



PUTNAM VILLAGER

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Putnam Rotary's Christmas story



The Day Kimball Inpatient and Outpatient Behavioral Health department with their Putnam Rotary Club gift bags.

PUTNAM — The Putnam Rotary Club, focused this year helping the less fortunate, raised funds and then executed a massive gift bag program to help several groups that have the same calling. Putnam Rotary Club President Kathy Kirk's "Boots on the Ground" program took months of planning, research and work by Rotarians. She said, "This year, the

Putnam Rotary Club felt it was important for our club to move beyond fund-raising alone, and become more personally engaged with the people we serve. Our 'Boots on the Ground' initiative reflects our passion for hands-on service and meaningful connection within our communities. Through this effort, we plan to focus our time and energy on supporting local veterans, seniors,

individuals facing mental health, challenges, and those experiencing homelessness. Last week, the members came together to pack 175 bags filled with clothing and personal necessities for four local homeless agencies and the mental health department at Day Kimball Hospital. This project was a powerful first step in our Boots on the Ground initiative and reflects our deep commitment and passion for serving those facing homelessness and mental health challenges with dignity and compassion." The club's service area covers Putnam,



The Putnam Rotary Club "elves" making short work of packing 175 gift bags for those in need.

Thompson, Woodstock, Pomfret and Eastford. The club members gathered last week and had a gift bag assembly line. Rotarians divided themselves into production lines and deftly put all the bags together. The bags were then delivered to the groups who serve those who need help. The Day Kimball Inpatient and Outpatient Behavioral Health department received 60 bags that contained: Tissue packs, comb combs, journal/pen, colored pencils, crayons, stress relievers and coloring books. Access Agency received 60 gift bags with

hats, toothpaste kits, hand warmers, socks and lip balm. They are to be used at two homeless shelters that the agency helps. The 40 Living Faith United Methodist Church homeless men gift bags contained: Underwear, soap, hand warmers, toe warmers, toothbrush/toothpaste, razors, shaving cream, jerky or Slim Jims and granola bars. The 16 Eastford Food Pantry gift bags contained: Mac and cheese, granola bar, oatmeal, fruit cup and tuna. Rotarians finished each bag with a beautifully wrapped cookie.

Killingly launches Healthy Heroes program

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

KILLINGLY — A new program in Killingly is helping introduce kids to healthy lifestyles at the start of their school careers. The school district's Healthy Heroes program works to enhance students' interpersonal skills and personal growth while raising awareness of healthy habits at an early age. The Killingly Board of Education hosted a special presentation by Kelsey Crawford-Vasquez, a kindergarten teacher at Killingly Central School (KCS) who said the program works to increase academic performance, attendance in school, and strengthen social-emotional skills through programs geared towards healthy choices and lifestyles. Healthy Heroes is a free, weekly afterschool program that began in November. Funded by a \$200,000 Connecticut Afterschool Grant, the program is led by local educators as part of a partnership with the organization Monitor My Health. Healthy Heroes provides 20 education lessons, each with a unique focus. Crawford-Vasquez said the primary goals are to get kids involved in nature, form connections with each other, and embrace an appreciation for education. "The biggest goals we have right now are getting these kids outside, getting them extra recess, and getting them out in the fresh air," said Crawford-Vasquez. "Most of the kids we have right now, a lot of them aren't provided with the outside opportunities when they go home to play. They don't have that space to play and move their bodies, so that's one of the things we're prioritizing. We're giving them healthy snacks and water. The biggest instruction is on creating healthy habits." Each activity included in the program focuses on a specific goal or approach to healthy habits. These multi-disciplinary activities focus on understanding the food plate, arts and music, STEM, and fitness. Students learn about healthy eating, cleanliness, dental hygiene, mindfulness, and daily routines all based on lesson plans provided to the school by the three-person Healthy Heroes Committee from Monitor My Health. According to reports about the program earlier this year, Healthy Heroes is expected to remain a part of the Killingly School District for at least two years before the district must assess the success of the program and the status of future grant funding.

NCEF celebrates 13 years of Tackle the Trail in 2026



PUTNAM — Oct. 17 will mark the thirteenth running of Tackle the Trail™, Northeast Connecticut's unique race in an amazing place. Offering various distances, including marathon, marathon relay (up to five runners per team), half marathon, 10K, and TackleJR, the race traverses the northern portion of the Air Line State Park Trail from Windham through downtown Putnam. Registration will open on New Year's Day. In celebration of thirteen years of Tackle, we will offer special pricing for the first thirteen days of 2026. A new year allows all of us to make resolutions. Race Director Monique Wolanin, a lifelong runner and former cross-country coach, shared, "Tackle the Trail offers an exciting opportunity to set

goals, get healthy, and feel great. As you or your team cross the finish line, you will be proud for achieving your goals." Tackle the Trail™ has quickly grown to become a nationally recognized event. To date, the race has welcomed runners from near and far: 35 states, four countries, and counting. We especially appreciate our runners who return year after year to Tackle. We are indebted to all who make Tackle the Trail™ so special, including our runners, sponsors, volunteers, and partners. Proceeds from the race help local students pursue their higher education goals. For race information and to register starting Jan. 1, visit tacklethetrail.org.

Special Tax District fails at Thompson referendum

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

THOMPSON — Thompson taxpayers had their say on a pair of ordinances on Dec. 18 that would have established a new special tax district to designate funds for the town's fire departments and a new open burning ordinance. While the tax district received a majority vote of support, it failed to obtain the required two-thirds of the vote to be implemented. Meanwhile, the burn ordinance failed outright by a majority vote. The two proposals have been discussed in town forums for several months with the special tax district specifically being a major focus. The proposed ordinance justified the special tax district as a way to help procure equitable funding for the town's five volunteer fire departments. The burn ordinance would have implemented a way that Thompson could enforce regulations, including permits, for residents to ignite and maintain open burn fires on their properties. The special tax district, labeled as the Thompson Fire Protection Association District in the ordinance, would have brought all five of Thompson fire departments under a single funding structure. The money procured through this taxation was promoted as a method of ensuring that all departments could maintain their equipment and vehicles and help resolve limitations in funding among each department. Essentially, the district would have created a format to pay all of the expenses for the fire departments collectively using specially designated taxpayer money separate from the town's budget. This would have been collected as a "fire tax" levied on all taxable properties within the district, which would have included the entire town of Thompson. While there was clearly support for the district, the vote failed to reach a two-thirds majority required to implement the district. The final tally was 542 "yes" and 474 "no." The second ordinance on the ballot sought to allow town officials to install a system to help regulate permitting for open burning and enforce penalties for violations. While the state has open burning regulations in place, Thompson had no means of enforcing these requirements on its own. The ordinance would have empowered town officials to designate Open Burning Officials authorized to issue warnings and permits. Recreational fires, barbecues, and portable heaters would have been exempt. The vote tally was nearly identical to the result of the tax district question but flipped as the majority voted against the ordinance. The open burn ordinance saw a vote of 545 "no" and 469 "yes," defeating the question by a simple majority.



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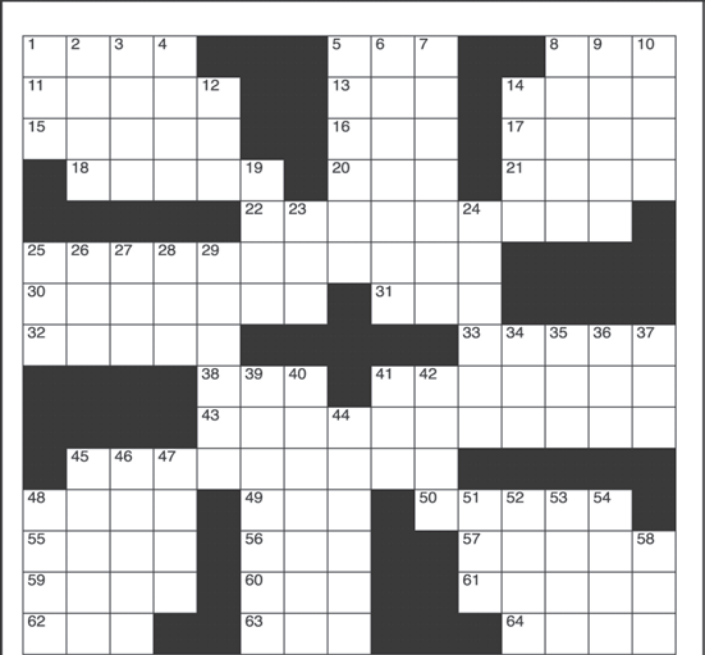
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- CLUES ACROSS
1. Paddles

5. Sunscreen rating

8. Very fast airplane

11. Immune responses

13. "Partner" to feather

14. New England river

15. Longest river in New Guinea

16. Midway between east and southeast

17. Israeli politician

18. Back bones

20. Consumed

21. One you can rely on

22. Dressed up gaudily

25. Representatives

30. Dog breed

31. Pitching statistic

32. Manpower

33. S. Korean entertainer

38. Outsourcing firm

41. Viceroy of Egypt under Turkish rule

43. One who removes antlers from a flower

45. Potluck dish

48. Discount

49. Airborne (abbr.)

50. Cavalry sword

55. Basics

56. Hollywood director Howard

57. Afflicted in mind or body

59. Horsley and Majors are two

60. Midway between northeast and east

61. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation

62. Malaysian isthmus

63. Fall back

64. Check

- CLUES DOWN
1. Former CIA

2. Baseball's best pitchers

3. ___ Nui, Easter Island

4. Invests in little enterprises

5. Constant

6. Hobby

7. A place to store food

8. Short-tail marten

9. Burn with a hot liquid

10. Left his heart in San Francisco

12. Swedish krona

14. Legendary actor Connery

19. French cleric

23. Former measure of length for textiles

24. Opaque glassy substance

25. Residue of burned item

26. A place to unwind

27. Japanese honorific

28. Terminus

29. Fails to make a shot

34. Journalist Tarbell

35. College hoops tournament

36. Monetary unit of Macao

37. Of she

39. Spoke ill of

40. Elements

41. Kilocalorie (abbr.)

42. Shades

44. Poem of fourteen lines

45. Pole used in Scottish sport

46. Hollyhocks genus

47. Street name for marijuana

48. Polio vaccine developer

51. Swiss river

52. Prejudice

53. Actor Idris

54. Confederate soldiers

58. Criticize

PUZZLE SOLUTION

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NORTH GROSVENORDALE — On Dec. 13, the Davis Family proudly celebrated 50 years of a tradition that can be summed up in one word: amazing.

