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# Handcuff Hunger helps local food pantries

BY JASON BLEAU  
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

REGION — The Putnam Police Department, Killingly Police Department, and Connecticut State Police Troop D in Danielson once again teamed up for their annual Handcuff Hunger campaign throughout the pre-Thanksgiving weekend collecting food and cash donations to help several agencies provide Thanksgiving food and resources for local families.

Handcuff Hunger is a staple of the holiday season in the region and sees officers from different departments positioned at grocery stores to welcome donations from locals that are then spread out to different food security programs throughout the region to support Thanksgiving food distributions. Representatives of the Putnam Police were stationed at the Price Chopper in Putnam, officers from the State Police Troop D Barracks spent time at Stop n' Shop in Putnam, and the Killingly Police Department accepted



Jason Bleau

The Putnam Police Department was stationed outside of Price Chopper in Putnam to collect food for TEEG and Daily Bread during Handcuff Hunger.

donations at the Stop n' Shop in the Killingly Commons throughout both Nov. 23 and 24 collecting everything from turkeys and holiday staples to canned goods and cash or check donations. Officers from all

departments have long considered Handcuff Hunger to be a highlight of their annual calendar as a time when they can have positive interaction with the community and help make a difference for those in need. Putnam

Police Captain Justin Lussier said his department is always amazed at the outpouring of generosity the community brings each year.

"We've been doing it a number of years now, and we're always success-

ful here. We're always amazed at how generous the local community is. There's definitely a significant need in this area and the townfolks always step up to help us out," said Lussier. "I think this is one of our favorite days and we get to interact with the public in a very positive way.

We really enjoy what this day means for everyone."

Patrolman Mark Juhola of the Killingly Police Department also touched on the significance of the day and how the generosity of local residents helps make a difference for those in

Turn To **HANDCUFF** page **A7**

## Ceremony bids farewell to 'Redmen' and 'Redgals'



Jason Bleau

This banner displayed during the special retirement ceremony will hang in the Killingly High School gym in honor of the decades of history associated with the "Redmen" and "Redgals" mascots.

BY JASON BLEAU  
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

KILLINGLY — The "Redmen" and "Redgals" are officially no more, but the much-debated former names of Killingly High

School's sports teams will live on through a special banner to be hung in the high school's gym recognizing the history associated with the mascot.

It's been a long road to retirement for the

"Redmen" and "Redgals." The name was originally changed to the Red Hawks in 2019 as part of a national movement to remove Native American mascots from sports teams with some deeming them as

offensive while others felt the names were a source of pride. The issue became the driving force for Republicans to dominate the election cycle and fill the Board of Education, eventually reinstating the mascot. The Board has since regained a Democrat majority and voted 5-4 earlier this year to officially retire the names for good, this time including a special remembrance ceremony to honor the history of the labels which dates back to as early as the 1930s.

That ceremony was held on Nov. 26 in the Killingly High School Cafeteria prior to the annual Powder Puff game. School officials debuted a special banner with the "Redmen" and

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## Roseland Park gets a facelift

WOODSTOCK — Thanksgiving morning marked the re-opening of Roseland Park after a brief hiatus for major construction projects. Visitors were greeted by a beautiful new entrance, freshly paved roads throughout the entire park, and a new traffic pattern designed to make the park safer for drivers and pedestrians alike. Dark, overgrown paths now see sunlight, the slopes of Mt. Elliot are once again visible, and walkers no longer need to be wary of crumbling roads underfoot. The new road layout assures that children and vehicles will no longer share the same space.

The paving project, and other improvements are being funded through the generosity of the local community through the Park's "150 Years and Beyond" Legacy campaign, launched just over a year ago. To date the campaign has raised over \$900,000 towards the ultimate goal of re-building the park's infrastructure, and re-imagining Henry Bowen's vision of a rural, lakeside park for the generations to come.

More improvements are on the way for 2025. The road reconstruction project included the installation

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## Bysiewicz honors Korea, Vietnam veterans in Thompson



Jason Bleau

American Legion Post 13 presents the colors to begin the "Thompson Korean-Era and Vietnam-Era Veterans Award Ceremony."

BY JASON BLEAU  
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

THOMPSON — More than 50 Thompson veterans attended a special ceremony in their honor at the Tourtelotte Memorial High School Auditorium in Thompson

on Nov. 25 presented by Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz, State Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Ronald Welch, Thompson First Selectman Amy St. Onge, and Thompson Veterans Affairs Officer Rene Morin.

The ceremony saw both state and local officials praising the veterans in attendance for their dedication to their country during two conflicts: the Korean War and the Vietnam War. The Korean War is often called the "Forgotten War" as it

took place for only a few years between World War II and the Vietnam War. The Vietnam War, while more well-known, lives in infamy for the way that citizens who opposed the conflict treated veter-

Turn To **VETERANS** page **A8**

### Holidays bring early deadlines

Along with merriment and good cheer, the holiday season brings with it an accelerated press schedule for our next few editions.

The submission deadline for any press releases and letters to the Editor intended for publication in our Dec. 13 edition will be Monday, Dec. 9 at 4 p.m., as usual.

For the following week (Dec. 20), the submission deadline will be Thursday, Dec. 12 at 10 a.m.

For the Dec. 27 edition, the deadline will be Tuesday, Dec. 17 at 4 p.m.

For the Jan. 2 edition, the deadline will be Thursday, Dec. 19 at 4 p.m.

Please note that our offices will be closed Dec. 23-25 in observance of Christmas and Dec. 30-Jan. 1 in observance of New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.



# Rachel Coolidge earns Westview's November Employee of the Month award

DAYVILLE — Rachel Coolidge is Westview's November 2024 Employee of the Month.

Coolidge is a rotating Teacher's Assistant at Westview Child Care Center, which neighbors Westview Health Care Center and Country Living at Westview Commons in Dayville. As a floating aide, she works to preserve the everyday flow of the curriculum by assisting with every student demographic between infancy and pre-kindergarten. She is a member of the original team hired at Westview Child Care Center; onboarding with the facility just prior to their opening in September 2023. When the first "graduating class" of students at Westview Child Care Center moved from pre-K to their kindergarten enrollment, it was a bittersweet moment for Coolidge. She was delighted to see their successes in early education lead to their advancement, but she knew she would miss these students with whom she had formed such caring bonds.

According to Coolidge, her connections with her students are her favorite parts of day-to-day life at Westview Child Care Center. Utilizing her professional devotion, she hopes to establish an early touchpoint in her students' lives that they can joyfully reflect back upon throughout their journey in education and growth in life. This passion is derived naturally. Looking back on her own life, she recalls some of her own early educators with fondness. In addition to



Rachel Coolidge

her experience gained over the last year as a Teacher's Assistant at Westview Child Care Center, she has also worked at another local child care provider and privately taught her nieces when they were learning from home. Coolidge earned an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education from Connecticut State Community College: Quinebaug Valley, and she plans to pursue further education in this field. Through all of her classroom education and hands-on experience, she knows the art of teaching effectively and also possesses a great deal of practical knowledge and safety training—including first-aid instruction and CPR certification.

Rachel is the daughter of Deborah and Wayne Coolidge. She was born in Tucson, Az. when her father was stationed there with the United States Air Force; moving with her family to Danielson around the age of four. Her sister, Rebecca Chase, and her husband Shawn Chase have two daughters, Lauren and Emily. The Coolidge family is very close, and they enjoy spending time together. They all appreciate family outings—whether it is going to apple orchards in the warmer months or sledding together in snowier times, they try to make as many classic New England memories that they can. Family also connected Rachel to Westview well before she came on as a teacher at Westview Child Care Center: her cousin Pam has held an important role at Westview's Outpatient and Aquatic Therapy Center for many years. Most of Rachel's family works in either education or medicine, so integrating her professional role at Westview Child Care Center with the broader offerings of the Westview facilities is a natural connection.

Additional modes of care are accessible to students at Westview Child Care Center if needed, and Rachel greatly appreciates that. While on the Westview campus, some of her students may benefit from exercise instruction from their Sports Medicine team, therapy from their Speech/Language Pathologists, or friendly visits and pen-pal correspondence with residents at Westview Commons through the

"Adopt-A-Grandparent" program. Rachel appreciates Westview Child Care Center's approach to "Caring for Generations," their state-of-the-art facility for learning through play, and the collective of colleagues she works with. Together, they know that good communication between the child care center and the parents/guardians of the students is a highly important aspect of the operation. As collegial Teachers and Teacher's Assistants, they too form a bond together—and Rachel expressed her appreciation for their acknowledgment as the November Employee of the Month.

