are not shooting and killing anyone, kidnapping people, yanking them from their cars, pinning them to the ground or illegally deporting them. They are not assaulting innocent citizens.

I listen to the WINY call in show occasionally and become enraged that so many contributors defend ICE and condemn anyone who challenges ICE out loud. ICE defenders say that what ICE is doing is legal and therefore if anyone who challenges this is breaking the law and endangering ICE thugs. They are wrong.

MAGA must explain why they are going after non-violent, productive persons when there are really dangerous illegals like street gangs or organized crime members? The most obvious reason is that these targets are well-armed, organized and willing to fight back. Raiding homes, businesses and courthouses is easy and almost never results in injury to ICE thugs. They are not showing much bravery while screaming they are the victims.

STEPHEN EITZEL
PUTNAM

Learning to slow down without falling behind

There is a strange pressure in modern life that tells us we must always be in motion. Faster replies. Shorter waits. Quicker results. Even here in the Quiet Corner, where the pace has traditionally been gentler, that sense of hurry has found its way into daily routines. You can see it in parking lots, at checkout counters and even in conversations that feel rushed before they have a chance to settle.

I have been thinking lately about what it really means to slow down. It does not mean giving up on responsibility or becoming careless with time. It means choosing to be present instead of constantly racing ahead to the next task. There is a difference between being efficient and being frantic, though the two are often confused.

When I was younger, I believed that staying busy was the same as being productive. If the day was full, it must have been successful. With a few more decades behind me, I have learned that a packed schedule does not always equal a meaningful one. Some of the most valuable moments happen when we pause long enough to notice what is right in front of us.

Slowing down can be as simple as taking an extra minute to really listen when someone is talking, instead of preparing your reply before they finish. It can mean driving with a little more patience on a familiar back road, letting the scenery be part of the trip instead of something to rush past. It can mean sitting at the kitchen table with a cup of coffee and no distractions, just long enough to gather your thoughts before the day begins.

In Northeast Connecticut, we are surrounded by reminders that steady rhythms still matter. Old town centers, farm fields and quiet neighborhoods were not built for constant speed. They were built for people who worked hard but also understood the value of routine and rest. There is wisdom in that balance, even if it feels out of step with the world on our screens.

I am not suggesting we turn back the clock or pretend that modern life does not exist. Technology has brought convenience and connection that earlier generations could only imagine. But it has also trained us to expect everything instantly. When that expectation creeps into how we treat each other, it can wear us down. Patience becomes rare. Attention becomes shallow.

What I have found is that slowing down, even briefly, makes everything else feel more manageable. A calmer start to the morning often leads to a smoother afternoon. A few quiet minutes at the end of the day can make the evening feel longer, in a good way. It is not about adding more to the schedule. It is about creating space within it.

There is also a certain dignity in moving at a human pace. Machines are built for speed. People are built for thought, connection and care. When we rush constantly, we lose some of what makes us ourselves. When we slow down just enough, we remember why we are doing what we do in the first place.

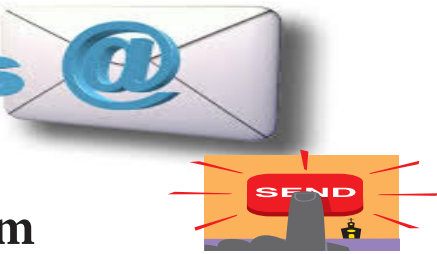
As the week unfolds, it might be worth experimenting with this idea. Choose one small part of the day to approach more slowly. Walk instead of rushing. Listen instead of interrupting. Pause instead of reacting. See what happens. You may find that you do not fall behind at all. In fact, you may feel more caught up than you have in a long time.

In our little corner of the state, where community still matters and neighbors still notice one another, learning to slow down is not a step backward. It is a way of holding on to what makes this place feel like home, even as the world keeps spinning faster around us.

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brendan@villagernewspapers.com



LETTERS
TO THE EDITOR

Living in a fantasy world?

To the Editor:

It is curious that during these past several weeks, and because of President Trump’s radical actions, there has been virtually no mention of the Epstein files and a bipartisan Congressional move to get the complete files released according to law. Could Trump’s actions - extreme as they are - have been a diversionary tactic to upstage the demand for those files? If so, shame on Congress and the media for letting it completely disappear from public scrutiny.

Trump has distracted Congress and the media, as he has:

- Destroyed some 35 small boats and murdered at least 115 occupants; kidnapped Venezuela’s president (and murdered 80-100 people)...for drug trafficking...ahem...to seize Venezuelan oil.
- On Fox News Trump described the invasion, airstrikes and capture as if it were a TV spectacle, a violent entertainment, rather than an international incident of extreme geopolitical and human consequence.

How ridiculous - and dangerous - are these further actions?

- Establish a ‘Board of Peace’ in Gaza with Trump as its head, and Putin - the invader of Ukraine - invited to be on the board? and charge a fee of \$1 billion to get a permanent seat on that ‘Board of Peace’?
- Threaten boots on the ground to acquire Greenland because Denmark did not award him the Nobel Peace Prize? And Maria Machado actually gave Trump her Nobel Peace prize to stroke his ego?
- Put thousands of boots on the ground in Minneapolis, with another 1500 ready to deploy to ‘protect’ its residents, when crime is actually down? The real crime is being committed by ICE agents who handcuff old men and carry them off to deportation in their underwear. And pepper spray or shoot those who get in their way.
- Threaten to exact extreme tariffs on any country that disapproves of his determination to acquire Greenland, destroying our long time bond with NATO allies?

We must be living in a fantasy world - a madhouse - as these actions can only occur in a world of extreme political fiction run by a mad man.

The President does not have the power to wage war or run another country unless our Congress is complicit by allowing him to do so. Congress is selling the soul of America. We, The People, have rights: The right for each of us to be equal under the law; the right to help make and shape those laws; the right to choose how we are governed, and by whom. We, the people, must get out and vote. And each of us should take a handful of new voters to the polls. I hope it’s not too late.

KAREN RYKER
WOODSTOCK

The notion that murder
is a fitting response to peaceful
protest is disturbing

To the Editor:

In his latest letter to the Villager, Ed DeLuca, like a seagull or blue-footed booby, regurgitates some MAGA talking points he picked up from cable TV or social media for the presumed purpose of trolling other readers and adding his two cents to the toxic brew which now constitutes much of our public discourse. He argues, in a letter remarkable only for its complete absence of measurable cerebral activity, that Renee Good, peacefully protesting the armed goons who have taken over her city, had it coming to her when she was shot point-blank in the face by a cowardly ICE officer. I don’t need to go into why, in this country founded on protest and which, throughout its history, has enshrined the right to peacefully protest, this is a profoundly disturbing thought. Mr. DeLuca says that he’s going to “be in the process of writing a book.” I’m hoping that at least part of that book will include some investigation into how his Italian ancestors were treated when they first came to America.

John A. Day, Jr.
Woodstock Valley

Artificial intelligence is advancing at a pace that feels unprecedented, leaving some feeling uncertain and even worried. Yet throughout history, periods of rapid technological change have followed a familiar pattern: anxiety about job disruption, followed by adjustments in how people work, produce, and create value. For investors, the real question today is not whether AI will change the labor market (it will), but how those changes may influence the broader economy and financial markets over time.

A familiar pattern: Technology reshapes work, but also creates it

Concerns about job displacement are not new. The Industrial Revolution reduced the need for agricultural labor but also introduced an entirely new manufacturing economy. The introduction of the personal computer reshaped office work but opened the door to software, IT services, digital media, and other high-growth sectors. And the internet era automated tasks that were once done manually while simultaneously creating millions of new jobs in fields like cybersecurity, e-commerce, and data analytics.