Van and Florence Davis raised 13 children, and each year, they made it a priority to gather and celebrate family. Santa always joined the festivities, bringing a small gift for children under the age of 12, along with a special stocking from Van and Florence filled with a coloring book, crayons, and a candy cane. Each family also contributed a child's gift to be placed on the gift table, and tickets were sold at \$1 for 10 chances to help raise money to host the party. Adult items are \$1 per chance if those are brought. All food is homemade. One family member from each family signs up for the main course meal items and all other generations bring a dessert. So much food and goodies all day long!

Fifty years later, this beautiful tradition continues just as it began. Over the years, many siblings have sadly passed, leaving one sister, Bevy Chauvin, and one brother, Gerald Davis, Sr. This year's turnout was especially heartwarming, with so many family members coming together—filling the room with love, laughter, and cherished memories.

The celebration featured appearances by Santa and the Grinch, a photo booth, a DJ, and a professional photographer to help capture the magic of this milestone event. Family members traveled from near and far, including Switzerland, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, to be part of this incredible celebration.

Here's to 50 years of love, unity, and tradition—and many more to come. Cheers to family!

Interact fundraising breaks \$10,000 mark



Anthony Beaudreault, left, and Spencer Mayo.

PUTNAM — Dec. 20 was the final day for the Putnam Rotary Club's Interact Club traditional Salvation Army kettle campaign. Ninety percent of the money raised stays in the northeast corner.

Rotarian Roberta Rocchetti, the Interact advisor, said, "I am truly blessed to live in such a generous and supportive community. Today we took in over \$2,000, bringing our total well over \$10,000."

She thanked all the volunteers: Calleigh Levesque, Amaya Sagastieiza-Muniz, Bailey Benton from Tourtellotte Memorial High School; Keegan and Kenzie Porter from Marianapolis; Anthony Beaudreault, Spenser Mayo and Elise Coyle from Woodstock Academy; and Lily Macpherson, Avery Thornton, Ayden Boucher, Paige Perry and Gabby Cerasiello from Putnam High School. She also thanked Claudia Ursin and Leo Rocchetti and Rotarians Doug Porter, Joe Adiletta, Marc Archambault, Mike and Roberta Rocchetti.

There will be a pizza party for all the volunteers who participated in the Salvation Army Kettle Campaign Jan. 5. Awards will be made.

In addition, the next Interact meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 13 at the Putnam Public Library.

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Cindy Olsen’s half century at Westview celebrated with Employee of the Year award



Cindy Olsen

DAYVILLE — Cindy Olsen is recognized as the 2025 Employee of the Year at Westview Health Care Center.

In honoring Olsen as the Dayville facility’s 2025 honoree, Westview celebrates her 50 years of dedication—and counting! She has touched innumerable lives and contributed to every department’s operation spanning five decades at Westview. Throughout all of her different efforts, and at every level of her professional growth, she has shown heartfelt passion to help others. Now in her 25th year as Westview’s Director of Nursing Services, her impact expands continually; helping others to help others across a legacy of generations.

On Christmas Day 1975, Olsen’s Westview journey began with the diligent duties of dishwashing. After working for some time as a Dietary Aide, she transferred to Housekeeping and Laundry Services and gained more familiarity with the skilled nursing environment throughout Westview. Her early interests in nursing care grew in these experiences, and flourished as she entered the field as a Certified Nursing Assistant. Adjacently, she started working with patients and residents in recreation, and in 1979, she became Westview’s Therapeutic Recreation Director.

In December of 1980, Olsen set forth in her career as a Licensed Practical Nurse; finding her efforts in patient care to be highly rewarding and inspiring. She aimed ever higher: when she earned her degree as a Registered Nurse in 1992, she continued caring for patients while pursuing positions of leadership. During these years, working to aid the patient population as the Infection Control Coordinator and promoting the growth of fellow colleagues as the In-Service Director instilled Olsen with important perspectives on the major operations within a skilled care setting. Next, in April 1995, she ascended to become a Certified Case Manager for those entrusted to Westview’s care and continued her work for a few years managing the needs, goals, and outcomes of rehabilitation cases. Ascending first as an Assistant Director of Nursing in 1998, she ultimately earned the role and responsibility of Westview’s Director of Nursing Services in February 2001.

Olsen credits her passion for nursing as a natural progression, considering she is a third-generation health care profession-

al. She grew up in the Killingly area with her mother, her father, and her four siblings. She attended Killingly High School and Windham Technical High School to further her pre-college education in health care. She went forth from there to Becker College for her degrees as a Licensed Practical Nurse and as a Registered Nurse.

Cindy and her husband Keith live in Killingly. They are delightfully close in both proximity and heart to their two sons and their growing families. Cindy’s son Josh, his wife Jill, and their children Miles and Anabel, as well as Cindy’s son Justin, his wife Abita, and their children Aryanna and Aliyah are all within brief drives. Some of Cindy’s favorite activities take place in the great outdoors: she loves crafting, golf, fishing, and skeet shooting. Above all else, Cindy simply loves any time spent among family and friends. In receiving this award, Cindy acknowledged her gratitude for the principles, philosophies, and people of Westview.

“I sincerely appreciate this recognition—thank you! Over the years, I have been fortunate to work with an organization that truly listens, encourages open communication, and appreciates each and every one of us,” she says.

Cindy emphasized her gratitude for her colleagues, commenting, “I have been blessed in working with many team members that are truly caring, give exceptional care to the residents/patients of the facility, and exhibit their commitment and compassion on a regular basis. Thank you so much for this distinction!”

“Congratulations to Cindy on achieving the distinction of 2025 Employee of the Year!” remarked David T. Panteleakos, Administrator. “As Westview’s longest

tenured employee, Cindy also has the unique distinction of being the longest serving Director of Nursing in Westview’s history. Now, with over 50 years of dedicated service to Westview, I share in congratulating and thanking Cindy for her remarkable longevity and dedicated service to the ultimate beneficiaries of her life’s work, the residents.”

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, Connecticut 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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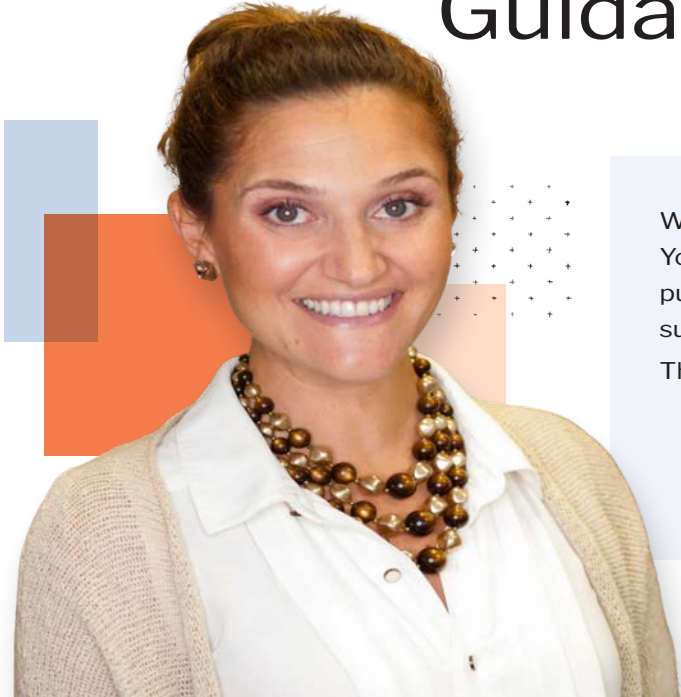
To enrolled members of the Democratic Party in Brooklyn, CT: Pursuant to the Rules of the Democratic Party and state election laws, you are hereby notified that a caucus will be held on

January 9th at 7pm at the Clifford Green Building at 69 South Main Street, Brooklyn, CT, to endorse candidates for the **Brooklyn Democratic Town Committee (BDTC)**, and any other related business.

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BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

Rethinking New Year’s resolutions, the Quiet Corner way

As another year turns over, many of us will reach instinctively for a familiar tradition: New Year’s resolutions. Eat better. Save more. Get organized. Spend less time scrolling. These promises often begin with good intentions and fade quietly by February, leaving behind a sense that we somehow fell short before the year truly began.

Maybe this is the year to rethink what resolutions are supposed to do for us.

In small towns across Northeast Connecticut, life rarely moves according to sweeping transformations. Progress here is usually incremental. It is found in steady routines, neighborly gestures, and quiet commitments kept over time. That same mindset may offer a better model for how we approach the new year.

Instead of grand resolutions, perhaps we should focus on modest, durable ones. Not declarations meant to impress ourselves on Jan. 1, but habits that fit naturally into everyday life. Walking a little more. Attending one extra town meeting. Checking in on an elderly neighbor. Cooking one more meal at home each week. These are not flashy goals, but they are achievable, and they matter.

Communities like ours are built on follow-through, not fanfare. Volunteer fire departments run because people show up consistently. Libraries thrive because residents keep using them. Local boards function because a few citizens commit to serving, often quietly and without recognition. The most meaningful resolutions are often the ones that resemble these civic virtues: reliability, patience, and attention.

There is also value in resolutions that look outward instead of inward. Much of modern self-improvement culture encourages us to optimize ourselves endlessly, as if life were a personal performance review. But towns are not held together by perfection. They endure because people are willing to be present, even when tired, busy, or imperfect.

This year’s resolution might be to listen more closely. To disagree without contempt. To assume good intentions before bad ones. In an era of constant noise and division, choosing restraint and courtesy is no small thing. It is, in fact, a meaningful act of community care.

For families, the new year can also be a chance to reset expectations. Not every calendar needs to be full. Not every moment must be productive. Making time for shared meals, unstructured evenings, or a walk down a familiar road can do more for well-being than any ambitious checklist.

For towns, the new year is an opportunity to recommit to the basics. Maintaining roads. Supporting schools. Keeping public spaces welcoming. These are not resolutions that make headlines, but they shape daily life in lasting ways.

None of this means abandoning ambition. It means grounding it. The most effective resolutions are not the ones that promise a new version of ourselves overnight, but the ones that quietly align our actions with our values.

As the calendar turns, perhaps the best resolution is simply this: to show up, again and again, for our families, our neighbors, and the places we call home. In Northeast Connecticut, that kind of steady presence has always been our greatest strength.

OPINION

Opinion and commentary from the Quiet Corner

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Santa...

To the Editor:

The joy of this holiday can be summarized in the gratitude for so many blessings, within the context of the tragedies and conflict that surround us! It’s a miracle that we can still smile at each other or lift our eyes away from the constant “Breaking News” on our cell phones!

Besides being grateful for the big ticket items of family and a balance between health and meds, I want you to know how grateful I am for news TV anchors, reporters, and advertisers, who can speak without a frog in their throats! Are they trying to sound sexy while reporting that this country is blowing boats on a suspicion of illegal activity? I can hardly listen to a broadcast without clearing my own throat constantly, when they cannot be understood, which takes me to another source of information or a Hallmark overdose of peppermint candy!