"I have major gratitude in receiving this award. By earning Employee of the Month, I am honored to know that my peers recognize the work that I do and how much I care about our students," Coolidge stated. "This award is unexpected and humbling, because I do not come here to be recognized myself—I come here to help our students to know that they are recognized for their wonderful talents, expanding knowledge, and unique personalities. Every day here is very rewarding to me!"

Westview Executive Vice President David T. Panteleakos is proud to see the triumphs of Westview Child Care Center through the steadfast efforts of professionals like Rachel:

"At Westview Child Care Center we are fortunate to have Rachel and the staff who have been here since day one—they help us to maintain the standard of excellent care we establish throughout our Westview family and are highly seasoned in our child care model. At the same time, an outstanding example can be shown and helpful assistance can be offered by Rachel to our new teachers that join Westview Child Care Center's faculty," Mr. Panteleakos commented. "As we continue to grow and enhance the experience for students at Westview Child Care Center, I am happy to have Rachel as a consistent example of teacher dedication. Congratulations to Rachel!"

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 16 years.

## Greater Putnam Interfaith Council holds annual Thanksgiving service at B'Nai Shalom



Courtesy

Emcee Pam Rosenlund welcomes to the podium Marge Guerin of Congregation B'Nai Shalom, who offered a Thanksgiving prayer.

PUTNAM — On Nov. 18, Congregation B'Nai Shalom again hosted the annual Greater Putnam Interfaith Council Thanksgiving service. Cher Kapelner Champ of GPIC and synagogue president Sue Stern welcomed the group of more than 50 people from the community. GPIC member Pam Rosenlund of the Unitarian/Universalist faith emceed the event. She and other GPIC members shared Christian, Jewish, and Baha'i prayers of thanksgiving. Leslie Sweetnam and Jim Stahr provided music. Karen Osbrey of Interfaith Human Services of Putnam spoke of the services provided and how we can help. Brenda Buchbinder told of the Interfaith activities in Willimantic.

Rev. Ross Johnson of Living Faith Methodist church gave the address, saying we are all like pieces of a Thanksgiving pie and we need to be forces for good in the world. The service ended with the group singing of "Let There Be Peace on Earth," a theme of the evening. Then people shared fellowship and refreshments.

## 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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- CLUES ACROSS**
- 1. Bar bills
  - 5. Recipe measurement (abbr.)
  - 8. Swiss river
  - 11. Czech Republic capital
  - 13. "Officially known as"
  - 14. A French abbot
  - 15. Having a strong sharp smell or taste
  - 16. Local area network
  - 17. Data transmission speed measure
  - 18. Embarrass
  - 20. When you hope to get there
  - 21. This (Spanish)
  - 22. Gives up
  - 25. Churchgoer
  - 30. Current
  - 31. Slang for gun
  - 32. Small drum
  - 33. Vanished union bigwig
  - 38. Rocker's tool of the trade
  - 41. Dearth
  - 43. 2024 Olympics host
  - 45. Excess blood in the vessels
  - 48. Afrikaans
  - 49. Agreement between provider and customer
  - 50. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
  - 55. Ancient Syrian city
  - 56. Witch
  - 57. Celebrations
  - 59. Long period of time
  - 60. A team's best pitcher
  - 61. Current unit
  - 62. One-time aerospace company
  - 63. French/Belgian river
  - 64. Swedish rock group

- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. Yearly tonnage (abbr.)
  - 2. Genus of clams
  - 3. Remark
  - 4. Actor LaBeouf
  - 5. Ohio town
  - 6. Olympic sport
  - 7. Cure
  - 8. Behave in a way that belittles
  - 9. Shares a boundary with
  - 10. Give advice
  - 12. Promotional materials
  - 14. Assist or encourage, usually in some wrongdoing
  - 19. "Agatha All Along" actress Kathryn
  - 23. Small piece
  - 24. King of Camelot
  - 25. Parts per thousand (abbr.)
  - 26. Small Milky Way constellation
  - 27. One who challenges authority (abbr.)
  - 28. Equal (prefix)
  - 29. Shawl
  - 34. S. American wood sorrel relative
  - 35. The end
  - 36. Supervises interstate commerce
  - 37. Yes vote
  - 39. Officer of high rank
  - 40. Church office
  - 41. Tire pressure measurement
  - 42. From a distance
  - 44. Photographs
  - 45. Industrial process
  - 46. Nobel Prize-winning physicist
  - 47. Map out
  - 48. Mammary gland part of female mammal
  - 51. Honorable title (Turkish)
  - 52. Spongeliest cake leavened with yeast
  - 53. Speak incessantly
  - 54. Poetry term
  - 58. Relaxing space

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# Explore the Last Green Valley photo contest winners announced



The other winning photos in the Scenes calendar are: "Waldo in Winter," by Nick Velles of Franklin; "Winter Falls," by Speros Velles of Franklin; "Old Sturbridge Potter," by DiBonaventura; "Buffumville Lake Cove," by Vicki Aubin of Oxford, Mass.; "Dandelion Dew" by Laura Tedeschi of Hampton; "Two Deere in a Field," by Matt Greene of Canterbury; "The Old Barn," by Elaine Nelson of Pomfret; "Fire in the Sky," by Graff; "Falling for Blue Flag," by Hamby; "Peaceful Inspiration," by Shori Velles; and "Princess Pine," by Aubin.

REGION — The Last Green Valley, Inc. (TLGV) received so many wonderful photos it was once again able to produce two 2025 calendars, "Wildlife in The Last Green Valley" and "Scenes from The Last Green Valley."

Tim Gingras of Charlton, Mass. took the coveted cover shot for the Wildlife Calendar. His image "Hey There, How's it Going?" was taken in Oxford, MA and features an eastern newt in its red eft stage. It is also the March image. Sarah Hamby of Thompson photographed the beautiful Scenes cover, "Arboretum Picnic" at Palmer Arboretum in Woodstock during spring bloom. It is also the August image.

Both Gingras and Hamby are first-time winners of the cover photos. Hamby has been a regular contributor to the TLGV calendars, with her photos appearing inside for the last decade.

"I'm pretty much over the moon about the cover," Hamby said.

Hamby's photography began as part of her job as a local journalist, but a feature story on Old Furnace State Park changed her perspective. She became both an avid hiker and developed a passion for landscape photography.

Hamby said she was running errands in Woodstock in May, when she decided to stop and see what was blooming at Palmer Arboretum. The vibrant colors and the distinctive tree in the background drew her in.

"I thought, 'maybe this would look nice for the calendar.' More people should come to the Arboretum," Hamby said.

Gingras started taking photos in August of 2023 after his brother, Bill Gingras, who has also had photos in the TLGV calendar, urged him to take up the hobby. Tim's wife had passed away earlier in the year and he needed an outlet. He had always loved the outdoors and was an avid hiker and finally gave in to his brother's prodding.

"He's pretty much taught me everything I know," Gingras said. "I'm addicted now."

Gingras estimates he spends about 30 hours a week out in the field taking photos. He saw the newt in Oxford, Mass. just weeks before the deadline for the photo contest and did what his brother taught him – get low. He wanted to look the newt in the eye and used a macro lens to capture the crisp details of the newt's face.

"I lay on beaches, I lay in mud, I lay in swamps," Gingras said. "You get down to their point of view and get engaged with them."

The other winning photos in the Wildlife calendar are: "Kingfisher Posing on a Branch Above the Water," by Ron Zigler of Holland, Mass.; "Pileated Pair Tearing Up a Log," by Alton Blodgett of Lebanon; "Great Blue Heron Family," by Zigler; "Clearwing Moth," by Zigler; "On High Alert," by Blodgett; "Green Heron," by Karyn DiBonaventura of Pomfret; "Frog Lily," by Vickie Mathieu of Chaplin; "Prey Tell, What Are You Looking At?," by Matthew Marshall of Lisbon; "Nature's Camouflage," by Shori Velles of Franklin; "Tom Turkey," by Ryan Graff of Hampton; and "Purple Finch in the Winter," by Sandee Harraden of Woodstock.