AI is poised to follow a similar arc. Early adoption trends already show that companies are deploying AI not only for automation but also to enhance productivity and support decision-making.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s Business Trends Survey, AI adoption among firms has grown meaningfully in the last year, with an estimated 5.4-9 percent of U.S. businesses now using some form of AI. That figure is expected to rise significantly over the next decade as organizations seek tools that improve efficiency or help manage increasingly complex data environments.

As with past technological shifts, the long-term labor market impact is likely to be mixed: certain functions may become more automated, but new types of work – especially those requiring advanced technical skills, creativity, and oversight – will emerge.

What increased automation could mean for the economy

AI’s core promise is pro-



FINANCIAL
FOCUS
JIM ZAHANSKY
INVESTMENT
ADVISER

ductivity. If businesses can complete work faster, with fewer errors, or at lower cost, productivity may improve at the macro level. Historically, productivity growth has been a key driver of economic expansion. However, transitions of this scale also tend to unfold unevenly across industries and time periods. Several potential dynamics could shape the economic environment over the next decade:

1. Efficiency gains for early adopters: Companies integrating AI into operations, analytics, or customer service may see improved scalability. In past cycles—such as the introduction of industrial machinery or computing—firms that adopted new technologies early often gained a competitive advantage.
 2. Shifts in labor allocation: As repetitive or rules-based tasks become more automated, labor may shift toward higher-value functions. This mirrors historical patterns in which workers moved from agriculture to manufacturing, then from manufacturing to services.
 3. Wage pressures in high-skill sectors: Demand for workers who can develop, guide, or manage AI may increase. This could contribute to wage dispersion between technical roles and nontechnical roles, similar to what occurred during the digital revolution.
 4. Short-term adjustment risks: Periods of technological transition can involve worker retraining needs, friction in hiring markets, and uneven impacts across industries, which may temporarily influence consumer sentiment or spending. Taken together, these factors suggest that AI’s economic impact is unlikely to be uniform. Instead, we may see periods of disruption followed by periods of stronger growth as the technology matures.
- Potential market implications
- While markets are forward-looking, history reminds us that transformative technologies can influ-

ence market structure as industries evolve. Several themes may be relevant:

Broader adoption beyond technology: AI is no longer confined to large-cap tech firms. Demand is expanding across sectors, including infrastructure, utilities, and healthcare, as organizations explore how AI can improve services or reduce operational complexity.

Narrow leadership may broaden over time: Previous innovation cycles (e.g., early computing, early internet) often began with concentrated market leadership and later expanded as adoption grew. While each cycle is unique, diversification remains essential, particularly when a small group of companies plays an outsized role in index performance.

Potential for reduced information gaps: AI can analyze research or market data at extraordinary speed. As adoption increases, price disparities may become less frequent, making it harder for individual investors to identify mispriced securities based solely on public information. That underscores the continued importance of disciplined portfolio construction and long-term planning.

Risks remain integral to the conversation: Cybersecurity vulnerabilities, misinformation, model errors, and lack of transparency remain key concerns highlighted by industry experts and regulatory bodies. As with any innovation, the path forward carries both benefits and limitations that investors should carefully weigh.

What it means for investors today

AI’s influence on jobs, productivity, and markets may ultimately echo previous periods of deep technological change: disruptive in the short term, transformative over the long term. For investors, the key is not

to chase headlines, but to stay grounded in time-tested principles: maintain a globally diversified portfolio; revisit your plan as your goals or the market environment evolves; assess exposure carefully, both to emerging opportunities and to associated risks; and work closely with a financial advisor who can help evaluate complex, rapidly moving trends through the lens of your long-term objectives.

A thoughtful, goals-based approach remains one of the most effective ways to navigate change with confidence. That’s what our Plan Well, Invest Well, Live Well™ strategic financial planning process is designed to do. To see how we can help to guide you and your finances through the future with “Absolute Confidence. Unwavering Partnership. For Life,” schedule a complimentary discovery session at whzwealth.com or call (860) 928-2341.

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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.



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Courtesy

ESPINOSA WINS STATE TITLE

Putnam Middle School fifth grader Teagan Espinosa won the 2026 Elks Hoop Shoot 10-11 year old State championship Saturday morning in Manchester. Espinosa made 21 of her 25 shots to advance to the New England Championships in Portland, Maine on March 7. Espinosa also won the Connecticut State Elks Association “Terry Owens” award for the Best Female Shooter in the state. Bryce Espinosa competed as well in the boys 12-to-13-year-old division making 22 of his 25 shots but fell short to finish in second place by one shot. Bryce finished his Elks Hoop Shoot career with two state titles and one New England championship last year, competing in the National competition in Chicago.



Courtesy

The Putnam Clippers fell short against Somers High School 67-58 last Wednesday night in a non league game. Camden Kell (4 blocks) and TJ Espinosa (1 block) each had 19 points, 9 rebounds, 4 assists and 3 steals in the loss. Senior Nick Devlin added 12 points, 4 rebounds and 2 assists as Putnam falls to 4-5 on the season. Here, Camden Kell goes in for a dunk

OMG Shop in Putnam joins U-Haul dealer network

PUTNAM — U-Haul Co. of Connecticut is pleased to announce that The OMG Shop, a local smoke shop, signed on as a U-Haul® neighborhood dealer to serve the Putnam community.

The OMG Shop at 255 Kennedy Dr. will offer essential services like U-Haul trucks, trailers, towing equipment, and moving supplies.

Normal business hours are 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday and 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday-Sunday. Reserve U-Haul products at this dealer location by calling (860) 481-6298 or visiting <https://www.uhaul.com/Locations/Truck-Rentals-near-Putnam-CT-06260/003693/> today.

The OMG Shop owner Nimisha Patel is proud to team with the industry leader in do-it-yourself moving and self-storage to better meet the demands of Windham County.

U-Haul has teamed with independent dealers to offer rental equipment to do-it-yourself movers since 1945. During these challenging times for small businesses, more than 22,000 dealers across the U.S. and Canada are generating supplemental income through their U-Haul affiliation. When customers rent from a U-Haul dealer, they are directly supporting an independent small business in their community.

Because no financial investment is required to be a dealer, these local affiliates are not U-Haul franchises. They are simply small businesses that have committed a portion of their lot space for U-Haul equipment, and a portion of their time to help meet the mobility needs of their neighbors. Learn more about the dealer program and how to join by visiting [uhaul.com/dealer](https://www.uhaul.com/dealer).

Need moving labor services with your U-Haul rental? Since 2002, Moving Help® has been the No. 1 choice of customers seeking labor for loading and unloading, packing and unpacking, home safe moving, piano moving, cleaning, and U-Box storage container services during their moves. Customers choose the number of workers, hours, and service date needed from a network of 7,800 customer-rated local and independent Moving Help Providers across the U.S. and Canada. Transparent upfront pricing is given, and payment release is subject to customer approval when the job is completed using Moving Help’s patented payment code. Reserve moving labor services at [MovingHelp.com](https://www.MovingHelp.com).

About U-HAUL

Celebrating our 80th anniversary in 2025, U-Haul is the No. 1 choice of do-it-yourself movers with more than 24,000 rental locations across all 50 states and 10 Canadian provinces. The U-Haul app makes it easy for customers to use U-Haul Truck Share 24/7 to access trucks anytime through the self-dispatch and -return options on their smartphones with our patented Live Verify technology. Our customers’ patronage has enabled the U-Haul fleet to grow to 203,000 trucks, 137,400 trailers and 41,700 towing devices. U-Haul is the third largest self-storage operator in North America and offers 1,111,000 rentable storage units and 96.5 million square feet of self-storage space at owned and managed facilities. U-Haul is the top retailer of propane in the U.S. and the largest installer of permanent trailer hitches in the automotive aftermarket industry. Get the U-Haul app from the App Store or Google Play.