Thank you for the enlightened drivers who dare to cross the white line in front of them when parking, by moving into the empty space in front of them! If they did dare to color outside the lines, they would discover a clear view of the path to the Exit without having to twist their necks to make sure that no one is walking into their car during any time of the year!

Thank you for the Killingly Stop/Shop Manager (Owen), who offered me a pound of their best smoked ham (Blk. Forest Inspiration) at no cost,

when the deli “mom” behind the counter told him that I had been overcharged the month before!

Thank you for the budget payment plans from utility companies like Spicer Propane! As well as the neat little button feature that turns my KIA “on” before I get into my pre-owned car! Thank God for the big hearted salesman (Peter), who answers my calls and teaches me how to use those features! ... a full-time job! Thank you for my Super Wonderful neighbors too, and my Mail carrier Santa! My stocking runneth over!

Thank you especially, Santa, for the awakening actually happening among Voters, in multiple Special elections across the Country, who are showing up to reject madness, incompetence, criminal actions, and abuse of power in our federal government right now.

Santa, I hope you’re not offended when I choose to celebrate the feast of the Epiphany on Jan. 6 instead of a treasonous insurrection. I have come to believe that establishing harmony, is the key to co-existing in our lifetime. If we can make it happen with intention, in our families, communities, and the work place, it would spread like wildfire! We have to believe that it IS within our reach Santa! After all... we already believe that reindeer can fly! ... Right?

LYDIA RIVERA-ABRAMS
DAYVILLE

Tell anyone with a road petition to take a hike

To the Editor:

Hey, Lowell Davis Road, how is that scenic road ordinance working out for you? Especially the part about having to go to the Planning and Zoning Commission for permission before you can touch a mature tree.

Well, those mature trees are now dropping their dead branches with a vengeance at every storm.

Try five power outages in the last four months,

the latest one lasting 31 hours on the Saturday before Christmas.

So, if anyone reading this newspaper has a zealous neighbor coming at them with a scenic road petition, tell them that you like electricity, and to take a hike.

BEVERLY WARNER
THOMPSON

Religious freedom, not religious rule

To the Editor:

December includes several religious holidays, making it a time of reflection for people of various faiths. As the winter chill fills the air, we are reminded that it’s the season of giving, of volunteering in our communities, and spending time with loved ones.

Although our country does not have an official national religion, a diverse range of beliefs and practices shape American cultures, communities, and families. This is not by accident. The Constitution was designed to protect American citizens’ right to practice—or not practice—religious traditions free from fear or persecution. The First Amendment tells us that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” Yet some states are purchasing “Trump Bibles” for public schools and requiring that the Ten Commandments be displayed. Previously, the Supreme Court ruled in 1963 that mandatory Bible readings in public schools were unconstitutional and ruled in 1980 that posting the Ten Commandments violated the First Amendment’s establishment clause which separates church and state.

Project 2025, the Trump/Vance Administration’s policy blueprint undermines the separation of church and state. Their policies are actively advancing a Christian nationalist agenda and dismantling long-standing protections of religious liberty for the American people.

In my view, religion should bring out the best

in humanity. Many faiths emphasize community, charity, caring, ethical living, kindness, compassion, and love, regardless of one’s faith. Sadly, and especially under the Trump/Vance administration, religion is too often used as a tool for division and control rather than a source of compassion and care. Respect for diverse beliefs encourages understanding, not conformity. It encourages acceptance and the freedom to be different. Using executive orders or government power to promote a specific religion—to elevate the lives of some above others—violates not just the Constitution, but the principles on which this country was founded.

Under this Administration, families have been torn apart. “Thoughts and prayers” are commonplace for endless school shootings. Thousands are losing access to healthcare. As a self-proclaimed “beacon” of democracy, America should lead by example. Right now, we’re leading the world in mass incarceration and mass shootings. What’s next on our leader list – mass sex trafficker when the DOJ and FBI finally release all of the Epstein files? These examples are not the best of humanity.

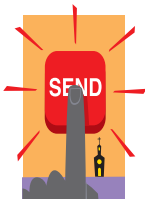
My hope for the New Year is that the current Administration’s divisive and cruel policies—far too many to list here—are halted by Congress and SCOTUS and that our rights to religious freedom, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are returned to all.

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Resolutions that last

I have lived through enough New Year’s Eves to know that resolutions are a tricky business.

They tend to arrive with a burst of confidence, often written down with a brand-new pen on a clean piece of paper. By mid-January, that paper is folded, misplaced, or quietly ignored. By February, it has become a faint memory, filed away with unused gym memberships and ambitious planners.

For years, I thought this meant I lacked discipline. Now I suspect the problem was never willpower at all. It was scale.

Most resolutions ask us to become someone else overnight. A healthier person. A calmer person. A more organized person. That is a tall order for a single date on the calendar to deliver. Life, especially in Northeastern Connecticut, does not change in dramatic leaps. It changes in inches.

I was reminded of this recently while doing something entirely unremarkable. I was clearing ice from the front steps, the kind of slow, careful work that cannot be rushed. One missed patch, one careless swing, and you pay for it. It occurred to me that this is how most good habits are formed. Slowly. With attention. With respect for reality.

When I was younger, resolutions were loud. Now they are quieter. I no longer promise myself sweeping transformations. Instead, I aim for small corrections. I try to leave things a little better than I found them. Some days, that means patience. Other days it means knowing when to stop.

The truth is, many of the best resolutions are already woven into daily life here. People show up to shovel a neighbor’s driveway without being asked. They sit through long meetings because someone has to. They keep commitments even when it would be easier not to. No one calls these resolutions, but that is exactly what they are.

I have also learned that kindness makes a poor headline but an excellent habit. Holding the door. Letting someone merge. Choosing not to say the sharp thing that comes to mind. These acts rarely feel heroic, yet they quietly shape the tone of a community.

There is another resolution I return to every year, whether I name it or not: gratitude. Not the polished kind meant for social media, but the private kind. Gratitude for health that mostly holds. For work that still matters. For familiar roads and familiar faces. Gratitude does not erase problems, but it steadies the ground beneath them.

If I could offer one suggestion for the new year, it would be this: make resolutions that forgive you for being human. Ones that allow for missed days and second chances. Ones that understand that progress is rarely linear.

The calendar may change all at once, but people do not. We change the way this region always has, one careful step at a time.

And that, I have found, is resolution enough.

How to prioritize your financial goals for 2026

A STRATEGIC GUIDE FOR AN UNCERTAIN BUT OPPORTUNITY-RICH YEAR

If the past few years have taught us anything, it's that financial planning today requires both resilience and adaptability. As we enter 2026, we find ourselves facing a mix of encouraging economic trends and ongoing uncertainties.

Inflation has cooled, interest rates may begin to stabilize, and the stock market continues to reflect both innovation-driven growth and periodic volatility. At the same time, many households are still recalibrating after years of elevated costs and shifting financial priorities.

In this environment, the question is no longer simply "What are my financial goals?" but rather "Which goals deserve my attention first?" Prioritization is the key to clarity, confidence, and meaningful progress. Here's a guide to getting yourself on the path to all of those things in 2026, based on the Plan Well. Invest Well. Live Well.™ process we utilize for our clients here at WHZ.

Start with your values—they're your anchor in a changing economy

Economic forecasts will always evolve, but your values remain the steady lens through which decisions should be made. Purpose-driven planning helps ensure that your financial goals reflect what truly matters to you—family security, financial independence, philanthropy, lifestyle flexibility, or the ability to take advantage of new opportunities.

In a year characterized by market transitions and ongoing global uncertainty, grounding your planning in values offers a sense of direction that market headlines alone can't provide.

Clarify your "must-haves" and "nice-to-haves"

With many analysts expecting a gradual normalization of interest rates and continued market volatility, categorizing your goals can help you stay disciplined and focused.

Your Must-Haves are your foundational goals; they protect your long-term financial health across all types of market environments. They include: building or maintaining an emergency fund; paying down high-interest debt; strengthening insurance coverage; and staying consistent with retirement savings

Your Nice-to-Haves are your aspirations. These goals are meaningful, but they should be pursued after your financial base is secure. They may include things like: major travel or lifestyle upgrades; home renovations or a second property; funding future goals ahead of schedule; or starting a business or passion project.

New Al-Anon meeting in Pomfret

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

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

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

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

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Incorporate 2026 economic conditions into your planning

This year's economic landscape adds important context to how you prioritize.

Interest rates may begin to ease: While rates remain elevated compared to pre-2022 levels, analysts expect a gradual shift toward moderation. This may create opportunities for refinancing, debt repayment strategies, or home-purchase timelines.

Inflation is moderating, but budgets remain stretched: Slower price growth doesn't erase several years of rising costs. Revisiting cash flow and savings goals with today's expense levels in mind is essential.

Opportunities exist in selective equity sectors: Technology, AI-driven innovation, and productivity-focused industries are expected to remain strong contributors to market growth, though volatility persists. A diversified long-term strategy remains the most resilient approach.

Fixed income has regained relevance: After years of low yields, today's bond environment offers more attractive income opportunities. This may influence how you balance risk across your portfolio and align investments with your time horizons.

Housing markets are stabilizing: Moderating price growth and slowly improving inventory may support medium-term planning for buyers who delayed purchases during the recent high-rate cycle.

Understanding how these trends affect your financial landscape can help you sequence your goals strategically.

Use a foundation-first approach

When in doubt, apply a clear hierarchy to your goals. This helps ensure you're strengthening your financial position even during periods of market change.

Strengthen your emergency fund: Aim for 3–6 months of expenses in a high-yield savings account. Liquidity remains essential amid economic transitions.

Reduce high-interest debt: As interest rates evolve, paying down expensive debt

provides immediate and long-term benefits. Reducing these balances often accelerates progress toward every other goal.

Capture employer benefits: Contribute enough to your workplace retirement plan to secure the full employer match—one of the most efficient ways to build long-term savings.

Prioritize retirement savings: Consistent contributions to 401(k)s, IRAs, or other tax-advantaged vehicles remain a cornerstone of long-term planning, regardless of short-term market fluctuations.

Pursue medium- and long-term aspirations: Once your foundation is strong, direct resources toward education savings, home purchases, travel, or other meaningful goals. The key is sequencing—not sacrificing what matters.

Set clear, measurable goals for 2026

In a dynamic year, the goals most likely to succeed are those that are specific and actionable. Instead of "save more," try: "Increase my emergency savings by \$4,000 this year," or "Invest \$500 per month into my retirement accounts." Clear goals allow you to track progress, stay motivated, and adjust when needed.