## Area Knights of Columbus, Danielson Elks to hold second free 'Coats for Kids' program

PUTNAM — Bring your child to get a free, new, warm winter coat on Tuesday, Dec. 10, from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m. at the Cargill Council 64 Knights of Columbus Hall, 64 Providence St. in Putnam. It's a big blue building.

The area's Knights of Columbus and Danielson Elks Lodge 1706 will be giving away new winter coats in various colors for boys and girls, in toddler's, children's and teen sizes. They will also have free blankets and free, used winter coats in good condition available for men and women. The program is free and open to anyone in need, with no obligation. For information, please call (860) 928-5873.

## VILLAGER ALMANAC

### AT CT AUDUBON

Bird sightings at the Connecticut Audubon Society Center at Pomfret and Wyndham Land Trust properties for the week of Nov. 25: Bald Eagle, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Meadowlark, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Barred Owl, Great-horned Owl, Junco, Golden-crowned Kinglet, White-throated Sparrow, Red-tailed Hawk, Bluebird, Song Sparrow. Visit [ctaudubon.org/pomfret-home](http://ctaudubon.org/pomfret-home).

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 EDITOR

# Finding your holiday spirit

It happens every year: November fades into December, and suddenly, the world expects you to transform into a holiday fanatic overnight. The lights go up, the carols start playing, and every ad you see insists it's "the most wonderful time of the year." But what if you're just not feeling it yet? Or, worse, you're feeling the pressure to feel it?

Here's a little secret: the holiday spirit isn't something you have to force. It sneaks up on you when you least expect it—like when you hear a kid giggling in a Santa hat, or when the smell of cookies baking fills the house. It's in those little moments, not in the perfectly decorated tree or the over-the-top gift list.

So, how do you find it? Start small. Pour yourself a mug of hot cocoa (marshmallows optional but highly recommended) and sit by the window for five minutes. Listen to your favorite holiday song—the silly ones count too. Drive around to check out the lights in your neighborhood. You don't have to deck the halls in a single day; sometimes, just hanging one strand of twinkle lights can do the trick.

And if the holidays feel like more of a chore this year, that's okay too. Give yourself permission to celebrate in your own way. Skip the big party if it stresses you out and invite a few close friends for a movie night instead. Or spend a quiet evening wrapping gifts (even if they're just for yourself). It's about finding joy where you are, not where you think you're supposed to be.

Remember, holiday spirit isn't one-size-fits-all. It's not about how much you spend or how perfectly you decorate; it's about making the season your own. So whether you're going full Buddy the Elf or keeping it low-key, let the magic find you. It always does.

**Letter submission policy**

Letters to the Editor must include the author's name, address, and a daytime phone number for purposes of verification in order to be considered for publication. Only the author's name and the town in which they reside will be published. Letters submitted without all of the required information will not be accepted.

It is the sole prerogative of the Editor to determine whether a submission satisfies our requirements and decency standards, and any submission may be rejected at any time for any reason he or she might deem appropriate.

# OPINION

Opinion and commentary from the Quiet Corner

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Free speech makes America stronger

To The Editor:

I'm sure I turned a few readers' heads with my support for the obscene Brandon sign last week despite being solidly on the blue team, but free speech is one of those things that made this country and Western civilization into something great. What's missing nowadays is people being taught the difference between opinions and facts, and that opinions may not be facts because people can be wrong. Hence the overreaction to people who say something that somebody doesn't like in these opinion sections, although these papers are minor league compared to the internet. To make a long story short, if you think Ed DeLuca is going to destroy the world, go for a walk outside or something and get some fresh air.

Feedback is a gift, even when it's negative, and even when it's wrong. Let's take internet haters for example. If you post something on social media and the usual garden variety trolls dogpile you for it, what they don't realize is that they're working for free. I'm looking for reasonable logical people to associate with, so I'd expect that if someone ran their mouth about me that reasonable people will want to double-check what those people are saying about me to make sure it's correct. If they don't then they're suckers and I don't want to deal with them. If they do, that

troll has destroyed their credibility and made themselves look completely nuts because I most likely won't resemble the caricature of me that they made up in their head.

Suppressing free speech just makes people weaker. First, you look weak because you look like someone who can't take criticism. Second, your company or team or whatever will weaken because if you intimidate people out of speaking up, they most likely will, and you may miss out on good ideas or lose good people to greener pastures when only unimaginative bobblehead doormats can stick around. Now keep snowballing that further and further up the chain until it affects entire countries, and you can look at how we won the Cold War versus the Soviets or our current differences versus China. No matter what you may think of Trump, he pales in comparison to Xi Jinping banning Pooh Bear from the PRC because he can't stand the fact that he kind of looks like Pooh Bear.

I realize that locally we have a massive bipartisan problem with free speech with some overly emotional people in our local political establishment, but if someone else has a free speech problem, do yourself a favor and don't make it your problem as well.

JAY GERHART  
PUTNAM

### I will continue to pray

To the Editor:

After reading the Opinion page on Nov. 15, I knew that I would see the meltdown, unhinged never Trumpers crying over the election. The House, the Senate, the popular vote and the Presidency. America's voice was loud and clear except for the never Trumpers who continue to try and shame the American voters, shame Trump, and anything good that they continue to hate.

To the few here, it's getting old, stale, doesn't make sense, and really, not many people really care what you write. I am sure you must sit around the pity party table with plenty of tissues crying and trying to find more insulting words that you think will shake all Trump supporters. It's not working. Trumpers, Nazis, Hitler, stupidity, ignorant, greedy, deplorables, uneducated, Walmart shoppers, garbage people and whatever they can think of. Again, it's not working.

Trump won. I know you hate it and can't move on. It's OK; take a deep breath. No one cares, except maybe a few. The Democrats can't handle it, people on TikTok are completely unhinged, screaming at a wall, flipping out, melting like ice in a microwave. Actually, it really goes to show America how unhinged many people are over an election. Give me a break.

I really wonder how many leftists lived up to their promise? Did they leave the country? Another bunch of jokers who think that we will all fall apart if they move. Move; we don't care. I will stay around and dig in and support Trump and his new administration. I will continue to pray, as I have done when Biden was President. I didn't promise

to leave, I didn't have a meltdown, I didn't call Biden names, I just didn't agree with his policies. I spoke out about his anti-God policies. I still prayed. I didn't his policies on immigration with open borders allowing criminals, terrorists, and millions of pounds of Fentanyl killing our citizens; I didn't like his policies supporting transgender surgery on children that Harris supported. I didn't support his abortion issues; I still prayed. His son Hunter's laptop was protected by the FBI in 2019, and many never Trumpers here said that the laptop was compromised when actually, it was real, it was true, and used as evidence to convict him of not paying taxes. I still prayed.

Now, as I am watching Trump shaking up both Democrats and Republicans who have enjoyed ripping the American taxpayers off now will have to give account of their actions. Just today, the Pentagon just released their audit. Seven failed audits in a row. Is that not our tax money? Please, I don't want to hear any more about Project 2025. Again, there is no proof, except for those who won't seek the truth, will continue to lie. Please, it's getting old. So for you who can't keep it together, go to McDonald's and have a burger on Trump, throw your trash in the trash can; many Trumpers will pick it up and haul it away. Take a deep breath, go home and take a nap. Trump will still be here. Plenty of tissues at Walmart if you don't mind. The Walmart shoppers won't smell, and the employees will be very kind, as always.

Go Trump!

KEVIN MACK  
NORTH GROSVENORDALE

### The war for democracy is just heating up

To the Editor:

Congratulations to the Villager. What a collection of well-written, knowledgeable, fact-checked and even witty series of election letters we've had in these pages. Unfortunately, truth, compassion, historical knowledge and Constitutional patriotism were not quite enough to deny Trump his squeaker. If anyone says "landslide," laugh in their face.

I'm appalled but not depressed, and I'm not moving to Canada. I have an army of strong, smart and battle-tested allies to fight alongside to defend my country in the years ahead. They feed me truth and they work with and for me in local, state, regional and national fights for the people and causes I love.

Some of them are online fountains of accurate information and direction. Some are national organizations with long histories of fighting for our freedoms, with researchers, lawyers and field workers in every state. They fill my postal box with requests for donations but their mailings and magazines help me add my letters and phonecalls and donations to the causes I care about. They're not going away during Trumpdom.

They include:

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) who as quickly defends Right as Left liberties, an army of the best lawyers, on your side.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, (NAACP) formed by black and white Americans in 1909, with an active, well-led chapter right in Windham.