Area students named to SUNY Potsdam President’s List

POTSDAM, N.Y. — Kate Ritzau of Dayville and Joaquin Fraga of Woodstock were recently named to the President’s List at The State University of New York at Potsdam.

Ritzau, whose major is Music Education, and Fraga, whose major is Music Education, were among 738 students who were honored for academic excellence in the Fall 2025 semester. SUNY Potsdam President Dr. Suzanne Smith recognized the students for earning top marks.

To achieve the honor of being on the President’s List, each student must have satisfactorily completed 12 numerically-graded semester hours, with a grade point average of 3.5 or higher.

About SUNY Potsdam

Founded in 1816, The State University of New York at Potsdam is one of America’s first 50 colleges -- and the oldest institution within SUNY. Now in its third century, SUNY Potsdam is distinguished by a legacy of pioneering programs and educational excellence. The College currently enrolls approximately 2,500 undergraduate and graduate students. Home to the world-renowned Crane School of Music, SUNY Potsdam is known for its challenging liberal arts and sciences core, distinction in teacher training and culture of creativity. To learn more, visit www.potsdam.edu.

Local student named to Bucknell University Dean’s list

LEWISBURG, Pa. — Bucknell University has named Keenan LaMontagne of Pomfret Center to the dean’s list for outstanding academic achievement during the fall semester of the 2025-26 academic year. A student must earn a grade point average of 3.5 or higher on a scale of 4.0 to receive dean’s list recognition.

LaMontagne is a member of the Class of 2026 majoring in Electrical Engineering.

Putnam Area Foundation awards grant to support Rectory School’s Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service

POMFRET — The Putnam Area Foundation, Inc. (PAF) has awarded Rectory School a community grant in support of the school’s annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, part of a broader \$30,000 investment in nonprofit organizations serving families and residents across Northeastern Connecticut.

The grant will support Rectory’s 2026 Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, a schoolwide initiative that engages every student K-9 in meaningful, hands-on service while helping them better understand their role in the communities they belong to—locally, nationally, and globally.

This year’s program reflects a thoughtful evolution of Rectory’s long-standing commitment to service, guided by the theme Cultivating a Beloved Community, inspired by Dr. King’s vision of a society grounded in care, fairness, and mutual responsibility. Through a combination of a keynote presentation, interactive workshops, and com-

munity-based service projects, students will explore how service is not a single act, but a way of living thoughtfully and responsibly alongside others.

Throughout the day, students will be encouraged to see themselves as members of many interconnected communities—from their families, dorms, classrooms, and teams to their towns, their country, and the wider world. The experience is designed to help students understand that meaningful change does not require grand gestures, but begins with everyday choices, compassion, and action.

“Dr. King believed that everyone can serve, and this grant allows our students to bring that belief to life,” said Head of School, Julie Anderson. “With the support of the Putnam Area Foundation, our students will take part in service that strengthens local organizations while deepening their understanding of what it means to belong to—and contribute to—a caring community.”

“The Putnam Area

Foundation is pleased to fund Rectory’s Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service because it connects students with real needs in Northeastern Connecticut,” said Kyle Borner, Putnam Area Foundation (PAF) Board Member. “By partnering with local organizations and taking on hands-on projects, students see that Dr. King’s call to serve starts right here—through practical action that strengthens the community around them.”

The Putnam Area Foundation’s community grant program supports organizations that strengthen youth opportunities, preserve and share local history, promote volunteer service, and provide critical public-safety and veteran resources across Northeastern Connecticut. Rectory School was selected in recognition of its commitment to developing young people who lead with empathy, responsibility, and purpose.



GRANT continued from page A1

Mountain Laurel Floral Designs announces Valentine’s Day preorders and workshops



DANIELSON — Celebrate the season of love with Mountain Laurel Floral Designs, a locally owned flower and gift shop in the heart of Danielson. This February, Mountain Laurel is hosting a variety of creative workshops for all ages, from watercolor Valentine’s cards to macramé hearts. The shop is also now accepting Valentine’s Day preorders for flowers and gifts through Feb. 7.

“We’re especially excited to introduce our first watercolor classes in February,” said co-owner Pam Blinten. “We’ve been hoping to add watercolor to our workshop lineup for some time, and we’re thrilled to partner with local artist Lauren Richardson to bring these new classes to our community.”

Mountain Laurel continues its commitment to inclusive, family-friendly programming by offering workshops designed for all age groups.

“We’ve made a conscious effort to create activities that everyone in the family can enjoy,” Blinten added. “That’s why we’re excited to bring back our popular Open Art Studio on Feb. 8, featuring fun crafts for children alongside more advanced projects for pre-teens, teens, and adults.”

New this winter, Mountain Laurel is introducing a kids’ craft table available during regular business hours, allowing children to enjoy a quick, hands-on activity while their parents’ shop. January’s featured craft is a fun and easy salt snowflake project.

Customers are encouraged to place Valentine’s

Day flower and gift preorders by Feb. 7. Offerings include a dozen roses for \$85, hand-wrapped bouquets starting at \$50, and designer vase arrangements beginning at \$60. Mountain Laurel is also debuting a new Valentine’s Day DIY Arranging Kit, perfect for Galentine’s gatherings or a cozy date night at home. Kits start at \$120 and are available in a wide range of color palettes, providing everything needed to create beautiful floral arrangements. Delivery is available within a 15-minute radius of the shop on Main Street in Danielson.

“In addition to our specialty flowers, we’re excited to partner with Sadie’s Sweets to offer locally made chocolate truffle boxes. What pairs better with roses than chocolate?” Blinten said. “We’ll also be offering a selection of gifts including plushies, candles, and hand-made cards, all available for preorder.”

To learn more about our Valentine’s gifts or register for upcoming workshops, visit mountainlaurelfloralct.com. Customers are also encouraged to sign up for Mountain Laurel’s email list to receive special monthly workshop offers and updates.

February Workshop

Valentine’s Watercolor Cards

Feb. 1 | 1 – 2:30 p.m.

\$25 - Local artist Lauren Richardson will guide you through painting a beautiful watercolor Valentine’s card for your special someone.

Free Story Hour with

Andrea Smith

Feb. 7 | 9 – 10 a.m.

Free - Join local author Andrea Smith for heartwarming stories and a Valentine’s Day-themed craft.

Macrame Hearts

Feb. 7 | 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

\$25 - Sweet Designs will walk you through crafting adorable hearts using wire, macrame cord and a little love!

Valentine’s Open Art Studio

Feb. 8 | 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Pay Per Craft - Choose from Valentine’s cards, Valentine’s dried flower terrariums, thumbprint heart magnets, and more. Fun for the whole family, with crafts for all ages. Crafts as low as \$2, free to sign up!

Galentine’s Day at Two Dogs Coffee Shop

Feb. 18 | 6 – 8 p.m.

\$55 - Have a date night with a friend! We’ll guide you through how to design pressed flower picture frames while you enjoy your favorite Two Dogs latte! Drink and craft included.

Needle Felted Polar Bears

Feb. 19 | 6 – 8 p.m.

\$55 - Learn how to craft a cute polar bear using wool and a needle. Led by local artist Susan Scott Kenney.

Gabby and Pam create floral arrangements that honor the rhythms of the seasons and host a variety of hands-on workshops that celebrate creativity and connection.

Schwartz Public Lecture

KOBIE BOYKINS

NASA Engineer

Kobie Boykins is a principal mechanical engineer at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory, where he’s worked on every Mars mission since 1996. Passionate about innovation and Earth’s future, Kobie believes understanding other planets is key to preserving our own.