Stay flexible—life changes, and so does the economy

2026 may bring shifting markets, changing interest rates, and evolving personal circumstances. Flexibility is a strength—not a sign that your plan isn't working.

Review your goals annually or when major changes occur, such as a new job, marriage or a new child, caring for aging parents, a move or home purchase, or retirement transitions. A financial plan is a living document meant to evolve with your life.

Move Into 2026 with clarity and confidence

Prioritizing your financial goals isn't about doing everything at once. It's about sequencing your steps strategically, staying grounded in your values, and adapting as the year unfolds. With the right structure and support, 2026 can be a year of meaningful financial progress.

At WHZ, we integrate current market data with personalized planning to help cli-

ents make well-timed, well-informed decisions—reducing uncertainty and strengthening long-term confidence. Our Plan Well. Invest Well. Live Well.™ process helps clarify your goals, align them with your values, and pursue them with Absolute Confidence. Unwavering Partnership. For Life. Contact us for a complimentary consultation at whzwealth.com or call (860) 928-2341.

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Quiet Corner Al-Anon group meets Wednesdays

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

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

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Killingly High School Weekly Sports Wrap-Up



Indoor Track
On Dec. 27, the Killingly Indoor Track team battled at the Coast Guard on a snowy day against 19 other schools. Competition was never lacking with soooo many schools representing!
As always, ladies first:
In the 4x180, four awesome ladies took to the track, Kezlee Morrarty to Laylanie Benitez to Adalyn Malarkey to Jaclyn Suprenant flying to beat seven other teams finishing 10th! Kezlee, Adalyn, and Jaclyn could all be seen vaulting in the air at Long Jump, all putting up fresh PRs! They could also be seen putting in work for the 55m dash in a field of 103 ladies. Adalyn finished 16th with a fresh PR; Jaclyn finished close behind with a fresh PR, then Kezlee blazed in her heat and race, followed by Naomi Nunez with a fresh PR! In the 300m, Rosalyn Worden finished 24th out of a field of 72 with a fresh PR! Closely behind was Laylanie who was bolting in her heat! Rosalyn also put in work in the 55m hurdles and flew with a fresh PR! Annnnd Nina Purcell took on a trio of competitions, flying in the 600m for a fresh PR, launching her Shot Put for a fresh PR and in Triple Jump, she launched herself to finish 4th with a fresh PR!
On to the gentlemen:

In an awesome captains 4x180, the gentleman ran a fresh PR of Isaiah Benoit to Calvin Vandale, to Wesley Sprouse to Ezekiel Benoit! In the 55m dash, Killingly sent 6 of our best to compete in a field of 108. Finishing 2nd with a fresh PR was Kaiden Cayer, followed by Aveion Janton- Adams and Ezekiel Benoit both finished 14th with fresh PRs, Cooper Logee finished 32nd beating out over 70 others, Jackson Olson could be seen absolutely flying in his heat with a Season Record time, and Gabriel Covington dashed his way to yet another PR! In the 300m against a field of 81 athletes, 4 athletes could be seen bolting in their heats! Jackson finished with a SR, while Maddux Duquette, Edward Purcell, and Gabe finished with fresh PRs! Gabe also battled hard in the 600m with a fresh PR! Killinglys long distance specialist Cal could be seen putting in hard work in the 1600m finishing 14th out of a tough field of 25! In the 55m hurdles, Jeremiah Smith continues to dominate; he flew finishing 1st in a field of nine. He could also be seen flying in the air with Coop and Aveion in High Jump out of 18 athletes. Jeremiah finished 3rd, Coop 6th, and Aveion set a fresh PR! In the Long Jump, out of a field of 29, you could see

Killingly gentlemen rocketing though the air! Aveion finished 2nd with a fresh PR, Coop finished 5th and Jeremiah 6th with fresh SR, Kaiden finished 10th with a fresh PR, Elijah absolutely launched himself in the event and Edward was flying for a fresh PR! In the Shot Put, 5 of Killinglys best launched their shots in a field of 70. Zeke finished 24th with a fresh PR, followed by Jackson with a fresh PR, Wes, Maddux and Cal. In the Triple Jump, in a field of 8, Killingly took 4 spots, ALL with fresh PRs! Elijah finished 3rd, followed by Edward, Maddux and Wes! Annnnd lastly, our Pole Vaulting specialist Isaiah took to the air for an awesome height of 8' for a fresh Indoor PR!
Absolutely awesome job all! Everyone one of you represented yourselves and Killingly proudly! I'm very proud of everyone for a great meet! Mother Nature can try to slow us down but the train keeps rolling and our next meet is this Saturday, January 3rd at the Coast Guard.
Boys Basketball
Killingly Basketball (3-0) took the win over Plainfield (1-1) on Dec. 22 behind a 34 point performance from Quin Crowley!
Final Score 89 - 36!
Quinn Sumner had 14



points and 5 rebounds, while Greyson Marquez added 10 points and 7 assists! Trevor Galarza also had 7 points for Killingly!
Brayden Marquis led Plainfield with 15 points.
The boys took the win in the semi finals of the Grasso Tech Holiday Classic over Lyman Memorial (0-3) on Dec. 26!
Final Score 79 – 21.
Quin Crowley and Quinn Sumner each had 17 points a piece to lead Killingly!
Peter Kazantzis had 7 points and 6 assists, while Aiden LaMotte and Rigel

Pelletier each added 7 points. Greyson Marquez dished out 9 assists!
Ethan Apicelli had 7 points for Lyman.
On Dec. 29, NFA (1-3) took the win over Killingly (4-1) on the road behind 19 points from Josh Lavoie.
Quin Crowley had 18 points for Killingly, while Quinn Sumner added 15 points and 13 rebounds. Greyson Marquez added 12 points and 8 assists. Peter Kazantzis had 7 points and 13 rebounds.
Girls Basketball

Killingly Girls Basketball (1-3) was led in a win against Plainfield (2-1) on Dec. 29 behind 17 points and 26 rebounds from Amaya Spadola while Declyn Benjamin and Gianna Peters each added 9 points, and Ella Adams added 8 points!
Final Score Killingly 52 – Plainfield 40
Gracie Pekarovic-West added 6 points and 8 rebounds.
Neveah Dailey had 17 points and Isabella Britland had 12 points for Plainfield



Access Community Action Agency reaffirms commitment to community services

REGION — Access Community Action Agency announces organizational changes that will take effect at the end of January 2026. These changes include a significant reduction in workforce following the closure of a residential program, the conclusion of a time-limited pilot program, and ongoing delays and uncertainty related to administrative funding.

“These decisions were not made lightly,” said Emma King, Executive Director. “While we have faced unexpected funding challenges, our focus remains on maintaining stability and ensuring that the people who rely on us continue to receive services.”

The Board of Directors and leadership team conducted a careful review of the agency’s financial outlook after anticipated funding did not materialize as expected. Delays connected to federal administrative processes and the scheduled end of grant-funded initiatives required the agency to adjust its staffing model to align with available resources.

“As a Board, our responsibility is to ensure the long-term health of the agency,”

said Joanne Todd, Chair of the Access Board of Directors. “These changes position Access to remain operational, responsive, and focused on its mission during a period of uncertainty.”

Although staffing levels are being reduced, Access is working actively to ensure that core programs and services remain available to the community. Service delivery will continue, and leadership is taking steps to minimize disruption for individuals and families who depend on Access programs.

Any updates related to program hours or service adjustments will be shared directly with the community and posted on the agency’s Web site at www.accessagency.org as information becomes available.

Access Community Action Agency has served Windham and Tolland counties since 1965. Its mission is to build access to opportunities that empower under-resourced individuals, families, and communities to achieve and sustain economic stability.

George Foint named to Dean’s Honor List at Cedarville University

CEDARVILLE, Ohio — George Foint of Thompson was named to the Dean’s Honor List at Cedarville University for Fall 2025. This recognition requires the student to obtain a 3.75 GPA or higher for the semester and carry a minimum of 12 credit hours.

Cedarville University, an evangelical Christian institution in southwest Ohio, offers undergraduate and graduate residential and online programs across arts, science

and professional fields. With 7,265 students, it is among Ohio’s largest private universities and is ranked among the nation’s top five evangelical universities in the Wall Street Journal’s 2026 Best Colleges in the U.S. Cedarville is also known for its vibrant Christian community, challenging academics and high graduation and retention rates. Learn more at cedarville.edu.

The Week in Sports at Woodstock Academy

Girls basketball

Dec. 23
Ponaganset (RI) 60
Woodstock Academy 54

The hosts pulled out the win as they broke a 54-54 tie with 1 minute, 54 seconds left to play and scored the final six points of the game.

Isabel D’Alleva-Bochain led the Centaurs (2-2) with 14 points in the non-league game.

Kaylee Saucier (four 3-pointers) and Elise Coyle both finished with 13 apiece.

Javiana Stec scored all 13 of her points in the second half for Ponaganset (4-0) while Marron Nerney led them with 16 points.

E.O. Smith Tournament

Dec. 29
Ellington 53
Woodstock Academy 41

The Woodstock Academy girls basketball team came back from a week off and ran into an undefeated Ellington Purple Knights team in the first round of the E.O. Smith tournament in Mansfield.

The game began on a good note as senior Vivian Bibeau scored six of her eight points to help the Centaurs to a 14-10 lead after the first eight minutes.

But Ellington (4-0) rallied in the second quarter behind senior guard Julia Laughlan who scored eight of her game-high 24 points that put the Purple Knights ahead, 28-21, at the half.

Ellington extended that lead to nine in the third quarter.

Sophomore Payton Nord was the only other player in double figures for Ellington with 10 points.

Boys Hockey

Dec. 27
Masuk 4
Woodstock Academy 1

Luke Kondub was a one-person wrecking crew for the victorious Panthers at the Jahn Ice Rink at Pomfret School.

Kondub scored a pair of unassisted goals, one late in the first period, the other early in the third.

After Gabe Flannery scored the Centaurs’ first goal of the season off a Cameron Perreault assist to cut Masuk’s lead in half, Kondub took all the momentum away from the hosts with a power-play goal just over a minute later.

Kondub then finished the four-goal game for Masuk (2-0) with an empty-net tally with 1 minute, 18 seconds to play.

The loss dropped Woodstock Academy to 0-4 on the season.

Boys Basketball

Dec. 27
Griswold 67
Woodstock Academy 51

A 14-2 run by the host Wolverines at the end of the second quarter put Griswold (3-1) up by 13 at the half and it did not lead by less than double digits the remainder of the way.

Kaiden Kazlauskus was the only Wolverine player in double figures with 22 while both Aaden Cutter and Kolby Mills added nine.

Drake Abdullovski led Woodstock Academy with 18 points, 10 came in the final eight minutes.

Vuk Lisancic added 10 in the loss.