Planned Parenthood, who offer a range of women's health support and prevent more

abortions than any other organization.

The Conservation Law Foundation, a Boston-based, New England wide defender of our air and water and land.

The Sierra Club, started by Republicans but a national defender of our resources and magnificent natural inheritance. They have an active, effective CT chapter right in our capitol city. Great magazine!

The Human Rights Campaign - the biggest national gay rights organization.

The Lincoln Project - the best-organized Republican opposition to the Trumpicans. Their video ads are witty and accurate.

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), keeps track of American Nazis and the wide variety of American racist and hate-groups, even in our Connecticut back yard.

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, (PFLAG), a national organization with a strong CT chapter that does education and support.

Vote Vets, The veteran's opposition to draft-dodger, veteran-contemptuous Trump.

The United Church of Christ (UCC) just one of many strong Christian organizations that help organize the Gospel-based promotion of Jesus's commandment to love one another amid such hate.

Now that the candidates have stopped begging, these folks can give your dollars power to support your beliefs and, besides their constant appeals for more funds, most have great magazines and direction to turn your depression into action.

They all can be found online. Now get busy. The war for our democracy is just heating up.

G. LESLIE SWEETNAM  
WOODSTOCK

## 'Tis the season to go out

'Tis the season to go out. In the few short weeks that comprise the holiday season, we cram in more outings



NANCY WEISS

than the rest of the year combined. We bundle up and set out in the early darkness for performances of many different kinds. A litany of what I do isn't important, but it

illustrates what is happening here and why it matters.

Once, I vowed would never again attend "The Nutcracker," as I had seen it in overheated auditoriums with little girls hopped up on sugar and cranky from wearing uncomfortable holiday dresses. I'd break my word in a minute if there were a show nearby. Instead of the ballet, I'm looking forward to seeing the musical, Frosty, at the Loos Center with my grandchildren. I will settle in and remember the wonderful operas and shows I have seen there. For people like me who love the theatre, there is the moment just before the curtain goes up and the crowd is quiet that feels sacred. It's a feeling I hope to pass on.

Recently, we enjoyed a concert at Pomfret School in the gorgeous Clark Chapel. It was a chilly evening and the dark shadows dancing on the carved woodwork made it seem I had stepped into an English country church. We heard the NCCO- Northeast Connecticut Community Orchestra play a medley of songs to celebrate the season, including music by Leroy Anderson, with personal recollections from his daughter, Jane Anderson Vercelli, a member and founder of the group. It was memorable.

On a chilly afternoon, we hopped on golf carts and took a guided tour of the renovations at Roseland Park in Woodstock. Landscape Architect and Woodstock native, Will Martin and his wife, Eden of GroundView LLC, worked with the Trustees of Roseland Park to develop a plan that will make the venerable property more accessible to visitors and viable in the 21st century. The park is a little jewel that with Woodstock Golf Course adds much to the pleasure of living here. Without the vision and drive of the current volunteers, the place could have limped along, but instead, it will flourish.

The Thanksgiving inter-faith service this year at the Federated Church of Christ in Brooklyn co-hosted by the Temple Beth Israel Preservation Society, will bring together people from many towns for the 69th time to celebrate gratitude and community. When everyone stands together to sing, it as close as it gets to feeling universal empathy and common purpose.

The 23rd Holiday Dazzle Light Parade steps off on Dec. 1 to the delight of tens of thousands. It is a scene right out of the movie, "It's a Wonderful Life." I never miss it. Local groups create floats covered with twinkling lights and people wave to the crowd. The finale is an armada of fire trucks that makes everyone applaud. One would have to be a real cynic not to be moved.

Since 1959, Concert Choir of Northeastern Connecticut performs classical and modern choral music. This year they are at the Loos Center Dec. 7 & 8 with The Complex Performing and Creative Arts Centre, another remarkable homegrown group that puts on excellent shows. I bought our tickets ages ago.

How does all this happen in an area with a population under 100,000? Volunteers, more volunteers, traditions, new ideas, a sense of purpose and connection among us all. Changes have come in every aspect of our lives, but we persevere in raising our voices, playing our instruments, lighting our fire trucks and turning out to applaud the work. Bundle up. Go out. It's worth it.



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## A time of joy

To the Editor:

Well, little Trumpers, it would appear that your early Christmas gift to traitor Trump has reaped some extra goodies. Seems the Department of Justice has decided to drop all federal charges "without prejudice" against him.

Who couldn't see that coming?

Allow me to expand on this. It means that, in this new world you have helped to create (and dragged us into kicking and screaming), you may: 1) Try to overturn a Presidential election if you don't like to lose; 2) Steal highly classified documents and stash them in your toilet (that's called espionage); 3) Commit crime de jour (Supreme Court says so).

There is one caveat — being dismissed "without prejudice," for the few of you who can comprehend above third grade level, means that the charges can be re-filed if and when Trump leaves office. At his age, perhaps even in abstention, when he is hopefully long gone and hard to find. Don't count on it.

The final report of this national disgrace, at least, should be published and released to the public. Unless the corruption of the Trump years filters its way down into the minds of historians, the verdict of history should be as kind to him as that of Stalin and Hitler, his idols. Trump hasn't the decency to fathom this fact.

From now on, the once revered phrase "No one is above the law" will be presented with an asterisk.

Here's a story that may give you an idea as to where we are heading as a country. It is the comparison of two lawyers.

Trump defense lawyer Todd Blanche: Defender of a Constitutional Oath breaker and insurrectionist. He is now in line to be the second highest ranking law enforcement officer in what is sure to become Trump's Department of Retribution, Deputy Attorney General.

Special Prosecutor Jack Smith: Passionate defender of the rule of law and bringing criminals to justice. He is now being threatened with investigation and prosecution for doing his job (see above).

In his final statement, Mr. Smith said, "The Governments position of the defendant's prosecution has not changed," meaning Trump is still guilty as sin, and we all know it.

Now who do you think is trying to make the world a better place? I know, Trumpers, that is a tough one.

Here's one more thing to tuck into your stockings, boys and girls. Trump has just announced that he will be placing a 25 percent tariff on all Canadian and Mexican products coming into the States. Why? to "punish" them for having such "loose borders." OK, there's more from the Orange Elf.

Good riddance to Matt Gaetz. Now we present election denier Pam Bondi for Attorney General, who just happens to be a registered foreign lobbyist for the government of Qatar (a host for Hamas).

For head of the Department of Intelligence we have yoga queen Tulsi Gabbard, Syria and Russia useful idiot whom Pravda called "An asset to the Kremlin."

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem for head of Homeland Security. She says Trump belongs on Mount Rushmore. She'll cut the ribbon.

The only thing loose around here is the space between Trump's ears. He will be testing all previous government norms because now, he can. And he owes it all to you. You, whom he will now give the middle finger to.

A great crisis is upon us now because Americans, in name only, were angry at the price of eggs. You'll see.

RICK ROCHELEAU  
DANIELSON

## Today's immigrants are not the same

To the Editor:

A recent letter suggested that the United States is not the same country that once welcomed immigrants who became the backbone and strength of our nation. Opinion is respected, but are today's immigrants the same as the ones that came in back then, and why is it that we hear only the bad stories about them? I'm not saying that they're all criminals, or of ill intent, but maybe somebody can enlighten me as to why the only positive thing I've heard is that they take the jobs that Americans don't want, and I thank them for doing that.


Three of my grandparents and an uncle came over on the boat from Italy and arrived at Ellis Island and in Boston. They came here to become American citizens, and even better, proud contributors to our way of life. Back then, it was family members, friends and the Italian community that helped them out and I'm sure that gratitude was repaid. Both my grandparents on the DeLuca side were immigrants and though he passed away when I was two years old, my grandfather started a business in Millbury, Mass. called Delco Rubber (short for Deluca Company) that employed family members and gave people jobs; he also owned the building that housed his company. My grandfather on my Mother's side and his brother Nicholas (Uncle Nick) worked at Wear Well Trouser (in Worcester). That business became a victim of the construction of Route 290, and after that he became a tailor and a State Officer for the Sons of Italy in Worcester; he actively supported Massachusetts Republican Gov. John Volpe, and when opera singer, Sergio Franchi - another immigrant success story - was in the area, he parked his car in my grandfather's garage. Nicholas served in World War Two and later became Johnny Carson's head tailor and Carson would fly him across the country to personally fit him with a suit. (Anybody remember Johnny Carson suits?) So now you've heard some success stories about the immigrants who actually became the backbone and strength of our nation, and no doubt the older folks reading this paper have similar treasured memories. And for a non-family example, I worked with a lady who immigrated here from Africa. She did what was required, and the day she became an American citizen was one of the proudest moments of her life.