Friday, January 30

7:00 – 8:00 PM

Pomfret School, Hard Auditorium
398 Pomfret St.
Pomfret, CT 06258

POMFRET

This event is free and open to the public. Registration is required. Register at pomfret.org/schwartz.

Joseph Danna of Woodstock achieves Dean’s List at NECC

HAVERHILL, Mass. — Congratulations to Joseph Danna of Woodstock on being named to the Northern Essex Community College Fall 2025 Dean’s List!

To be included, students must attain a grade point average of 3.3 or higher within the term, carry six or more credits within the term, and be matriculated in a degree program.

Northern Essex Community College, the first federally designated Hispanic Serving Institution in New England, is an education leader for the Merrimack Valley. Through a supportive learning environment and cultural inclusion, NECC embraces all identities and inspires initiative and excellence through top-notch affordable certificate and associate degree programs online and at campuses in Haverhill and Lawrence. NECC offers many bachelor’s degree transfer options, workforce development and community education classes, and is host to the NECC Police Academy, MassHire Merrimack Valley, and Gallaudet University’s Regional Center for the deaf and hard of hearing. Visit Northern Essex online at www.necc.mass.edu.

Samuel Hagan named to College of Charleston President’s List

CHARLESTON, S.C. — Samuel Hagan, of Woodstock, was among more than 2,050 students named to the College of Charleston Fall 2025 President’s List. Hagan is majoring in Accounting.

To qualify for the President’s List (Highly Distinguished), students must earn a GPA of 3.800 or higher and complete a minimum of 12 semester hours.

Located in the heart of historic Charleston, S.C., the College of Charleston is a nationally recognized public liberal arts and sciences university. Founded in 1770, the College is among the nation’s top universities for quality education, student life and affordability. Its beautiful and historic campus, combined with contemporary facilities, cutting-edge programs and accessible faculty attracts students from across the U.S. and around the world.

Abbie O’Brien of Dayville named Presidential Scholar at Clarkson University

POTSDAM, N.Y. — Abbie Elizabeth O’Brien of Dayville, a senior majoring in chemical engineering, was named a Presidential Scholar for the Fall 2025 semester at Clarkson University.

Presidential Scholars must achieve a minimum 3.80 grade-point average and carry at least 14 credit hours.

Clarkson University is a proven leader in technological education, research, innovation and sustainable economic development. With its main campus in Potsdam, N.Y., and additional graduate program and research facilities in the Capital Region and Hudson Valley, Clarkson faculty have a direct impact on more than 7,800 students annually through nationally recognized undergraduate and graduate STEM designated degrees in engineering, business, science and health professions; executive education, industry-relevant credentials and K-12 STEM programs. Alumni earn salaries among the top 2 percent in the nation: one in five already leads in the c-suite. To learn more, go to www.clarkson.edu.

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Crossword Puzzle

1				2		3	
				4			
5							
						6	
7			8				
			9				

ACROSS

- 1. Related to onions
- 4. Passage of minutes
- 5. Reason
- 6. Artificial intelligence
- 7. Liquid meals
- 9. Browned bread

DOWN

- 1. Scoops liquid
- 2. Bases for soups
- 3. Importance given
- 8. Cooking vessel

Answers:
Across
1. Leeks 4. Time 5. Logic 6. AI 7. Soups
9. Toast
Down
1. Ladles 2. Stocks 3. Emphasis 8. Pot

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



1789: The first American novel is printed in Boston.

1915: Kiwanis International is founded in Detroit.

1948: The Flag of Quebec is adopted and flown for the first time over the National Assembly of Quebec.

NEW WORD

CHOWDER

thick, hearty soup defined by its chunky texture

Food FACT:

This soup is traditionally smooth and creamy and often begins with a shellfish stock.

Answer: Bisque

How they say that in...

- English: Soup
- Spanish: Sopa
- Italian: Minestra
- French: Soupe
- German: Suppe

Did You KNOW?

The earliest archaeological evidence of consuming soup dates back to 6,000 BC, when the soup featured hippopotamus meat, sparrows, lentils, and vegetables.



Get the PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Noodle soup

The Week in Sports at Woodstock Academy

Boys Basketball
Woodstock Academy 61
East Lyme 53 (OT)
The Centaurs were down by seven with just over five minutes left in regulation on Jan. 13 when Drake Abdullovski suddenly came alive. The sophomore, who came in averaging over 20 points a game, had only two in the first three quarters against the Vikings, But Abdullovski, who finished with 16 points, hit four 3-pointers in 2:19 and put the Centaurs up by three. East Lyme rallied to force the game into overtime but the Centaurs (4-3, 2-0 Eastern Connecticut Conference Division II) outscored the Vikings 9-1 in the extra period for the win. Vuk Lisancic, who had six blocks in the game, contributed 13 points and fellow big Mert Coker had 10 for the Centaurs.
Karch Kaczor led East Lyme (1-7, 0-4) with 18 points.
NFA 54
Woodstock Academy 42
The Centaurs owned a one-point halftime lead but scored only 15 second half points on Jan. 16, including just five in the third quarter and the Wildcats were able to overtake their visitors.
Xawier Matwiej led Woodstock Academy (4-4) with 14 points, all of those came in the first half. Drake Abdullovski had seven points in the first half but only made a 3-pointer in the second half to finish with 10 points.
Josh Lavoie was the only player in double figures for NFA (4-5), which won its third straight game, as he finished with 23 points.

Girls Basketball
Ledyard 45
Woodstock Academy 44
Not having your floor general can make life difficult.
Just ask the Centaurs.

Woodstock Academy point guard Kaylee Saucier was felled by illness on Jan. 13, and the Colonels (5-2) took advantage and recorded the one-point, Eastern Connecticut Conference non-divisional win.
Isabel D’Alleva-Bochain led the Centaurs (5-4), who lost for the first time in four games, with 11 points while Allison Camara added 10.

Killingly High School Weekly Sports Wrap-Up

Girls Basketball
Killingly Girls Basketball (3-5) was led in a loss against NFA (3-7) on Jan. 13, behind 9 points and 13 rebounds from Amaya Spadola, while Ella Adams added 8 points, and Gianna Peters added 12 points and 5 rebounds!
Final Score: NFA 60 - Killingly 41
Catrina Turgeon and Declyn Benjamin each added 6 points for Killingly.
S a v a n n a h Guernsey had 21 points, and Jazin Torres had 19 points for NFA.
On Jan. 15, the girls (4-5) were led in a win against Amistad (1-11) behind 10 points from Gianna Peters, while Amaya Spadola added 10 points and 11 rebounds, and Aislynn Hassett added 10 points and 5 steals, and Ella Adams added 9 points!
Final Score: Killingly 51 - Amistad 18
Declyn Benjamin added 6 points for Killingly.
Serenity Barnaby had 13 points for Amistad.

The girls (5-5) were led in a win against Hale Ray (6-2) to close out the week on Jan. 17 behind 16 points and 4 steals from Gracie Pekarovic-West, while Ella Adams added 14 points and 5 assists, Amaya Spadola added 9 points and 18 rebounds, and Gianna Peters added 8 points 5 rebounds and 4 assists!
Final Score: Killingly 53 - Hale Ray 42.
Mia Pisciotti had 25 points for Hale Ray.

Local students earn Dean’s List honors at Nichols College

DUDLEY, Mass. — Nichols College is proud to recognize the academic accomplishments of students on the fall 2025 Dean’s List.

Dean’s List recognizes those students who achieve high grades during a single semester. To be included on the Dean’s List, a student must have a minimum grade point average of 3.5 for at least 12 undergraduate credit-hours and must have received no grades below B- during the semester.