Girls Hockey

Dec. 29Hamden 3
Woodstock Academy Co-Op 0

The Centaurs did everything except put the puck in the back of the net at the Jahn Ice Rink at Pomfret School.

Woodstock Academy outshot the Green Dragons (3-1), 33-13, but three of Hamden’s shots went in, two off the stick of Jozie Becker.

Lexy Patel scored the other goal for the visitors into an empty net with just over a minute left.

Josie Hatch made 10 saves in net for the Centaurs (0-4).

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Clippers notch win in first round of Norwich Tech tournament

COLCHESTER — The first round of the Norwich Tech Christmas tournament took place at Bacon Academy Monday, Dec. 29. The Putnam High Clippers improved to 2-2 on the season with a win over Norwich Tech 54-38.

Freshman guard TJ Espinosa led the Clippers with a game high 22 points and tied a game high with 8 rebounds, 2 assists and 2 steals. Senior Nick Devlin had 15 points, 7 rebounds, 2 assists and a game high 6 steals for Putnam. Sophomore Camden Kell added 15 points, 5 rebounds, 2 steals and 1 assist and Sam Jackel chipped in a game high 8 rebounds.

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The toys that we grew up with

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 any-one answers.

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

Calling all Artists: Third Annual Tiny Art Show at Putnam Public

See the gold in every day

BY MIKE BOGDANSKI

I received so much great feedback on my last column. My focus was on the many great places and activities in Northeast Connecticut, and this second version will focus on the people who make it special.

Several years ago, one of Northeast Connecticut's finest citizens, Ron Coderre, wrote a column that everyone loved to read (thanks, RPC). At the end of the year, he always mentioned many great local people who have given much to our area. This article will be my version.

Thank you to all the great people who make Northeast Connecticut a special place to live. I know I cannot mention all the deserving citizens, but I will do my best.

First, family -- my wife, our children, and grandchildren, who we are blessed to have in our lives, my sister Jean, my brother-in-law Dave, and my nephew Alex Stratton. I want to thank the people who influenced me throughout my life:



TIPS FOR SUCCESS
MIKE BOGDANSKI

my generous and loving parents, and the many martial arts teachers who always held me to a higher standard.

Gary and Karen Osbrey, who have dedicated their lives to improving our towns, have a genuine love for people and the ever-popular morning show with the illustrious John Mahon. The decades of students and members of Mike Bogdanski's Martial Arts and Midtown Fitness, who still often mention how much they miss my old gym. Mayor Barney Seney and all he has done for Putnam (and for me personally); Putnam Town Administrator Elaine Sistare; the ever-vigilant Putnam Police Department, especially Captain Justin Lussier, a very special person to me. Michelle Lott for her senior lunches; Barbara Chubbuck for just being the very best person; Beth Markowski Roop for her contribution to the duck race. The stalwart local leadership of Maureen Nicholson, Joe Bellavance, Ed Grandelski, and Nick Donohue, who put in the time, heart, and work selflessly for residents, retired rec director Willie Bousquet, a Putnam legend, and Jimmy Callaghan, who has risen to fill these big shoes.

Great community groups like the Chamber (Elle and Nancy) and the PBA (President Kate Cerrone), and their dedicated members who drive Northeast Connecticut energy like a racecar.

Professor Gary Powell for his friendship and compassion, Peter Vitale for his leadership, Joe Carvalho for his vision, Arthur Fairthorne for his quiet and dedicated mentorship, and Dr. Jeff Gordon for his passion for NE. CT., Dr. Deb Campbell, for her emergency department heroism at DKH.

Mike Green, whose dad used to be Putnam's police chief, a dedicated martial artist now fighting a serious health battle, Jeremy Goulet -- Black Belt, former Marine, and MP for your indomitable spirit and dedicated support,

Amy Brunette and Dick Loomis and their passion for business, Dick Salvas highlighting all classic cars, Danny Goyette for getting us deals on vehicles, Sam Markely who sold me my ninja Corvette over 45 years ago, Putnam's restaurant of the year owners Sheila and James Frost (by the way, James is my first Black Belt, starting karate at age 11)—excellent breakfasts at the Painted Baker with Monique and Jamie, Jimmy and Deb St. Jean, Tracie, Kathy, and Jen at Chase Graphics. Nicole and Julie for your artistry at the Complex, Tonya Brock, and your dedication to the Bradley Playhouse. Linda Colangelo and Laura Croscetti for too many good deeds to mention, Tim Daley, DJ, for keeping us dancing. Insurance King Matt Desaulnier, computer guru Eric Gould, the benevolent and generous Tom Borner, Dave Vitale, former restaurateur and now clean-up man, Linda Lemmon, and her Putnam Town Crier, who shows us how a small town newspaper gets built, and Mike and Krupa, who believed in Putnam enough to make Montana Nights, and now Bounce X, The Larsons, and their Sprucedale Gardens Nursery for green thumbs, and for Logee's and their legendary greenhouses.

Great people who have passed: former Mayor and State rep Danny Rovero, Don Brown, former vice president of the frozen food aisle at Stop and Shop, Laura Gubemat, one of the greatest moms, Karissa Choquette, who went through Black Belt testing while wearing a chemo port; Laurie Champany, the most formidable cancer fighter ever; and Master Griz, who was a dedicated student and instructor right to the end.

Valley Spring greets President Kathleen Demers, Waldo, and my buddy Danny Moulton. Moe Coderre for his warm and genuine personality. Joe Carlone, Sr., for friendship and foot switches.

Veterans Fred Ruhlemann and Bruce Hay, for their dedication to veterans and their generous food share; Rob Challinor and Hans Lowell, for keeping the veteran spirit alive at the Putnam V.F.W.

Kristen and Zak from Wonderland Comics, who provide me with my monthly Superman comics; Trent Pappas and his Quiet Corner TV project; and Robin Deary Fillmore for the most extraordinary gymnastics center in the state.

Consistently dedicated Villager letter writers, Dr. Lee Wesler and Lisa Arends. Our local historians: Bill and Terri Pearsall, John Miller, Jeanne Benoit, and Queen of the Boxcar Museum, Pat Hedenberg.

And a special thanks to Brendan Berube and Villager newspapers!

There are so many great people to mention, and I am sorry for leaving you out.

Hoping everyone can live their dream in 2026. I plan to!

Mike Bogdanski is a martial arts Grandmaster, anti-bully activist, and newly elected selectman.

Library. "Remembering the Revolution" (Optional Patriotic Theme). Stop in to register and pick up a three-by-three-inch canvas, paint and brush. Return by Jan. 31. Art will be exhibited in the library beginning Feb. 2. Call 860-963-6826 for additional information.

Happy 2026! I wish you good health and happiness in the new year. I'm writing this before the holidays due to an early deadline so still have toys from my childhood on my mind. Since I wrote about Barbie last week, I thought this week I'd mention some toys for boys. Killingly Historical Society president Bernie Mitchell named a few which he had in the 1950's. One was Lincoln Logs. He also had bricks that were similar to Legos, but were not Legos. They had windows and doors that actually opened. One year he received a sled for Christmas which he was able to use at recess at school on the nearby hill in Attawaugan. He also had an American Flyer train (S gauge which was a smaller gauge than the Lionel trains). Bernie mentioned that he and his friends frequently played with marbles.

Killingly Historical Center volunteer and board member Sue Gosselin wondered if anyone remembered Mr. Potato Head? She said it was a "bring your own potato toy." I think my younger sisters had one. From AI I discovered, "Mr. Potato Head is over 70 years old, having been invented in 1949 by George Lerner and officially launched by Hasbro on May 1, 1952, making him 73 years old as of late 2025, with the original toy kits even using real potatoes before the plastic body was introduced in 1964." ThoughtCompany.com provided a few additional facts. "In 1952, Mr. Potato Head became the first toy to be advertised directly to children on TV. In the 1960s, Mr. Potato Head toys changed for safety, using larger plastic parts and bodies."

Back to Lincoln Logs. I used to love to help my much younger brother build with them and was curious about how long they had been around so did an internet search. Did you know that they were designed by noted architect Frank Lloyd Wright's second son, John

Lloyd Wright? "By the time he turned 24, John was working side-by-side with his father as chief assistant on the design of Tokyo's Imperial Hotel. Faced with the challenge of building a structure that could withstand the powerful earthquakes that regularly shook Japan, Frank Lloyd Wright sketched an ingenious design that relied on a system of interlocking timber beams that would allow the hotel to sway but not collapse in case of a tremor. (The Imperial Hotel would indeed be one of the few buildings that remained standing after the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake that devastated Tokyo.) The relationship between father and son, however, crumbled over money long before the earthquake-proof hotel was ever constructed. Out-of-work, John Lloyd Wright turned his attention to a pint-sized design project. In 1916, using the blueprint for the Imperial Hotel as a model, he created a toy construction set that consisted of notched pieces of wood that children could stack to build log cabins, forts and other rustic buildings. Unlike Froebel's building blocks, the interlocking system of miniature logs could withstand the shockwaves unleashed by children's playing roughly with the toys.

"In 1918, John Lloyd Wright began to market his creation through his own firm, the Red Square Toy Company, and two years later he received a patent for his 'toy-cabin construction.' He bestowed upon his creation an alliterative name that also evoked an American icon—Lincoln Logs. The toy came with instructions to build not only Abraham Lincoln's Kentucky boyhood home, but a famous log structure from the pages of American literature, Uncle Tom's Cabin. The toy's packaging featured a simple drawing of a log cabin, a small portrait of Lincoln and the slogan 'Interesting playthings typifying the spirit of America.' Capitalizing on both a nostalgia for the frontier at a time when the United States was becoming increasingly urbanized and a wave of patriotism in the wake of World War I, Lincoln Logs became an instant success... Some



KILLINGLY AT 300
MARGARET WEAVER

scholars also believe John Lloyd Wright as a child possibly played with the Log Cabin Playhouse, a similar wooden construction set that had been developed by toy company Ellis, Britton & Eaton in the 1860s." (https://www.history.com/articles/the-birth-of-lincoln-logs).

If you have visited the Killingly Historical Center, you might recall that we have a beautiful, handmade dollhouse crafted and donated by Dr. and Mrs. Clifford Farmer. The house has two stories and an attic and contains miniature furniture and accessories from probably the beginning of the Twentieth century (give or take). Although the house contains "indoor plumbing" the toilet tank for water is located high on the wall with a long pull chain unlike today's models. There is an old-fashioned ice-box instead of a refrigerator and many other intriguing items from the past. Do stop in and see this dollhouse for yourself. Better still, if you have young granddaughters, bring them to see it.