Nowadays, we have them sneaking in via a porous border and receiving handouts galore. The democrat Mayor of NYC has decided to cut off some of the free stuff these migrants have been receiving and that led to thousands of them protesting in the street. If they can take to the streets to protest, they could be looking for work while they're out there, and if they don't like the loss they can always go back to where they came from. I've heard that migrant caravans heading toward the U.S. are breaking up after Trump's victory, which makes me question what their true intentions were? The DOJ has arrested a top Mexican drug cartel kingpin, an illegal alien, he was found living in a luxury apartment in California under a fake

name. And just because I haven't mentioned "illegals in the news" lately, they are still committing crimes on a regular basis.

I know times have dramatically changed since my relatives arrived, but shouldn't the concept still be the same?

ED DELUCA  
NORTH GROSVENORDALE



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# Candlelight

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## Clark Memorial Chapel,

POMFRET SCHOOL

### Sunday, December 15

### 7:00 - 8:00 PM

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*Doors open at 6:30 p.m.*  
*Parking is located across the street from Clark Chapel.*  
*Refreshments will follow in Hard Auditorium.*

*Watch the livestream at [pomfret.org/live](http://pomfret.org/live).*

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## HOLIDAY ART & CRAFT FAIR

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Additional Letters to the Editor, see Page A-8



# ACT Performing Arts Magnet High School now recruiting students for school year 2025-26



WILLIMANTIC — EASTCONN's Arts at the Capitol Theater (ACT) magnet high school is now accepting applications from grade 9-12 students passionate about pursuing intensive study in the performing arts. The school's recent string of achievements in film,

creative writing, and other artistic disciplines demonstrates its commitment to nurturing exceptional young talent.

Situated in the historic Capitol Theater in downtown Willimantic, ACT offers eastern Connecticut students a

NEASC-accredited program that seamlessly integrates rigorous academics with immersive arts education. Students learn from both certified academic teachers and working professional artists in an intimate, collaborative environment, with class sizes averaging

35 students per grade.

"Our innovative approach combines academic excellence with intensive arts training," said ACT principal Sarah Mallory. "Our students' successes – from winning film festival awards to having their works published in university literary journals – showcase how our personalized learning environment enables students to thrive creatively and academically."

ACT students choose from seven specialized arts pathways: Acting, Creative Writing, Dance, Integrated Arts & Management, Media Arts, Music, and Technical Theater (sets, lighting and costuming). The school's cutting-edge facility provides students with daily access to professional-grade resources, including a fully equipped theater, scene shop, modern audio/

video editing suites, spacious dance studios, and a comprehensive costume shop. These resources enable students to produce professional-quality work, from award-winning short films to published poetry and prose.

Through an ongoing partnership with Eastern Connecticut State University (ECSU), eligible upperclassmen can earn free college credits by taking university courses while completing their ACT education. This partnership extends beyond dual enrollment, as evidenced by ACT students' active participation in ECSU's literary festivals and cultural events.

Students consistently earn recognition in prestigious competitions and venues, including Young Writers publications, Scholastic's Art & Writing Awards, DMV-Travelers' Teen Safe

Driving Video Contest, and the Quiet Corner Film Festival. Their work has been featured in university publications and public performances, providing real-world exposure and professional experience while still in high school.

Prospective students can apply at [www.eastconn.org/act](http://www.eastconn.org/act). Applications for Spring 2025 enrollment will be accepted through Friday, Dec. 20, with classes beginning Monday, Jan. 20. For the 2025-2026 academic year, applications must be submitted by Tuesday, Jan. 28.

EASTCONN, ACT's administering organization, is a public, non-profit Regional Educational Service Center that has served northeastern Connecticut's educational needs since 1980. Learn more at [www.eastconn.org](http://www.eastconn.org).

## ACT Performing Arts Magnet High School presents "A Christmas Carol" Dec. 12-14

WILLIMANTIC — Arts at the Capitol Theater (ACT) Magnet High School presents John Jakes' adaptation of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" on Dec. 12, 13, and 14 at 7 p.m., with a matinee on Dec. 14 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for Adults; \$10 for Students, Seniors, Children and Military; and \$5 for current ACT Students, Alumni, and Staff. Call (860) 465-5636 to reserve tickets.

In keeping with the spirit of giving, audience members are encouraged to bring a nonperishable food item to the performance. All items will be donated to the Covenant Soup Kitchen in Willimantic.

"A Christmas Carol"

is Charles Dickens' beloved story of London's cold-hearted miser Ebenezer Scrooge, who considers Christmas a wasteful holiday for fools who have nothing to celebrate. He believes their time would be better spent working harder, longer, and clutching whatever money they have tighter to their chests.

Scrooge is visited by the ghost of his former partner Jacob Marley, who sends three spirits of Christmas to teach him the value of generosity, kindness, and charity to all—not only at Christmas time, but throughout the year.

ACT students and staff have collaborated to bring this time-hon-

ored tale to life on the Capitol Theater stage. This unique production features a thirteen-member cast playing all sixty characters in the story. As a magnet high school, students from many different communities in CT comprise the cast and production company.

Leading the ensemble are Mirielle Discola of Montville as Charles Dickens and Antony Ramos Pagan of Windham as Ebenezer Scrooge. The supernatural elements of the story are brought to life by Sienna Heath of Killingly as Jacob Marley, along with the three Christmas spirits: Izzy Jacques-Snow of Ellington (Ghost of Christmas Past), Jaeden Prochorchik



Courtesy

ACT students rehearse for the upcoming production of "A Christmas Carol."

of Windham (Ghost of Christmas Present), and Aleksandra Popovic of Ellington (Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come).

The Cratchit family is portrayed by Alec Soto of Windham (Bob Cratchit), Jehieli Blanco of Windham (Mrs. Cratchit), and Aliyah Rosario of Manchester (Belinda Cratchit). Parker Ruiz of Montville appears as Scrooge's nephew Fred, while Ramiyah Johnson of Groton takes on the role of Fezziwig, and Emma Magistri of South Windham portrays Fan Scrooge. Young actors

Wyatt Danieluk and William Niemitz alternate in the role of Tiny Tim.

The production is directed by Michael Lerner with technical supervision from Colin McNamee. The student technical team includes senior Andrew Grzywacz of Hebron as lighting designer and Joshua Cooper of East Lyme as set designer. Stage management is handled by Jesenia Manley of Willington and Adrian Hernandez of Willimantic. Sarah Murphy leads costume

design, with support from ACT's costume construction students.

Join the ACT community for "A Christmas Carol" at 896 Main St., Willimantic, on Dec. 12-14 at 7 p.m. or Dec. 14 at 2 p.m. for the gift of great theater.

EASTCONN, ACT's administering organization, is a public, non-profit Regional Educational Service Center that has served northeastern Connecticut's educational needs since 1980. Learn more at [www.eastconn.org](http://www.eastconn.org).

## Woodstock Community Kitchen under new leadership

Courtesy

Changing of the guard: Jennifer Duggan (left) and Kristen Kaiser (right) are replacing Bob Kirk (center left) and Bruce Lyman (center right) as the new site coordinators at the Woodstock Community Kitchen.



WOODSTOCK—The Woodstock Community Kitchen at the First Congregational Church of Woodstock is now under new leadership. Kristen Kaiser and Jennifer Duggan, both members of the FCCW, are the new site coordinators of the Monday meal there. They have replaced Bob Kirk and Bruce Lyman, who have stepped down from their leadership roles at the meal site.

The Woodstock Community Kitchen hosts a free nutritious meal every Monday at noon. The First Congregational Church of Woodstock partners with East Woodstock Congregational Baptist, South Woodstock Baptist Church, and Christ Church of Pomfret in this ministry. Each church prepares one meal a month. All meals are served at the FCCW dining hall. Everyone is welcome. Since its inception in March of 2015, almost 40,000 meals have been served or delivered.