The following local students have achieved Dean’s List honors for the fall 2025 semester:

Taylor Annis of North Grosvenordale
Sage Bukowski of North Grosvenordale
Kyle Busha of N Grosvenordale
Sebastian Hanshaw of N Grosvenordale
Jenna Bankowski of Pomfret Center
William Bushey of Woodstock Valley
Chloe Difusco of Danielson
Lilah Dunn of Danielson
Jonah Libby of Pomfret
Joanne Schroth of Danielson
Lincoln Waterman of Danielson

About Nichols College

Nichols College has earned business accreditation from the prestigious Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International), the longest serving global accrediting body for business schools and the largest business education network connecting learners, educators, and businesses worldwide. Founded in 1815, Nichols transforms today’s students into tomorrow’s leaders through a dynamic, career-focused business and professional education. Nichols offers real-world learning focused on professional depth - combined with vibrant living, competitive athletics, and an unmatched alumni advantage - equipping students to exceed their own expectations. www.nichols.edu

Local students earn President’s List honors at Nichols College

DUDLEY, Mass. — Nichols College is proud to recognize the academic accomplishments of students on the fall 2025 President’s List.

President’s List recognizes those students who achieve high grades during a single semester. Students whose semester grade point average is 3.85 or higher for at least 12 undergraduate credit-hours and no grades below B- will receive President’s List honors.

The following local students have achieved President’s List honors:

Brady Devlin of Putnam
Logan LaFrance of Putnam
Alekos Basley of Danielson
Ava Hovestadt of Woodstock
Ryan Odorski of Woodstock
Kaitlyn Tingle of Danielson
Alivia Dalpe of Thompson

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Assumption students named to Dean’s List

WORCESTER, Mass. — Assumption University has announced those who have been named to the University’s Dean’s List for the fall 2025 semester. Students named to the Dean’s List must achieve a grade point average of 3.5 for a five-class, 15-credit semester to be included on this prestigious list, which is announced at the completion of the fall and spring semesters.

Aidan Defilippo of Thompson
Audrey DeFilippo of Thompson
Avi Miller of Danielson

“Earning the right to be named to the Assumption University’s Dean’s List is an extraordinary accomplishment and we congratulate those students who demonstrated exemplary academic excellence this semester,” said Assumption University President Greg Weiner, Ph.D. “These students have demonstrated a deep commitment to the pursuit of truth in the company of friends that lies at the heart of the Catholic liberal education Assumption provides.”

About Assumption University

Assumption University, founded in 1904 by the Augustinians of the Assumption, is a premier New England university for high-quality education, integrating career preparation and education of the whole person, drawing upon the best in the rich and centuries-long tradition of Catholic higher education. Assumption’s graduates are known for their intellectual seriousness, thoughtful citizenship, and devotion to the common good. The University offers 37 majors and 49 minors in the liberal arts, sciences, business, nursing, professional studies, and other areas, as well as graduate degrees and professional credentials. For more information about Assumption University, please visit assumption.edu or follow us @AssumptionUMA.

CT Audubon announces Bill McKibben talk, documentary film screenings, book discussions

POMFRET — The Connecticut Audubon Society’s Center at Pomfret will once again offer its popular Tuesday Winter Series every Tuesday from Jan. 27 through March 24, at 6:30 p.m. All events in the series are free of charge, with registration requested for planning purposes and to receive a Zoom link.

Sarah Heminway, the director of the Center, says, “We have a great lineup of programs, including a talk by author and environmentalist Bill McKibben on February 3rd via Zoom either at the Center or at home.”

The following week, the Connecticut Audubon Society monthly book club will discuss McKibben’s latest book, “Here Comes the Sun: A Last Chance for the Climate and a Fresh Chance for Civilization.” Book discussions are Zoom only from home.

The Tuesday Winter Series includes four environmentally thought-provoking films hosted at the Center by the Pomfret Green Team. Each screening will be followed by a discussion of its topics. The Team will provide free popcorn.

To view the entire schedule of the Tuesday Winter Series programming and register, go to ctaudubon.org/pomfret-programs-events.

Local students earn Dean’s List honors at Nichols College

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Jenna Bankowski of Pomfret Center
William Bushey of Woodstock Valley
Chloe Difusco of Danielson
Lilah Dunn of Danielson
Jonah Libby of Pomfret

Joanne Schroth of Danielson
Lincoln Waterman of Danielson

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SKI SLOPES

WORD SEARCH

T	D	R	T	C	T	P	P	M	T	W	V	O	J	P	K	T	N	C	X
L	F	A	C	A	L	E	H	X	I	E	L	T	J	R	G	L	A	D	E
S	S	U	V	S	L	A	K	U	V	C	H	A	I	R	I	L	K	P	N
C	L	O	N	A	B	U	C	C	P	C	G	N	I	V	R	A	C	N	A
L	O	O	I	T	L	D	Y	I	A	O	A	H	E	R	W	P	W	P	L
M	P	B	G	R	R	A	D	I	T	J	L	D	L	I	F	T	R	L	O
G	E	T	M	O	J	N	N	Y	C	R	G	E	Y	B	E	E	V	R	D
N	D	S	P	W	S	X	G	C	D	E	N	S	J	S	J	E	F	N	
I	W	G	T	W	B	B	I	G	H	O	S	V	U	S	E	M	W	Y	O
R	A	N	M	N	T	K	L	P	X	E	H	X	K	X	O	O	C	E	G
S	S	I	D	A	G	L	J	A	H	C	G	I	G	O	L	W	E	C	N
P	H	D	F	R	T	N	T	R	C	K	L	B	R	P	W	C	B	O	D
F	E	N	J	K	I	T	I	E	I	K	R	G	W	Y	W	C	A	S	Y
K	L	I	O	Y	E	A	C	Y	F	W	D	O	X	N	E	S	T	L	H
P	M	B	V	R	S	E	K	A	P	X	N	I	O	C	Y	I	R	S	F
F	E	J	R	F	E	P	E	L	W	S	M	A	A	X	N	E	R	L	G
A	T	A	N	G	U	D	T	E	N	A	B	P	G	M	D	J	U	U	O
T	I	X	U	V	C	Y	L	S	F	V	X	L	R	W	O	Y	K	G	T
N	T	K	E	L	S	D	V	A	S	X	I	T	O	A	W	N	R	O	N
R	E	N	C	H	T	V	K	B	J	S	A	P	A	X	O	Y	D	M	G

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

WORDS

APRES-SKI
AVALANCHE
BASE LAYER
BINDINGS
BLACK DIAMOND
CARVING
CHAIR
DROP
EDGE
GLADE
GONDOLA
GROOMER
HELMET
JACKET
LIFT
MOGULS
POLES
POWDER
SLOPE
SNOWFLOW
TERRAIN
TICKET
VERTICAL
WAX

Pirates and privateers

Inclement 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 a.m. or later and see if anyone answers.

The Killingly Historical Society is pleased to announce that they have acquired copies of several interesting Connecticut books which are now available for \$20 each at the Killingly Historical Center, 196 Main St., Danielson, during regular business hours. The books are as follows: Connecticut Pirates and Privateers by Wick Griswold, Connecticut Witch Trials by Cynthia W. Boynton, Spies of Revolutionary Connecticut from Benedict Arnold to Nathan Hale, Revolutionary War Ghosts of Connecticut by Courtney McIvale, and Hidden History of Connecticut's Union Soldiers by John Banks.

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

February is Black History Month: As part of their America's 250 Anniversary programming, the Putnam Public Library and the Aspinock Historical Society will host "Slavery in New England" with Tom



KILLINGLY
AT 300
MARGARET
WEAVER

Kelleher (Old Sturbridge Village Historian) on Wednesday, Feb. 11 from 6-7:30 p.m. (Snow date- Feb. 18). Tom's program explores "the peculiar institution" in the colonies, and how it has shaped New England Society from the 1600's through today. Putnam Municipal Complex.