How old do you think dollhouses are? Would you believe the earliest documented one dates back to the 16th century. I really got a "what a co-incidence" jolt when I read who commissioned the earliest recorded European dollhouse. The Munich Baby House (1557-1558) was commissioned by Albrecht V, Duke of Bavaria. "It was crafted by elite royal artisans in the shape of a palace rather than the cabinet style that became popular later." (My daughter-in-law Ashley Weaver's maiden name is Albrecht!) I discovered much more about early dollhouses. Creators of Nuremberg Kitchens (1572): This early style of single-room miniature emerged in Germany as instructional tools for young girls. One notable early example was gifted to the Princesses of Saxony (daughters of Augustus, Elector of Saxony) in 1572. Nuremberg

Craftspeople: By the late 16th century, the city of Nuremberg had established itself as the 'toy city,' where local woodworkers and furniture makers began specializing in high-detail miniatures that set the standard for early European dollhouses. Dutch and German

Cabinet Makers: These artisans built 'cabinet houses,' which were repurposed cupboards filled with miniature rooms. Because these were custom commissions for wealthy patrons, the architects and furniture makers of the actual homes often designed and built the matching miniatures." (AI; also see https://historyfacts.com/arts-culture/article/a-tiny-history-of-dollhouses/). Again, do stop in and see the dollhouse at the Killingly Historical Center.

In a few days, it will be Jan. 6, the Feast of the Epiphany. Some of you may remember that it is also the feast day of a saint who lived and worked in the mills of Northeastern Connecticut during the 1860's. Yes, a future saint was here in out-of-the way Quiet Corner! Although Alfred Besette/Saint Andre Besette returned to Canada, two of his brothers Napoleon / Leon (1837-1927) and Claude (1841-1929) settled in Northeastern Connecticut and were buried in All Hallows Cemetery in Moosup. For a good biography of this saint see C. Bernard Ruffin's "The Life of Brother Andre-The Miracle Worker of St. Joseph." It was through Brother Andre's urging, hard work, and tireless prayers that the Oratory to St. Joseph in Montreal was constructed. For much more on him see my original write-up in the Jan. 3, 2020 Killingly at 300 column.

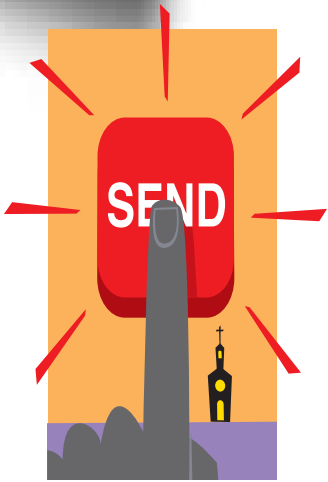
Margaret M. Weaver Killingly Municipal Historian, December 2025. Special thanks to Bernie Mitchell and Sue Gosselin for sharing memories. For additional information email me at margaretmweaver@gmail.com or visit the Killingly Historical Center at 196 Main St., Danielson, Wednesday or Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. or call 860-779-7250. Like us at Facebook

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brendan@

villagernewspapers.com



Roy Kitka named Thompson’s Veteran of the Month

THOMPSON — Roy Kitka of Wilsonville Road, North Grosvenordale, has been selected by the nominating committee to be recognized and honored as the January, 2026 Veteran of the Month for the Town of Thompson.

Vietnam War era veteran Sgt. Roy Kitka served his country in the United States Air Force Reserve honorably for five years from 1966 to 1971. He began his military career at the Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, where he reported for his Basic Training in November, 1966. At the completion of his basic training, he was re-assigned to the Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas, where he underwent extensive advanced training in all aspects of Waste Water Treatment and Management.

At the conclusion of his advanced training specialty, Kitka was assigned to the 905th Spt. Squad at the Westover Airforce Base in Springfield, Ma. where he spent much of his remaining active duty time. Sgt. Kitka was honorably discharged after a major industrial accident occurred which he was involved in, during a training exercise that he had been assigned to participate with his fellow military co-workers. He was returned to his home base at Westover AFB and

immediately hospitalized for a period of recovery. At the conclusion of his hospitalization he was evaluated and it was determined that he could no longer perform his military duties his duties due to the severe and complex nature of his injuries. Roy comes from a long and rich Military Family background. Roy’s Dad Bruno Kitka served in the U.S. Army in both World War I and World War II. His older brother Richard, a U.S. Navy Veteran fought in WWII, as did older Brother Francis who served in the U.S. Army, also fought in WWII. Francis was wounded in action and returned home with several medals of valor. Kitka’s younger brother Bruno served in the U.S. Air Force in Vietnam as a control tower operator at Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines. In addition, all of Kitka’s nephews served in the U.S. Military. Certainly, a true proud military family.

Kitka graduated from Tourtellotte Memorial High School in 1962, and continued his schooling at the H.H. Ellis Technical School in Danielson, graduating in 1963 as a Tool and Dye Maker. He immediately went to work in the tool and dye department at the Berner Tool and Dye Company in Southbridge, where he was employed for 10 years, leaving in 1973 to pursue his own interests.

During his employment at Berner’s, after hours Roy would dabble in his hobby selling tires and doing small auto repairs from his home.

In 1973, he and his wife Linda made the decision to turn this hobby into a full-time business, opening Roy Kitka’s Tire, Sales and Service. He very quickly became known as “The Tire Man.” Roy’s business grew expeditiously as he became known as the place to get your tires if you lived in and around, Northeastern Connecticut, Webster, Dudley, Oxford and well beyond. His customer base grew in part because of his great customer service, his friendly smile and very competitive prices. Some 52 years later, Roy and his wife Linda turned the business ownership to their son Dan and Dan’s wife Jean, and now Dan and Jean have complete business ownership of this very successful local business and have even expanded some of their services. Roy and his wife Linda turned the business ownership to Dan and Jean about 10 years ago so they could pursue many of the dreams they had little time to pursue when they owned and operated their own business. Roy remains in constant contact with this business almost on a daily basis, assisting when possible. Roy married his sweetheart, Linda Marilyn Mayotte, on Sept.

13, 1969 some 56 years ago. Together, they have a son, Dan, and a daughter, Molly Jane.

In the winter of 1982, Roy’s Community commitment was in full display as he awoke one early morning to find his elderly next-door neighbor’s house completely engulfed in a raging fire. Without hesitation, Roy, and as luck would have it, a passing State Trooper, Larry Groh, Sr., ran to the house and somehow managed to get to a second-floor window with Roy on Larry’s shoulders. Among the fire and thick black smoke, Roy located the victim and pull her out thru the second-floor bedroom window and to safety below. When ambulances and paramedics arrived, they treated her on scene and she was transported to an area hospital. She initially survived in the hospital for a few days, however eventually her burns were too severe to make a full recovery. The home was totally destroyed. Because of their heroic action that day both Veteran Roy Kitka and Trooper Larry Groh, Sr. were recognized by the local Community Fire Company with a citation. They also both received a citation and commendation from the State of Connecticut Public Safety Department for Meritorious Service above and beyond the call of duty for their

quick and unselfish life-saving action undertaken under very dangerous and life-threatening situation.

Roy is a very active member and volunteer in the Danielson Veterans Coffee House. The Danielson Veterans Coffee House has become very well known for its monthly food share distribution on the first Thursday of each month at the Kennedy Drive Farmers Market. Each month over 300 Families receive several thousand pounds of food. This is Roy’s favorite project with the Coffee House, as he works side by side with friend and classmate Bruce Haye the project manager, along with over 50 other volunteers to make this project such a success. Sgt Kitka was recently named as the 2026 recipient of the prestigious George Brown Founding Father of the Danielson Coffee House as it’s “Person of the Year.” Among all his other volunteer work, Roy was a long-time member and a Past President of the Thompson Lions Club. Roy also has sponsored as “The Tire Man” for decades, a Tee-Ball Team in the Town of Thompson Little League System.

Roy and Linda have many hobbies that they share together. Roy and Linda’s love of the ocean and fishing quickly come to mind. In the 1990’s and 2000’s (for about 20 years),

Roy owned a 27-foot lobster boat with 30 lobster traps. Many evenings during the warm weather months after Roy closed his business at 4:30 p.m., he and Linda would make the one-hour trip from their home on Wilsonville Road down to Groton on Long Island Sound to catch as many lobsters as they could. They would bring back their “Catch of the Day” to numerous area Restaurants. When they were not catching lobsters, Roy would bring his boat “ The Legasea ” to the Fisherman’s Co-op in Stonington to catch Flounder and Fluke for he and his Family to enjoy. In Roy and Linda’s earlier years when time permitted between raising a Family and operating a business, Roy and Linda would go deep sea fishing chasing cod and haddock with several of their neighbors out of Gloucester, Ma. fishing both the very popular George’s and Stellwagen Banks.

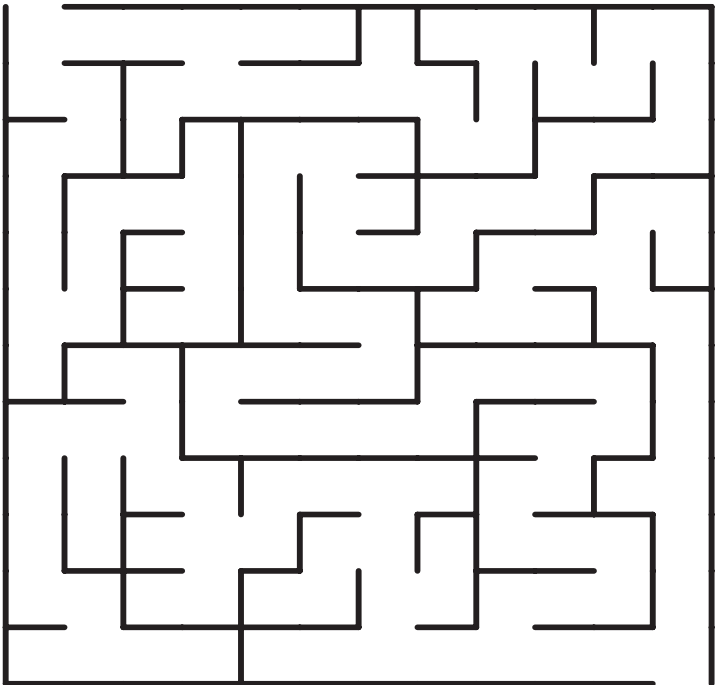
It is safe to say that Veteran Sgt. Roy Kitka and his lovely wife Linda, have dedicated their lives to their Family, to their Country, to their very successful local business , and to their Community.