"Bob and Bruce have fostered a welcoming community for guests and volunteers. They've created a robust organization grounded in faith and based in love for all," said Kristen Kaiser.

Kirk and Lyman will continue as members of the board of directors at the parent organization Community Kitchen of Northeastern Connecticut, Inc. Kirk became president of the nonprofit earlier this year. Community Kitchen of Northeastern Connecticut, founded in 1982, provides a free noontime meal Monday through Friday at a different church in our town region.

"Our Woodstock host site has been a blessing for everyone involved over the past ten years," Bruce Lyman commented. "We have great cooks, dedicated volunteers, and

appreciative guests. I am certain this supportive community will continue to prosper, and I am both excited and grateful to see this ministry of service flourish under Jennifer and Kristen's leadership."

Food for the meals is provided by the churches themselves and by CT Foodshare. Baked goods are donated by Soleil & Suns Bakery of Woodstock, Stop & Shop and Price Chopper of Putnam. Fresh produce is donated by Big Y of Danielson.

For more about Community Kitchen of Northeastern Connecticut and information on how to donate, go to [www.communitykitchensnect.org](http://www.communitykitchensnect.org).



Courtesy

Volunteers at the recent Christmas on the Hill event at the First Congregational Church of Woodstock.

## FCC Woodstock ushers in the holiday season

WOODSTOCK — The First Congregational Church of Woodstock ushered in the holiday season with "Christmas on the Hill," an indoor/outdoor bazaar on Nov. 23. The community was invited to shop for handcrafted and unique items, jewelry, toys, baked goods, wreaths, and greens. There was a cafe with hot soup and chili, as well as chicken pot pies to go. An online auction was held in conjunction with the event and winning bidders picked up their items.

"Despite the rainy weather, it was a joyful start to the season," commented Rev. Dr. Kevin Downer, pastor. "The monies raised will help fund church ministries, especially our support to non-profits such as Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group (TEEG), Habitat for Humanity, Together We Blossom, and disaster relief through Church World Service."

During Advent, the church will host several special events, and all are welcome. Sunday, Dec. 1 is the annual gift service for TEEG. A community potluck, Our Favorite Things, will be hosted on Dec. 15 and an adaptation of "A Christmas Carol" will be offered on Dec. 22 at 10 a.m. The Christmas Eve Candlelight Service of lessons and carols will be at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 24. All events and programs are open to the public.

The First Congregational Church of Woodstock is an Open and Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ. The church is located at 543 Route 169 Woodstock, CT 06281, just south of the Woodstock common. Sunday worship is at 10 a.m. in person and 7 p.m. on Facebook. For more information, go to [www.firstchurchwoodstock.org](http://www.firstchurchwoodstock.org) or call the church office at 860-928-7405.

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The Killingly Police Department collected food outside of Stop n' Shop in Killingly Commons benefitting several local non-profits including Friends of Assisi during Handcuff Hunger.

**MASCOTS**

continued from page A1

“Redgals” names and the Native American logo which will hang in the high school gym. Photos from the team’s decades of success and relevance in the town were shown in a slide show while memorabilia and authentic game-used jerseys were sold throughout the evening. Killingly High School Athletic Director Jim Lackner said the event wasn’t about any controversy, it was designed to pay homage to the name that many hold dear and remind them that it will always have a place in the school’s history.

“Tonight is a celebration to honor what the mascot has been for so many years,” said Lackner. “We had a banner made up that says ‘Home of the Redmen and Redgals’ - I think the point of the banner is we’re not looking to erase history. It’s part of Killingly. At some point in the future we will have a new mascot, but part of that banner is that we’re acknowledging that they were the Redmen and Redgals for so long.”

Killingly High School Football Coach Chad Neal, who has led the team since 2004 including achieving two state titles in 2017 and 2021 under the Redmen name, agreed that the night was one of celebration not of controversy. It was a chance to remember the history of the name and acknowledge new his-

tory yet to be made.

“I think it’s a nice moment to celebrate some great memories. I know for myself going back to the ‘80s, when my uncle was a coach for Killingly and wearing a lot of the gear, it’s something we always celebrate. It’s a nice night to acknowledge those memories as we retire the name,” said Neal. “It’s exciting to see what’s next but at the same time we are Killingly and what we represent is hard-working, tough players and that’s what we’re going to put out there to represent our community regardless of the mascot.”

The night also proved to be bittersweet for many who turned out to remember a mascot that represented pride in their school. Killingly graduate Mandi Bowden Phillips said she plans to continue to represent the name while also looking forward to what the new mascot will be.

“It’s weird and sad. It’s nostalgic to be here looking at the old jerseys and the slideshow. It’ll be sad to see the Redmen and Redgals no longer exist, but I will proudly represent them with my gear that I still have and the memories that I have. It’s going to be a big change, I think. I guess we’ll look forward to seeing what happens in the future with the mascot,” she said.

With old jerseys being made available for purchase as mementos of the decades of Redmen and

Redgal success, some visitors fully embraced the sentimentality of the day seeking out their old high school number or, in some cases, the actual jersey they wore on the field. That was the case for graduate Clifford Green who found and purchased the actual #56 jersey he wore representing the Redmen on the gridiron. He said the jersey and number hold special value to him.

“It means a lot to have this. It represents not just a number I wore when I played football, but it was also a tragic part of my life where I lost my father. Ironically, 56 was the age where he passed away. In more ways than just it being his age, he went to all my games when he was very sick so this just brings back the memories of my pride playing and still wishing I could do it. Now I get to take my old jersey and put it in a case for a future man cave,” said Green. “Obviously, there’s a lot of tradition and lots of history. I really don’t want to see the name go, but I understand. We’ll see what happens with the new mascot and name. It’s exciting to see where we go from here.”

Killingly has yet to pick a new mascot for the high school team. An ad hoc committee has been charged with determining options for the new mascot and is working with the town historian to generate options that will then be brought to the town for consideration.

**HANDCUFF**

continued from page A1

need.

“This is super important for our community, and we have so many great people who live within Killingly and the surrounding area who are so generous and give back to so many people. It makes a huge difference to have this ability to be here to allow peo-

ple to drop stuff off and help those in need. This is our community, we all live here, and this is important for all of us. If everybody does just a little bit, it makes a huge difference,” said Juhola. “The generosity of these communities is amazing. You can’t even fathom how generous people are and whether they give a lot or a little they’re making a difference.”

All proceeds from

Handcuff Hunger were spread between several agencies in the area including TEEG, Daily Bread, and the Friends of Assisi Food Pantry. Handcuff Hunger initiatives also took place south of the Quiet Corner where State Police and the Plainfield Police Department collected food to benefit Project Pin, Canterbury Cares, and the Chaplin Food Pantry.

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**ROSELAND**

continued from page A1

of underground conduit to allow for underground utilities, which will result in the removal of all overhead lines and utility poles in the park by early 2025. Pinecroft Paving, the Woodstock based company, which did such a great job of constructing and paving the new roadways, will add a second coat of asphalt to the roads to ensure many years of enjoyment. A

new basketball court near the Little League fields is in the works, along with the start of a multi-year tree planting program to re-introduce native hardwood species and other flora to the park. A remote-controlled entrance gate along with new road and traffic signs will be installed once the second coat of asphalt has been completed.

Longer term plans are even more ambitious, calling for new maintenance facilities, new play-

scapes, improvements to the golf course's irrigation system and more.

Said Martha Beckwith, President of the Roseland Park Board of Trustees, "We are so grateful for the generous support we have received to pursue our campaign goals. It shows just how much the this nearly 150-year-old park means to all of us."

The park is open to visitors daily from sunrise to sunset.



Courtesy

The new road to Little League fields.

**VETERANS**

continued from page A1

ans when they returned home.

The event is part of a larger campaign by Bysiewicz to honor veterans from these conflicts in towns across Connecticut. Similar ceremonies have been held in different towns year after year throughout the 2020s. In her speech to the veterans in Thompson the Lieutenant Governor explained how the Korean War and Vietnam War have a lot in common, from their terrible weather conditions that challenged the soldiers to veterans of both wars being overlooked for their sacrifices. She said it's time they make sure veterans of both conflicts are properly recognized and remembered.

"You've raised beautiful families, and you've made this community better because you've continued to serve your

community and your state and your country long after you left military service," Bysiewicz said. "It's our veterans that are the backbone of our communities. Those are the people who have volunteered as firefighters and EMTs, with non-profit organizations, they run for local or even state office and they've continued to serve this beautiful town and our state. We are so grateful for your service, and you truly are role models for what great citizens should be, always looking for ways to make your community better."