I have begun reading "Connecticut Pirates and Privateers" by Wick Griswold, one of the books now available at the Killingly Historical Center. It's quite interesting and very informative. I quickly learned that there was a lot of "muddy water" between who was a privateer and who was a pirate. Do you know the difference? A Google search provided the following: "A privateer is a private ship authorized by a government with a "letter of marque" to attack enemy vessels during wartime, essentially acting as a government-sanctioned raider, while a pirate is a lawless outlaw who attacks any ship for personal gain, without government sanction. The key difference is authorization: privateers operate legally under government commission (though often blurring lines), while pirates

break all laws and are hunted as criminals by all nations." (AI) According to Wick Griswold, Revolutionary Gov. Jonathan Trumbull, from Lebanon, issued many letters of marque to state ships, enabling them to become privateers during the Revolution. He wrote, "A typical Trumbull letter of marque would be similar to the one he wrote for 'Eli Rogers, Mariner and Commander of a Vessel or Boat called the Gull belonging to Capt. Rueben Rose & Co. of said state--- You may by force of arms attack, subdue, and take all ships and other vessels belonging to the Crown of Great Britain, or any of the subjects thereof, on the high seas...except the ships or vessels with their cargo belonging to any inhabitant or inhabitants of Bermuda...You shall bring such ships & vessels as you shall take with their guns, rigging, tackle, furniture and lading to some convenient port in this state, that proceedings may be had in due time before the courts...You shall keep and preserve every ship or vessel and cargo by you taken until they by sentence of a court properly authorized be adjudged lawful prize or acquitted..."(p.63-64). Griswold devotes a number of chapters in his book to Connecticut privateers. Did you know that stories persist about pirate treasure being hidden here in Northeastern Connecticut? I first learned the legend

from the late Harry Chase of Pomfret over fifty years ago. Wick Griswold relates how some believe that the famous pirate Captain Teach (Blackbeard) secreted treasure in Hampton and how numerous individuals searched for its location. I don't want to spoil the story so will leave you to read it for yourselves (p. 34). Once again, the book is fun to read, is quite interesting, and is available at the Killingly Historical Center. Since this year is the 250th anniversary of the founding of our country, I thought I'd take a glimpse back in time to Killingly in early 1776. There is no local newspaper at that time. However, town meeting records do exist and provide an idea of the families which were in Killingly at that time (before the first U.S. Census in 1790). At the annual town meeting in December 1775 Esq. Brown was chosen moderator. Mistery Jonathan Ellis, Benjamin Leavins, Captain Warren, Wyman Huchans, and Hez (Hezekiah) Green were chosen selectmen. From my knowledge of Killingly's history, I realized that each section of town was represented by a selectman, from Thompson Parish on the north (Green) to the southern part of town (Huchans). Residents would have been able to express their concerns to these individuals without having to travel from one end of Killingly to the other (the Massachusetts border to the Plainfield line). In terms of social structure, selectmen also seemed

to have been of a higher "rank" than many of the inhabitants. I also know a number were descents of the earliest families---Leavins, Green, Warren. Town offices in 1776 were certainly different than today. Surveyors of highways were as follows: Nathaniell Teller, Edward Joslin, William Dwight, Winthrop Chandler, John Bates, Joseph Joslin, Jesse Larned, Isaac Whitmore, Ebenezer Lee, Luke Upham, Nathaniell Mills, Jr., Capt. Keth, Francis Elliot (I have tried to write out full names where they have been abbreviated). Highwaymen: John Adams, David Perry, Oliver Richmond (D?), Benjamin Leavins, John Fuller, Jared Tolbut, Eleazer Meghill, Capt. Felshaw, James Paul, Bazilla Fisher, Zadock Spaulding, Comfort Day, John Barrit, Nathaniel Spaulding, Isaac Cady, Josiah Hulit, Dudley Wade. Fenceviewers: John Mason. Listers: Thomas Dike, Alphius Convars, John Whitmore, Joseph Torry, Parly Howe, David Cady, Barsilla Fisher. Sealers of Leather: Nathaniel Mi()d., Junior, Michall Adams, Wymon Hutchens. Grandjurymen: Benjamin Meriam, David Buck, Bresilla Fisher, Jacob Spaulding. Tithingmen: () Bates, Obed Clow, Ebenezer Star, Samson Howe Joseph Cady, Sen., James Paul. Branders of horses: Jacob Conves, Resolved Johnson, Ezra Brown (these men were likely blacksmiths by occupation). Sealer of "Wates and Mesures":

Simon Davis. Kee Keepers: Samuel Watson, John Felshaw, Jr., Simon Spaulding (of the churches in the three church societies---North/Thompson, Middle (Killingly Hill/ Putnam Heights, South Killingly). Hog constables: John Levon and Elijah Childs. (Extracted from Connecticut Town Meeting Records during the American Revolution, Vo. I, Ashford-Milford) by Jolene Roberts Mullen, under Dec. 1775). Several years ago DAR expert Ida Ransom informed me that even individuals whose ancestors held public office during the time of the Revolution were eligible for the DAR. Perhaps a reader will discover an ancestor that helps in their DAR quest. Both volumes are in the collection at the Killingly Historical Center. (Note that even in the recording of the names, spellings are erratic. I have left them as is with the thought that if you're searching for an ancestor, various spellings might help).

Margaret M. Weaver Killingly Municipal Historian, January 2026. 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.

Pinback buttons

Today's column will focus on pinback buttons. Pinback buttons are usually round metal discs with a pin attached to the back that you can wear on a shirt, jacket, etc. We often associate them with political campaigns, but they were used in advertising, political messaging, and for other purposes.

I'll start by providing some history on pinback buttons. Prior to pinbacks several variations of clothes fastener buttons were created by craftsmen to commemorate George Washington's inauguration in 1789. Mount Vernon has nine different inaugural button versions in their collection, according to



ANTIQUES,
COLLECTIBLES
& ESTATES
WAYNE
TUISKULA

their website. One has an eagle with the date March 4, 1789, when Washington was originally scheduled to be inaugurated. It was rescheduled to April 30. Another popular president's campaign advanced the use of buttons. During Lincoln's 1860 campaign ferro-type (also known as tintype) photographs were made into campaign buttons. The images on thin metal sheets were reproduced and typically inserted inside of brass holders with campaign messages embossed on the brass. In 1896, the Whitehead and Hoag Company began producing brightly colored pin-

back buttons using a new plastic material called celluloid. Political buttons are some of the most popular with collectors. The American Political Items Collectors group lists several subcategories of pinbacks. Some are presidential campaigns, focus on a single election year, single political parties, 3D items, local campaigns, Women's Suffrage movement, Prohibition movement, social causes, and Civil Rights. Other types of collectible pinback buttons include comic characters, events, advertising, funny or serious sayings, entertainment, and sports. You can buy some pinbacks for under a dollar while others can sell well into the thousands, and we've seen some good

results in our auctions. A group of political pinbacks, including McKinley for president, sold for over \$200. A group of 17 advertising, souvenir, Temperance Movement, circus & other pinbacks went for \$330 in 2024. As you might expect, sports related pinbacks are some of the most collectibles. Twelve early 1900s tobacco premium and 1930 Cracker Jack baseball pinbacks brought over \$260. Major Taylor was an African American cyclist who lived in Worcester and is in the U.S. Bicycling Hall of Fame. A pinback button labeled "Black vs. White" promoted an 1898 race between Taylor and Eddie McDuffee. It sold in one of our 2022 auctions for over \$1,400. There is also a Worcester connection to one of the most iconic pinback but-

tons ever made. Harvey Ball is said to have created the iconic smiley face image that became popular on buttons since the 1960s. An article in the Smithsonian Magazine said that Ball was paid \$45 for what took him about 10 minutes to design the image for the State Mutual Life Assurance Company. Smiley face pinback buttons with the original State Mutual markings on the back have recently sold between \$10 and \$60 in online auctions. It's not a windfall but still enough to put a smile on your face. The single-collector Civil War auction we've been working on will begin soon. We're preparing for a major auction with fine jewelry, sterling silver, art, and other antiques and collectibles that will take place after that. We also have been



accepting consignments for a major sports and comic book auction that will take place in the summer. It will feature the first baseball Ted Williams signed when he signed a contract with the Boston Red Sox. Please visit our website https://central-massauctions.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).