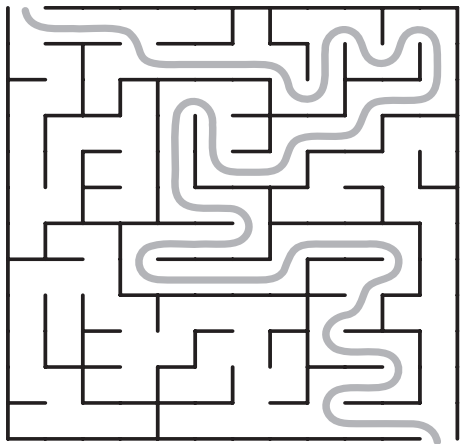
Maze Craze

Can you find your way through the maze?

START



FINISH



THIS DAY IN HISTORY

DEC 29

- 1607:** Pocahontas pleads for John Smith’s life when tribal leaders attempt to execute him.
- 1845:** The United States annexes the Republic of Texas.
- 1913:** Cecil B. DeMille begins filming Hollywood’s first feature film.

Food FACT:

This sweetened beverage was once a bitter drink made from roasted cocoa beans.

Answer: Hot chocolate

NEW WORD

COCOA

a hot drink made from cocoa powder mixed with sugar and milk

How they say that in...

English: Mug
Spanish: Taza
Italian: Tazza
French: Mug
German: Tasse

Did You Know?

A mug of hot cocoa can be made more delicious with the addition of whipped cream and miniature marshmallows.

Get the PICTURE?

Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Hot chocolate

Tips to stay the course with a New Year’s resolution

The holiday season is steeped in tradition. Many of those traditions are rooted in celebrants’ faith, but one of the last customs people embrace each year is largely secular.

The tradition of making New Year’s resolutions is older than many people may realize. According to History.com, the ancient Babylonians are believed to be the first people to make New Year’s resolutions when they began doing so roughly 4,000 years ago during a 12-day festival known as Akitu. That festival was religious in nature, but many people now make resolutions with a goal toward self-improvement unrelated to their faith. As people ponder their resolutions for the year ahead, the following strategies might help them stay the course over the next 12 months.

- Give serious thought to a prospective resolution. Statistics regarding New Year’s resolutions vary, but a 2024 survey from the Pew Research Center found that 13 percent of adults polled indicated they kept none of their resolutions. Numerous variables can affect whether or not a person keeps a resolution, but giving a potential resolution little thought ahead of time can make achieving a goal unlikely. Give any potential change ample thought before committing to a resolution. If you aspire to lose weight, identify the ways you’re going to go about that. Find a local gym to join, identify ways to eat a more nutritious diet and, perhaps most importantly, study how you can make time to stay the course. A little legwork in advance of declaring a resolution can pay off in the long run.
- Set periodic goals. Small goals along the way to the larger goal can serve as motivation to keep going. If you aspire to watch less television and read more, resolve to read 100 pages per week and then gradually increase that total if you so desire. Small goals can provide a great means to measure incremental progress that will ultimately make achieving a larger goal more likely.
- Be realistic. Realistic goals are more likely to be achieved than ones that seem good on the surface but are too difficult to keep. For example, if you aspire to exercise for an hour each day but obligations to work and family leave little time for physical activity, then you may need to reduce those expectations in favor of a more realistic, achievable goal. Taking on too much will only discourage you when hurdles inevitably appear, and that is likely to compel you to abandon the resolution entirely. If your initial goal is realistic, then any challenges that arise are less likely to derail your efforts.
- Don’t go it alone. Many people employ the buddy system as a means to stay motivated with fitness-related resolutions, and that approach can be applied to any goal you set at the beginning of the year. Having someone there to hold you accountable, and doing the same for a partner, increases the chances you’ll stay the course.

New Year’s resolutions are an ancient tradition, even if the majority tend to be abandoned rather quickly. But anyone can buck that trend and stay the course by employing a few simple, yet effective strategies.



What parents can do to cultivate kids’ creativity



Kids love to play, and moms and dads know that watching children have fun is one of the true joys of parenting. Play time might be all about fun for youngsters, but it’s also vital to their development.

A recently reaffirmed clinical report from the American Academy of Pediatrics originally released in 2018 noted that developmentally appropriate play promoted social-emotional, cognitive, language, and self-regulation skills in children’s brains. The authors of the report noted that play promotes executive function, allowing children to pursue goals and ignore distractions.

Kids indeed have much to gain from creative play, and parents can do much to encourage youngsters to cultivate their creative side.

of toys and supplies that encourage kids to use their imaginations.

- Allow children to pick their own projects. Parents might be inclined to urge children to engage in particular creative pursuits, but kids are more likely to embrace and enjoy creative play time if they’re allowed to pick their own projects and hobbies. Some children may be partial to drawing and coloring, while others may be natural born builders. Parents should resist any urge to direct kids toward projects and instead allow kids to identify their own ways to be creative.
- Don’t hesitate to participate. While kids should be allowed to pick their own projects, parents can still get involved. In fact, studies have found that children benefit in myriad ways when their parents play with them. Such interactions help to build children’s self-esteem and help kids learn about the world. Children also learn new skills and strengthen bonds with their parents through play. Kids who are encouraged to direct play sessions also learn and sharpen their decision-making skills. Participation also can extend to asking questions about kids’ creative pursuits, including what drove their decision-making during a given project and what they hope to do next.
- Take creativity on the road. Kids’ creativity can be cultivated anywhere, including outside the house. Let kids plan trips to a museum, nature preserve or another local attraction that encourages them to get in touch with their creativity in a fun and unique way.

Time to be creative benefits kids in numerous ways, and parents can do much to encourage kids to use their imaginations.



How to ring in the new year with Mother Nature



The arrival of a new year is a time of celebration for people across the globe. It’s customary to mark the occasion with fireworks, countdowns and champagne. For those who indulge a little too much on New Year’s Eve or stay up well past midnight, January 1 may be a day to recuperate. But spending New Year’s Day with Mother Nature is a great way to enjoy the first few hours of a new year.

- Go hiking. Time spent in freshly fallen snow and crisp air can offer a great way to recharge and approach the new year in a novel way. First Day Hikes were created by America’s State Parks to encourage people to enjoy the outdoors. They are held across the United States, but people in Canada or elsewhere can organize these January 1 hikes as well.
- Host a firepit brunch. Spending time around the firepit may seem like an activity tailor-made for autumn evenings, but dusk need not have fallen to enjoy an outdoor fire. Dress warmly and gather friends around a firepit or outdoor fireplace. Swap s’mores for cheese cubes on sticks that can be made warm and slightly melted over the open flames.
- Float or paddle. Take in nature from the water. Although these types of events may be better in warmer climates, those who are courageous enough to brave the elements can spend some time kayaking or floating on waterways that have not frozen over.
- Head to the slopes or a skating rink. Winter and skiing or ice skating are a perfect match. Spend the first day of the year testing out fresh powder, practicing double axels or sipping hot cocoa in the ski lodge.
- Visit a theme park. Some theme parks are still open after hosting holiday-centric special events. Crowds may be small on New Year’s Day, ensuring ride enthusiasts they can ride their favorite coasters multiple times.

New Year’s Day needn’t be all about headaches and sleeping in. Spending time outdoors is a fresh way to enjoy the start of a new year.

The month of January has been home to many historical events over the years. Here’s a look at some that helped to shape the world in January 1926.

- The first radio station in Ireland, 2RN, begins broadcasting on January 1.
- The worst flooding in the German city of Köln occurs on January 1. A torrent of water rises 35 feet, forcing roughly 50,000 people to evacuate their homes.
- General Theodoros Pangalos declares a state of emergency in Greece and assumes dictatorial powers on January 3. General Pangalos had become Prime Minister of Greece in June 1925 after orchestrating a coup d’état.
- Great War cemeteries in France are submerged on January 7 due to ongoing downpours affecting various areas throughout Europe. The same rains flood the London subway system as well.
- Gracie Allen and George Burns are married by a justice of the peace in Cleveland on January 7. The newlyweds ultimately gain renown as the comedy duo Burns and Allen.
- Twelve-year-old Prince Nguyen Phúc Thụy is crowned Emperor of Vietnam on January 8. The prince’s father, Emperor Khai Dinh, died two months earlier on November 6.
- Herman, Henry and Hillel Hassenfeld incorporate the Hassenfeld Brothers company on January 8. The company initially manufactures school supplies but eventually begins to make toys under the name “Hasbro.”
- Twenty Mexican rebels open fire aboard a train traveling from Guadalajara to Mexico City on January 9. The bandits escape with the equivalent of \$150,000 USD.
- The four-masted schooner Prinz Valdemar capsizes on January 10, blocking all ship traffic in and out of Biscayne Bay and the harbor of Miami, Florida. All aboard are rescued unharmed, but two ocean liners are prevented from leaving the harbor.
- United States Representative John W. Langley of Kentucky resigns from Congress on January 11. Langley’s resignation comes after the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed his jail sentence for violating prohibition laws by illegally selling alcohol to New York-based bootleggers with ties to organized crime.
- Michael Bond is born in Newbury, Berkshire, England, on January 13. Bond would survive a 1943 air raid in Reading during World War Two before authoring his first book, A Bear Called Paddington, in 1958.
- Twenty-year-old Ayn Rand departs Russia by train on January 17. Rand’s early life in Communist Russia heavily influenced the philosophy reflected in many of her more notable works.
- Voting rights activist Indiana Little leads several hundred Black men and women on a march to the Jefferson County registrar’s office in Birmingham, Alabama, on January 18. Little is arrested for disturbing the peace and would not be registered to vote for another 30 years.
- Multiple ships near New York City are threatened by a gale on January 20. The U.S. luxury liner SS President Roosevelt completes a rescue of the British freighter SS Antioe on January 28 after initial reports indicating the latter ship sank in the storm.
- Chaplin Court Treatt and Stella Court Treatt complete the first successful journey across Africa by motorcar on January 24. The duo began their journey one year, four months and 11 days before completing the trip in Cairo, Egypt.
- Speaking on behalf of the British Empire Cancer Campaign during a luncheon on January 25, British surgeon Sir Berkeley Moynihan says that cancer of the tongue is traceable to two things, including smoking.
- Thousands of mourners line the streets of Brussels to watch the funeral procession of Belgian national hero and cleric Cardinal Désiré-Joseph Mercier on January 28. Cardinal Mercier was known for his staunch opposition to the German occupation of Belgium during World War I.
- Violette Neatley Anderson becomes the first African American woman to be admitted to practice law before the U.S. Supreme Court on January 29.
- The Chamber of Deputies passes “Law Number 100” on January 31. The law grants Italian Prime Minister Benito Mussolini the right to issue judicial norms without prior consultation with the Italian parliament.

OBITUARIES

Francis Edward Kujawski, 92



Francis Edward Kujawski, age 92, of Thompson, CT passed peacefully on Monday evening December 22, 2025 surrounded by the love of his family at UMass Memorial Hospital in Worcester.

Frank was loved by and joined in marriage to Betty (Marshall-Milliard) Kujawski celebrating 45 years together.