Thompson First Selectwoman Amy St. Onge also addressed the veterans with a story about her uncle and his service to his country ending her speech by reminding the honorees that they played an important role in helping preserve the American way of life.

"As we honor your service for this country

that we love, I want you to know that you are valued, and we respect everything that each of you sacrificed in the promotion of the freedoms we enjoy today," St. Onge said.

The ceremony also included speeches by State Senators Jeff Gordon and Mae Flexer and State Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Ronald Welch who offered their own gratitude to the veterans for their service and shared their experiences working with veterans across the state. A unique part of the ceremony saw Bysiewicz leave the podium and speak with veterans in the crowd allowing them to share their experiences in either conflict with some taking the time to speak about the brotherhood and camaraderie that came with serving in the armed forces. Each veteran received their own honor to recognize their service.



Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz speaks with a local veteran during a special ceremony in Thompson honoring those who served in the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Planner or doer?**

To the Editor:

In another town, in another state and a couple decades ago, I had the privilege of working with an extraordinary Town Planner.

Within seven years, she had many major accomplishments. Among them:

Working with the regional EPA office and private parties, she got an old mill brownfields site remediated and the mill developed into mixed residential and office space.

Approached by a business owner looking to locate in town at a very strategic location but, unfortunately, a Superfund site. She once again worked with the EPA to get it cleaned up, and a new commercial business made the town its home.

An old landowner needing to sell a large portion of his property but not wanting to see a traditional develop-

ment created spoke to her. Together with the town's zoning official, a new "rural residential compound" was created. Each house on the site required multiple acres, and the compound included ten acres of open space. Residents being required to maintain the roadway.

She also applied for and received many block grants in the hundreds of thousands of dollars for projects such as creating and improving town parks and implementing the "Main Street" model for downtown revitalization.

These are just a few of her accomplishments as she saw her day-to-day duties in the role of Town Planner.

Since moving to Thompson over ten years ago, I've read a lot about all the plans for projects around the town, but I've yet to see much of any "doing." Too bad. There's so much potential here.

NANCY ANGELL  
EAST THOMPSON

**Earth — a big ball of plastic!**

To the Editor:

In a famous line from the 1967 movie "The Graduate," Benjamin Braddock, played by Dustin Hoffman, gets advice on his future in one word: "Plastics." That future has arrived. Invented little more than 100 years ago, it's impossible to imagine life today without plastic. More than any other material in daily life, we are surrounded by and in contact with plastic. Most of our clothes (63 percent), blankets, shoes, the floors we walk on, chairs we sit in, our food containers, and even our toothbrushes are made of plastic. We are in contact with it literally all of our waking and sleeping lives.

Plastics are made primarily from refined petroleum (hydrocarbons) blended with other chemicals including hexabromocyclododecane (fire retardants), ortho-phthalate esters (plasticizers) and tetrafluoroethylene (non-stick and waterproofing chemicals). As those long chemical names suggest, you don't want them in your body. But today we are exposed to upwards 13,000 different chemicals from plastics and virtually every fetus is born with Teflon and Scotchgard in their blood. The creators of plastic products take no responsibility for the enduring pollution and harm they cause and make no effort to recycle anything they produce. In fact, they outright dodge these responsibilities and leave them to us unwary consumers.

While countless things we use in the modern world are made better by plastic, evidence is mounting that we may have reached the point where too much of a good thing has become a bad thing. In solid form, plastics take centuries to decompose, slowly releasing their chemical soup into our seas, groundwater, land, air and food chain. Microplastics, particles less than five millimeters in size floating in the air like dust, are now found everywhere on earth, from the top of Mount Everest to the bottom of the Mariana Trench, and nearly all us humans now have microplastics in our blood.

In his 2024 book "Total Garbage," Pulitzer Prize winner, Edward Humes points out how in a mere century, we have plasticized the planet in a phenomenon that mimics climate change. In both scenarios, a product was created and immediately adopted and plugged into every aspect of human society with no understanding of the downside risks or strategy to minimize that. It is telling that Dr. Leo Hendrick Baekland, the man who invented plastic in 1907, refused to eat food stored in plastic containers.

Driving around the Quiet Corner this October I saw more cheap plastic Halloween decorations adorning people's yards than ever before. Everywhere I looked was a carnival of plastic. Intended to make our kids cheerful, we are thoughtlessly saturating them and their planet with the

thousands of chemicals that come with plastic. It's December now and plastic Christmas displays have replaced those from Halloween and in a few weeks mountains of it will be shoved into the back of garbage trucks everywhere. Our landfills will leach ever more of that plastic chemical soup into our groundwater, our air will fill with god-knows-what when it's incinerated, and the world's oceans will fill with ever larger plastic gyres, already the size of France. It seems people today regard all this as the normal way of life. It's not! It's poisoning our planet and ourselves, and it is insane! Yet, we've accepted and normalized this self-destruction. Ah, but the kids did love it (for a few weeks).

It is estimated that we consume five grams of plastic per week (the equivalent of a credit card) entering our bodies through the air we breathe, beverages we drink and food we eat. Ninety percent of bottled water contains plastic particles - you're much better off drinking from the tap. With at least 2,400 known toxins that can be released from plastics, including an insidious group called "forever chemicals" because they never degrade and go away, humanity is suffering the consequences. The growing list of health problems related to plastics include: infertility, adult sexual dysfunction, impaired intellectual development of children, high blood pressure, weakened immune systems and a variety of cancers that have been on the rise in the last 50 years. At the top of this list are cancers of the digestive system.

Don't think that you'll escape all this while on vacation. Kamilo Beach, Hawaii, referred to by the locals as "Trash Beach" is ranked one of the most polluted in the world, and the tide of plastic trash will soon be washing onto your favorite beach. It is estimated that by 2050 there will be more plastic in the seas by weight than all the ocean's fish combined.

Easy remedies at the top of the list, include using cloth bags when shopping and elimination of single use plastics like drinking cups and water bottles. Avoid buying cheap plastic items and choose more durable toys and products you won't end up discarding a month later, like those plastic Halloween decorations. Besides, whatever happened to carving a Jack-O-Lantern from a real pumpkin? The biggest gains, of course, will only come from regulations that hold manufacturers responsible for the products they unleash upon us and induce us as consumers to both purchase differently and recycle everything we can. With global plastic production forecast to triple by 2050, we should all do our part to protect our children, our health and our planet.

KEN WOLSLEGEL  
WOODSTOCK

**Danielson Martial Arts Academy announces newest round of students at grading**

DANIELSON — Thursday, Nov. 19, three time Martial Arts Hall of Fame inductee, 7th Dan Master Daryl Laperle announces promotion of 31 students in the schools most recent grading.



- Melinda Densmore - Apprentice
- Tori Dellagiovanna - Apprentice
- Aurora Huling - 1 Gup Red
- Scott Gardiner - 3 Gup Red
- Naomi Carlson - 3 Gup Red
- Rory Newcomb - 3.5 Gup Green
- Liam Stebbins - 3.5 Gup Green
- Liliana Huling - 4.5 Gup Green
- Chloe Wishart - 6.5 Gup Purple
- Waylon Hayden - 6.5 Gup Purple
- Noah Kane - 6.5 Gup Purple
- Jeff Fugazzi Jr - 6.5 Gup Purple
- Ziggy Fugazzi - 6.5 Gup Purple
- Marge Azu - 7 Gup Blue
- Paul Azu - 7 Gup Blue
- Elacy Brown - 8 Gup Blue
- Ryleigh Butler - 8 Gup Blue
- Alex Pettus - 8 Gup Blue
- Ava Moyer - 8 Gup Blue
- Julian Parenteau - 8 Gup Blue

- Abby Napierata - 8 Gup Blue
- Faith Kane - 9 Gup Orange
- Kevin Velazquez Jr. - 9 Gup Orange
- Madison Pelouquin - 9 Gup Orange
- Tommy Santiago - 9 Gup Orange
- Chase Landry - 9 Gup Orange
- Peyton Landry - 9 Gup Orange
- Cami Della Porta - 9 Gup Orange
- Ainslee Gagne - 9 Gup Orange
- Oliver Santiago - 9 Gup Orange
- Isaac Griffiths - 9 Gup Orange

This year, DMAA is celebrating 50 Years of being in business. For more information regarding classes, please call 860-779-0699, or visit the Web site at DanielsonMartialArts.com.