LEGALS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ESTATE OF
Joan Marie Meagher (25-00050)
The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated January 12, 2026, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.
Elyssa A. Foley, Clerk
The fiduciary is:
Cheryl A St. Onge,
1060 Dennison Drive,
Southbridge, MA 01550
January 23, 2026

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ESTATE OF
Jean L Carlson (26-00005)
The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated January 13, 2026, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.
Brenda Duquette, Chief Clerk
The fiduciary is:
Thomas J Stone,
13 Bayberry Road,
Old Saybrook, CT 06475
January 23, 2026

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ESTATE OF
Scott Carter Shea (25-00475)
The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated January 2, 2026, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.
Elyssa A. Foley, Clerk
The fiduciary is:
Valerie Shea,
101 Scotland Road, Floor 2,
Norwich, CT 06360
January 23, 2026

Town of Woodstock PZC
On January 8, 2026, the Town of Woodstock Planning & Zoning Decision made the following decision:
•Approved Application #668-09-25, Activity on a Scenic Road, 259 Quarry Road (MBL#6389/70/23). Applicant: Kings Highway Farm, LLC/Brian Sheldon
Details of these approvals may be obtained by contacting the Woodstock Land Use Department at landuse@woodstockct.gov
January 23, 2026

LEGAL NOTICE
WITCHES WOOD TAX DISTRICT
TAX COLLECTOR'S NOTICE
The second installment of Real Estate

bills listed on the October 1, 2024 Grand List become due and payable to the Witches Woods Tax District on January 1, 2026.
Payments must be postmarked by February 2, 2026 to avoid interest charges. Interest will be charged on February 3, 2026 on all delinquent payments at the rate of one and a half percent per month or a minimum charge of \$2.00 per tax bill, in accordance with Section 12-146 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Failure to receive a tax bill does not invalidate the tax or the interest. (Section 12-130 C.G.S.) If you did not receive a tax bill, please contact the Tax Collector immediately. If you have any questions, please contact the Tax Collector's Office at taxwlake@gmail.com or the Assessor's office at 860-928-6929 ext. 326. Payments must be sent to:
WITCHES WOODS TAX DISTRICT
PO Box 725, WOODSTOCK, CT 06281-0725
Frederick Chmura
Tax Collector
January 23, 2026

TOWN OF KILLINGLY
BOROUGH OF DANIELSON
SOUTH KILLINGLY FIRE DISTRICT
TAX AND SEWER USE NOTICE
The third quarter installment of real estate and personal property taxes for the Town of Killingly, the Borough of Danielson, and South Killingly Fire

District and the second half of the Sewer Use charge is due January 1, 2026. Supplemental Motor Vehicle taxes are also due January 1, 2026. Taxes and Sewer Use will become delinquent on February 2, 2026. All are subject to interest at the rate of 18% per annum, 1.5% per month or any fraction of a month, from the due date. A minimum of \$2.00 interest will be charged for each delinquent bill and installment.
FAILURE TO RECEIVE A BILL DOES NOT RELIEVE OR EXCUSE THE OBLIGATION OF TAX OR INTEREST DUE.
Payments will be received in the Revenue Office, 172 Main Street Killingly CT 06239, during the posted hours, by mail, online, or in our drop box. Please visit our website for full details and online payments www.killingly.org.
April Lamothe, CCMC
Revenue Collector
Town of Killingly
December 26, 2025
January 9, 2026
January 23, 2026

Woodstock Hist Dist Comm public hearing Jan 28, 6:30 pm for: 1. 543 Rt 169 First Cong Church Woodstock for windows; 2. 602 Rt 169 Kristen Keller for sign; 3. 57 Academy Rd Woodstock Academy for lighting. G White, Chair.
January 23, 2026

OBITUARIES

Cynthia Ann LeBeau, 69



Cynthia Ann LeBeau of Danielson, CT passed away on December 25, 2025, aged 69. Born in Putnam, CT Cindy was the beloved daughter of Ernest L. and Arlene E. (Woodward) LeBeau, of Danielson, CT.

Cindy attended ARC Eastern CT programs and later workshops with the Dempsey Regional Center and Northeast Placement Services (NEPS). She was a resident of Sunrise Northeast and was well cared for by the devoted staff there for several years. Cindy enjoyed crafts, especially beading, making many colorful bracelets and necklaces. She loved movies and music and was a big fan of The Wizard of Oz and Hello Kitty. She will be deeply

missed.

Cindy is survived by her mother, her brother Mark and wife Judy, of Bourne, MA. She leaves her niece and nephews Rex, Curtis, and Renee, and their families, and many extended family and friends. She was predeceased her father, by her brother Brian, and his partner Joyce Hewitt. A calling hour will be Saturday, March 14, 2026 from 10:00 to 11:00AM at Gagnon and Costello Funeral Home, 33 Reynolds Street, Danielson, CT. A Funeral Service will follow at 11:00 AM at the Funeral Home, and burial will follow at Holy Cross Cemetery, Danielson, CT. Share a memory at GagnonandCostellofh.com

Donations in lieu of flowers can be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, PO Box 1000, Memphis, TN 38101-9908.

Joseph “Richard” A. LeBeau, 91



Joseph “Richard” A. LeBeau, 91, of W. Thompson, Connecticut, passed away peacefully in the morning hours of January 5, 2026, at Matulaitis Rehabilitation and Nursing Facility in Putnam, CT.

Born on July 5, 1934, in W. Thompson, where he spent his entire life, Richard was the beloved son of the late Yvonne (Bergeron) and Alfred LeBeau. He attended Tourtellotte Memorial High School where he also played on the school basketball team. Following high school, he proudly served in the United States Marine Corps and was stationed in Korea and Japan before being honorably discharged in 1956.

In 1957, Richard married June (Groleau) LeBeau of Oxford, MA. They celebrated 68 years of marriage last year. June resides in Lisbon, CT with her daughter Karen.

He was a fluent French speaker as both of his parents migrated to the United States from Canada. Richard was always ready with a joke and a twinkle in his eye. He loved watching the Boston Red Sox and UConn Women's Basketball, took cherished yearly Thanksgiving-week trips to Cape Cod with his family, and enjoyed fixing cars for friends and family. In his younger years, townspeople often spotted him cruising around in his old red Chevy pickup—affectionately known as “Big Red.” He was an exceptional card player, teaching generations of his family the pitch and rummy games, where he was rarely defeated.

Richard was a familiar sight around town, walking daily to breakfast, collecting litter along the road, stopping first at Xtra Mart, and then heading to the Village Restaurant to chat with his buddies.