He leaves behind two sons Michael Kujawski and wife Melanie and Francis Kujawski and wife Jennifer. Stepson, Gary Milliard and wife Deborah. Daughters, Crystal Cepetelli and husband Mark and daughter Cheryl Kujawski and Fiancé John Taylor. And, Stepdaughter Patricia (Milliard) Veber and husband Gary; and stepdaughter, Bonnie Milliard.

Frank was the son of the late Francis and Stacia (Stelmach) Kujawski of Webster MA, and a late sister Dolores David and her late husband Albert David and their children Kevin, James, and Patrice.

Frank leaves behind his Grandchildren Jonathan Milliard, Benjamin Milliard, Keith Remillard, Amanda Bottone, Jennifer Gibeault, Devyn Fitch, Lynsey Poirier, Brook Kujawski, Julie Kujawski, Danielle Elliott, Savanna Kujawski, Troy Kujawski, Jason Baldwin, and Melissa Wilson.

Blessed with the love of seventeen Great Grandchildren Frank is now joined in heaven holding hands with Julian Alabenese.

After graduating from Bartlett High School Frank attended the University

of Massachusetts at Amherst where he earned a Bachelor's degree in Linguistics and Language Studies.

Frank served in the US Air Force during the Korean war from 1952-1956. Earning the National Defense Medal, United Nations Service Medal, Korean Service Medal, Good Conduct Ribbon, and the Ambassador for Peace Medal and Guardian of Freedom Medal.

A proud member of the North Grosvenordale VFW and American Legion, the Thompson Rod and Gun Club, and the TSKK.

Frank retired from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1990. His joys were spending time bird watching with his dogs, the Florida home, golfing, gardening, playing cards, hunting, and cooking amazing holiday feasts for his family.

A warm and soft soul, always calm, always loved go now with God.

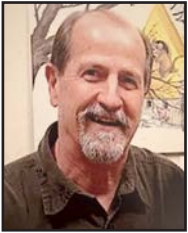
The funeral will be held 11:00 am on Monday, December 29 at Bartel Funeral Home, 33 Schofield Avenue, Dudley, MA

Calling hours will be Sunday, December 28 from 4 to 6 PM at Bartel Funeral Home, 33 Schofield Avenue, Dudley, MA. Military burial in the Spring at St. Joseph Garden of Peace.

In lieu of flowers donations to Webster/ Dudley Veteran Council C/o Veterans Home 4 Veterans Way Webster ,Ma. 01570 www.bartelfuneralhome.com



Normand L. Chartier, 80



Normand L. Chartier, 80, of Brooklyn, Connecticut, passed away peacefully on December 17, 2025, with family at his side. Normand was born September 23, 1945, and raised in Danielson, CT, the son of Dr. Gerard M. Chartier and L. Rubia (Lavigne) Chartier. He was the 7th of twelve children. Norm graduated from Killingly High School in the class of 1964 with the distinction of being the first football athlete from Killingly to be selected for All State. He went on to attend the University of Connecticut on a football scholarship. He was proud to be part of the 1965 UConn team that defeated Yale for the first time.

After a serious football injury in his third year, he changed direction, turning to his artistic talent, which led to a life-long career as a children's book illustrator and watercolor artist. Normand illustrated 76 children's books and spent a number of years as a freelance artist for Sesame Street. He has received numerous awards and accolades during his career, but he was most proud in 2013 when he was invited to join the Mazza Museum in Findlay, Ohio, which has the world's largest collection of original artwork by children's book illustrators. Several of his watercolor paintings and illustrations are also in the permanent collection at New Britain Museum of American Art and the Slater Museum in Norwich.

A vacation to coastal Maine in the 70's inspired him to paint the beauty surrounding him. He continued those summer visits for over 40 years and created a beautiful collection of watercolor paintings, which are featured in his book, "My Maine." Norm was a longtime fan of UConn Women's basketball. He also enjoyed collecting antique toys, especially

old metal Tonka Trucks and Lionel trains. He loved antique shops, and could never pass a yard sale without slowing down, and more often than not stopping to look around. He quite often found something he "just had to have."

Norm loved hopping in the car at sunset to find the best place to watch the sunset. He spoke fondly of family trips to visit various National Parks and Monuments around the country during his childhood, and later in life, in the summertime, just packing up the cooler at the end of the day to cook out at his family's place on the cove at Alexander Lake. He found joy being surrounded by the beauty of nature.

He was predeceased by his daughter, Sally Rubia, and his siblings Gerard, David, Pierre, Anne-Marie Allen, and Joseph. He is survived by his loving partner of 21 years Lynn Clark, daughter Dr. Molly Chartier (Michael), sons Samuel (Sarah) and Matthew, along with his four grandchildren Elyssa, Noel and Maxwell Grube and Lila Ferraro; plus his siblings Robert (Gretchen), Marc, Michele (Beth), Celeste, Louis (Suzanne), and A. Nicholas (Susan) as well as numerous nieces and nephews. The family is deeply grateful for the compassionate care provided by the dedicated nurses and aides at Pierce Memorial Baptist Home in Brooklyn, which made Normand's final days and hours so peaceful.

Family and friends are invited to visit with Normand's family from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm on Friday, January 16, at Gagnon and Costello Funeral Home, 33 Reynolds Street, Danielson, CT, followed by a service at the funeral home and a reception at Hank's Restaurant in Brooklyn.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Alzheimer's Association (Alz.org/donate) or your favorite charity. Share a memory at Gagnonandcostellofh.com

Closing out 2025

As we enter the new year, let's close out the latest 2025 auction news, beginning with a rare baseball card heading to auction.

T206 cards were produced by tobacco companies from 1909 to 1911 and given away as premiums. Honus Wagner played during that time and was a first ballot Hall of Famer who "hit .300-or-better for 15 straight seasons from 1899-1913," according to the Hall of Fame. In that span, Wagner won eight National League batting titles, led the NL in doubles seven times, stolen bases five times and RBI four times," according to the Hall of Fame's website. His baseball card is the rarest in the set and PSA (a card grading company) has graded only 36 Wagner cards, according to Sports Collectors Daily. Some have speculated that Wagner didn't want his likeness associated with tobacco products and that he wanted production of his card halted. However, Hall of Fame research showed that Wagner actively promoted other tobacco products. The card that was recently found came from a collection that had been handed down through a family after a collector passed away in 1974. The collector would have been 11 around the time when the cards were being placed in cigarette packages. Even though the card graded at only a 1 out of 10, it has a \$1,000,000 starting bid. The last PSA Honus Wagner graded 1 card sold for \$3.1

million in 2022 and this most recent card is expected to bring more.

In the rock and roll world, a rare photo went on the auction block recently. David Bowie's "Aladdin Sane" album cover is "one of pop music's most iconic images," according to an Antique Trader article. The photo depicts Bowie with the lightning bolt design on his face that appeared on the album cover. Brian Duffy took the photo. His archive website says his "cutting-edge photography documents the vibrancy of 'the Swinging '60's' London scene when the city was at the height of cool." The photo sold for £381,400 (about \$515,481 USD).

As you are probably aware, the government stopped minting pennies in November. The U.S. Mint partnered with the government to auction some of the last pennies minted. The pennies had an "Ω" (Omega) mark designating them as being some of the last that were made. Benjamin Franklin is credited with designing our country's first penny, the Fugio Cent. Fugio means "I flee" in Latin. The reverse had a 13-link chain that symbolized the 13 original colonies. The front had the words "Mind your business" below a sundial. They were struck in different locations in New Haven, Conn. The U.S. Mint produced its first penny in 1793. The coin is called the "Flowing Hair Cent" because of the image



of the woman on the front. The reverse has a wreath design with the words "One Cent." The most expensive set in the auction contained the last 3 pennies that were struck. Two pennies were made with the typical zinc and copper composition from the Philadelphia and Denver Mints along with a .9999 fine 24-karat gold penny. It brought \$800,000. Along with the other Omega pennies in the auction, the sale brought in \$16.76 million. Meanwhile, a local grocery store recently offered two cents for every penny with pennies getting harder to find. Hopefully no one turned in an Omega penny.

Our single-collector Civil War auction will be starting soon. Our following sale will include fine jewelry, sterling silver, art, and other antiques and collectibles. We'll be running a major sale with sports cards and memorabilia in the summer. We are accepting consignments for our two next sales. Please visit our Web site, <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)



Kenneth Dale Pion, 88, of Brooklyn, CT, formerly of Quinebaug, CT passed away December 24, 2025 at his home in Brooklyn, CT. He was the beloved husband of Diane Alice (Landry) Pion for 62 years. They were married on April 27, 1963. He was born March 25, 1937 in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, son of the late Delmar and Flora (Gravelle) Pion.

Kenneth attended Grand Rapids High School and moved to Southbridge, MA in 1960. He worked for Pratt & Whitney, American Optical, was a manager at several gas stations and was an auto mechanic at Knight Chevrolet from 1966-2000 when he retired.

He enjoyed fishing, hunting, boating and spending his youthhood on Shoal Lake Itasca County, Grand Rapids, Minnesota. Kenneth loved working on cars and restoring his 1951 Ford in his younger years. He was a country music fan and enjoyed Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson, Hank Williams and James Dean. Kenneth also loved his tv shows American Pickers, western movies and Steve Ives travel guy. Also, any history show.

He leaves his wife Diane A. Pion of Brooklyn, CT; his children Kyle Pion (Audrey Brousseau) of Putnam, CT, Keith Pion (Michelle) of Killingly, CT, Kandyse Bassett (John) of Pomfret, CT and Kurt Pion (Mary) of Sherborn, MA; his eight grandchildren Corey, Connor, Colby, Morgan,

Kenneth Dale Pion, 88

Jacob, Lucas, Matthew and Nathan; his two great grandchildren Payton and Cora; his sister Florine Lutterman. Also, several nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his brothers George Pion, Theodore Pion, Delmar Pion, Jr. and Bruce Pion. Also, a granddaughter Caylee Pion.

In lieu of flowers donations in his name can be made to UMass Memorial Hospital

A Mass of Christian Burial will be Friday, January 2, 2026 at 11:00 AM at St. Anne Church, 16 Church Street, Sturbridge, MA, burial will follow at St. Anne Cemetery Sturbridge, MA. Share a memory at Gagnonandcostellofh.com

LEGALS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

ESTATE OF

Robert R Pezanko, Sr. (25-00454)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated December 16, 2025, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Elyssa A. Foley, Clerk

The fiduciary is:

Robert R Pezanko Jr.
c/o STEPHEN T KULIG, BRIGHAM & KULIG, 69 BROAD STREET, DANIELSON, CT 06239
January 2, 2026

Send all obituary notices to

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