Richard is survived by his devoted wife June and their two daughters: Lori LeBeau Roy of Port St. Lucie, FL, and Karen LeBeau Jackson of Lisbon, CT. He leaves behind five grandchildren who adore him: Kristi Langevin Ventura of Port St. Lucie, FL; Mathew Jackson of Danielson, CT; Nickolas Roy of Brooklyn, CT; Leah Jackson of Norwich, CT; and Maegan Roy of Greenville, SC. He was also blessed with two great-grandchildren, Brayden Roy and Bodhi Jackson, who brought him great joy. Share a memory at SmithandWalkerfh.com

Lisa Marie Collins 1964-2026



Lisa Marie Collins of Woodstock died unexpectedly at home at New Roxbury Village Friday, January 9, 2026. She was the daughter of Marilyn (Boudreau) Stachura and was raised in Killingly by her mother and stepfather, Bronac Stachura whom she called, Dad. In addition to her parents, she is survived by her children, Brian Steele of Hartford; Alicia Bouthiller of Millbury, MA, and Ashley Bouthiller of Auburn, MA. She is also survived by her siblings including Linda Brule of Lisbon; Gary Provost of Brooklyn; Lori Casto and her husband, Randy of Thompson; David Day and his husband, Eric of Thompson; and Brenda Rich and her husband, Craig of Woodstock, and her sister-in-kind, Susan (Day) Burtchell. Lisa also leaves her long-time companion, Matthew Thibeault of Wales, MA along with 3 granddaughters, several beloved and special nieces and nephews, aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends. She was pre-deceased by her brother, Danny Provost; her sister-in-kind, Marlene (Day) Paille, and her brother-in-law, Dennis Brule.

Lisa loved her children more than the sun, the moon, and the stars. She savored family time whether it was small, intimate outings and conversations or large gatherings where her bright, enthusiastic, and energetic personality stood out. Where there were children, there was Aunt Lisa to love them up and show them a good time. She didn't hold grudges and always made sure to express her love and let people know what they meant to her. She lived simply yet enjoyed sharing and giving generously to others and saw a friend in every stranger. Her journey was not untouched by adversity, but she had a fierce spirit and her strengths outweighed her limitations. Despite her own disabilities, she found meaning and purpose helping others when she could and spent time as a volunteer with TEEG helping in the food pantry for those who are living with food insecurity. Her flame has gone out way too soon, but her light remains in the hearts of all who knew and loved her.

Lisa loved God. Her family and friends are invited to a service of remembrance and celebration of life at the First Congregational Church of Woodstock, 543 CT – 169, Woodstock, CT on her birthday, Sunday, February 08, 2026 at 2:00pm. Donations may be made in honor of Lisa's memory to TEEG at teegonline.org. or P.O. Box 664, 15 Thatcher Road, No Grosvenordale, CT 06255.

Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the Gilman Funeral Home & Crematory. For memorial guestbook visit www.GilmanAndValade.com

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Richard enjoyed a long and successful career with Pratt & Whitney Aircraft in East Hartford, CT. He began as a machinist and retired as a foreman at the age of 55, receiving a golden handshake after decades of hard work and dedication. Outside of his profession, he was a true jack of all trades—mechanically gifted, always tinkering, building, fixing, or improving something. He took great pride in his home, his meticulously kept yard, and especially his large yearly garden. Anyone who visited could count on going home with fresh vegetables.

Natalie C. Rettig, 91



MOOSUP - Natalie C. Rettig passed from this life on January 15, 2026. She was 91 years old. Natalie was a resident of the Danielson/Plainfield area as well as Florida for her entire life. She was wed to Wayne Rettig in Danielson in 1953. They enjoyed a long and adventurous 50 years together. He predeceased her in 2004. She was the daughter of Napoleon and Rose Gosselin. Natalie is survived by her son Tommy Rettig (Suzanne), grandchildren Adam Rettig (Heather) and Bethany Blanchette (Chris) and five great-grandchildren. Natalie was also predeceased by her sister Marylyn Burns, brother Richard Blanchette and Natalie's long time companion Donald Miller. She is further survived by Mary Beth (Donald's daughter) and William Hall, with whom she made her home later in life. Natalie worked for the former Electromotive company in Willimantic for several years and was an optical assistant for local Optometrists Drs. Herbert Schneider and Robert McNeil for many years. She proudly became the first female member of the Danielson lodge of Elks in the early 2000s. The family sincerely thanks the Day Kimball Hospice team for their wonderful care for Natalie in her final weeks.

There will be no calling hours and burial will be at the convenience of the family. To leave a condolence or share a memory, please visit www.DoughertyBrothers.com

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MURALFEST continued from page A1

the Walldogs on a virtual tour of Putnam.

“It was so important to show them the physical characteristics of our beautiful town, along with its passionate, festive vibe, commitment to public art, can-do spirit, and the warm, welcoming nature of our residents,” said Colangelo. “We quite literally put on the dog for the Walldogs, and it paid off.”

MuralFest Putnam is a public art collaboration that welcomes sign painters and muralists from across the country and around the world, and engages local artists, supporters, businesses, organizations, donors, and the community-at-large. Plans call for Putnam's rich history to be captured in a series of privately funded, stunning, storytelling murals.

The beautiful artwork elevates community pride, drives economic development, and boosts tourism. Learn more about The Walldogs at <https://thewalldogs.org/>, and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/TheOriginalWalldogs/>.

Walldog Jay Allen, author

of the book, “The Walldogs – America's Different Breed of Public Art Muralists,” explained that a Walldog festival in a selected town is a win for everyone.

“It's a win for the Walldogs and their ability to promote public art. It's a win for the people of Putnam who are going to give this gift to future generations...and the bigger win is humanity. This project takes us back to the same place, and that is the root words of ‘community,’ ‘common,’ and ‘unity.’ That weekend, we all have one common unity, and that is the beautification of your town,” he said.

Nineteen committee members in attendance at the meeting each spoke of their love for the Putnam community and their commitment to move the MuralFest Putnam project forward. The effort launched in May 2025, and has already raised \$45,000 in private funds, attracted dozens of volunteers, and garnered commitments for building locations to display the murals. The Aspinock Historical Society has been vetting historic individuals and events that shaped Putnam's history as subject

matter for the murals.

Walldog Founder Nancy Bennett commented on the unique passion displayed for Putnam, and quipped, “I feel like we're going to have to get on this bandwagon and hang on.”

The date change allows organizers to advance efforts for fundraising, mural selection and locations, lodging, meals, transportation, and other logistical planning. The town of Putnam has posted information at <https://www.putnamct.us/departments/economic-and-community-development>.

To join the movement, contact MuralFest Putnam Community Coordinator Elaine Turner at eturner245@gmail.com, or attend a monthly meeting on the third Thursday of the month at 5:30 p.m. in Room 201 at the Putnam Municipal Complex, 200 School St., in Putnam. Upcoming meeting dates are Feb. 19, March 19, April 16, May 21, and June 18.



Norma Place Demanche November 29, 1956 – January 14, 2026



Norma passed away on January 14, 2026 after a lengthy illness.

She was the daughter of the late Harry J. Place and Mary E. (Suprenant) Place. She is survived by her husband Louis Demanche; mother-in-law Eleanor Demanche; sisters Keri Buell (John), Doreen Roy (Richard), and Cindy Hamilton; brother-in-law James Demanche; her nephews Tom Buell (Patti), Travis Demanche; nieces Lisa Kellermann (Brian), Ashlee Gilligan (Shane), Emily Hamilton; great-nieces Emma and Anna; and many other cherished friends and relatives.

Norma was predeceased by her brother, Walt, stepfather Henry Abdallah and step-

mother Dorothy (Fales) Place.

Norma grew up in Woodstock and graduated from Woodstock Academy. She worked at several jobs in the area, including 22 years at Numa Tool in Thompson. She enjoyed her role as navigator while traveling with Lou, hiking, reading, word search puzzles, being outside and enjoying time with family and friends including hanging out with the B Bentley Band. She was a volunteer at the Woodstock Historical Society.





A celebration of life will be held on January 31, 2026 at 2:00 pm at Br. Cares Comm Center, 31 Tiffany St, Brooklyn, CT. A burial will be held this spring at Center Cemetery, County Road, Woodstock, CT 06281. Share a memory at SmithandWalkerfh.com

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



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