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# Seven end-of-year strategies to boost investments and trim your taxes

As we approach the final months of the year, it's the perfect time to take a strategic look at your finances. At WHZ Wealth Advisors, we believe in empowering our clients to make informed decisions that can help them Live Well both now and in the future. Here are some key strategies to consider for maximizing your investments and minimizing your tax burden before the year's end:



**FINANCIAL FOCUS**  
MICHAEL BAUM  
INVESTMENT ADVISER

**Max out your retirement contributions**

One of the most effective ways to reduce your taxable income while boosting your long-term financial security is to maximize your contributions to tax-advantaged retirement accounts. Consider the following:

**401(k) or 403(b):** Aim to reach the annual contribution limit, which is \$22,500 for 2024 (or \$30,000 if you're 50 or older).

**IRA:** You can contribute up to \$6,500 for 2024 (\$7,500 if you're 50 or older) to a traditional or Roth IRA, depending on

your income level and eligibility.

Remember, contributions to traditional retirement accounts are typically tax-deductible, potentially lowering your current year's tax bill while setting you up for a more comfortable retirement.

**Harvest tax losses**  
If you have investments that have declined in value, consider selling them to realize the loss for tax purposes. These losses can offset capital gains from other investments, potentially reducing your tax liability. Just be mindful of the "wash-sale" rule, which prohibits repurchasing the same or a substantially identical security within 30 days.

Consider roth conversions

If your income is lower this year or you're in a lower tax bracket, it might be an opportune time to convert some of your traditional IRA funds to a Roth IRA. While you'll pay taxes on the converted amount now, future withdrawals from the Roth IRA will be tax-free, potentially saving you money in the long run.

**Make charitable contributions**

Donating to qualified charities not only supports causes you care about but can also provide tax benefits. Consider the following strategies:

**Donate appreciated securities:** By donating stocks or mutual funds that have gained value, you can avoid capital gains taxes and potentially deduct the full market value of the donation.

**Establish a Donor-Advised Fund:** This allows you to make a large charitable contribution now, receive an immediate

tax deduction, and then recommend grants to your favorite charities over time.

**Review your investment mix**

As the year winds down, it's an excellent time to review your investment portfolio and ensure it still aligns with your goals and risk tolerance. Consider rebalancing if your asset allocation has shifted significantly due to market movements.

**Plan for Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs)**

If you're 73 or older, don't forget to take your required minimum distributions from your traditional IRAs and 401(k)s. Failing to do so can result in substantial penalties. If you don't need the income, consider using your RMD to make a qualified charitable distribution, which can satisfy your RMD requirement without increasing your taxable income.

**Accelerate deductions or defer income**  
Depending on your

tax situation, you might benefit from accelerating deductions into the current year or deferring income to the next. For example, you could prepay your January mortgage payment in December to claim the interest deduction this year, or ask your employer to defer a year-end bonus until January if you expect to be in a lower tax bracket next year.

Remember, everyone's financial situation is unique, and what works best for one person may not be ideal for another. That's why at WHZ Wealth Advisors, we take a personalized approach to financial planning. We're here to help you navigate these decisions and create a strategy that aligns with your specific goals and circumstances.

At WHZ Strategic Wealth Advisors, we're here to help ensure you finish the year strong and start the new year on solid financial footing, giving you "Absolute Confidence. Unwavering Partnership. For Life."

Visit our Web site at [whzwealth.com](http://whzwealth.com) to schedule your complimentary consultation or give us a call at (860) 928-2341.

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## Off to see the Wizard

With the release of the new hit movie "Wicked," I was reminiscing about the first time I saw "The Wizard of Oz." Way before you could stream thousands of films to watch anytime, we had to plan each October to view it. Although my first time seeing it at age six was pretty scary, I want to tell you about all the many things I have learned in life from the movie since then.



LESSONS FOR LIFE  
MIKE BOGDANSKI

If you recall, the story begins in black and white until Dorothy steps out of her house after landing in Munchkinland. Dorothy composes herself and opens the door, where you are immediately treated to the brilliance of colors that make the small town burst to life. The contrast from full shades of black and white to color is an amazing display of showmanship from the film's producers. When I give advice to kids, I ask them to describe their goals with as much color, detail, and intensity as possible to make them real, just like the "Pop" of colors grabs your attention in the film.

Dorothy's house lands on the wicked Witch of the East, freeing the munchkins from her rule. She is lost, wants to get home, and seeks advice from her new friends on which way to travel. In much the same way over the years, I have asked many people (much smarter than me) for mentorship, and they helped steer me in the right direction. Soon, for Dorothy, we find out the journey, not the destination, helps her realize the true answers to her problems.

On the journey (I call life), Dorothy and her dog Toto meet her first travel companion. Her new friend, the scarecrow, travels with Dorothy to visit the Wizard because he seeks a brain. I believe what he really wants is knowledge. Personally, me too. I have been a lifelong learner. Weekly, I read several books (some for the second or third time), view online seminars, get advice from some brilliant people, and watch YouTube video clips to learn at least one new thing every day. On the journey called life, it's essential to keep your body healthy and mind strong.

The next friend she meets is the Tin Man, who joins her on his search for a heart. This is ironic because he is the most tender and emotional of the group, and when he cries, he rusts!

One of my favorite stories about having a good heart is about adoption. A teacher talks about the concept of adoption and then has the children explain what they think it means. Going from one student to another, they all had slightly different versions of under-

standing and many questions. Finally, one little girl put it well: "Adoption is when a baby goes from the tummy of one Mom to the heart of another." Emotional reading that? Me too.

I love this quote from one of my martial arts mentors, the late Chuck Merriman; "Be as hard as the world forces you to be and as soft as the world lets you be."

Now, let's talk about the lion. In my years of martial arts training, I learned that if size were important, the elephant would be the king of the jungle. In the decades I taught kids, I knew that

one key component in creating a strong person was helping individuals, like the cowardly lion, to build their courage. I like to think you build courage versus get courage. Like a house being constructed, piece by piece, you first need to build a strong foundation. By overcoming small challenges before tackling the big ones, this strategy will not let things overwhelm you. When faced with enormous challenges, it is necessary to break them down into small, achievable steps first.

Over the years, I have developed key phrases to help communicate basic concepts, and this is one of my favorites: "Courage is not the absence of fear; it's being a little scared and being able to take action anyway." Setting and

achieving small goals first is of primary importance in growing as a person. We have learned that it's okay to fail. You never truly fail until you quit.

To wrap up, I have a couple of key points. One I love is, "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together." Two, continually seeking knowledge (a brain), a heart (compassion), and building courage are skills we all can learn from Dorothy and the Wizard—life philosophy at its best from L. Frank Baum, author of "The Wizard of Oz."

And by the way, I am still a little afraid of flying monkeys.

Mike Bogdanski is a martial arts Grandmaster and anti-bully activist.

## Padre Pio

In the small Italian village of Pietrelcina, on May 25, 1887, Francesco Forgione was born into a humble family of farmers. No one could have predicted that this boy, who would later take the name Padre Pio, would become one of the most enigmatic and revered figures in modern Catholicism.

Padre Pio's journey to the priesthood began early. As a child, he claimed to have mystical experiences, including visions of Jesus and Mary. At 15, he entered the Capuchin Order, and by 23, he was ordained a priest. But it wasn't his sermons or pastoral care that would make him famous—it was the miraculous and inexplicable phenomena that surrounded him.

Perhaps the most famous

aspect of Padre Pio's life was his stigmata—wounds resembling those of Christ on the cross.

In 1918, while praying, Padre Pio reportedly received these marks, which he bore for 50 years until his death.

The stigmata were examined multiple times by medical professionals, with opinions ranging from supernatural to psychological or physical causes. The Vatican conducted thorough investigations into these claims over decades, reflecting both skepticism and respect.

Ultimately, the Church ruled the stigmata as genuine and beyond natural explanation, contributing to his canonization in 2002.

His mystical gifts didn't stop there. Padre Pio was said to possess the ability to bilocate—appearing in two places at once—and to

read souls, revealing private details during confessions that penitents hadn't disclosed.

These accounts, while widely believed by his devotees, are based on anecdotal evidence and lack independent verification, leading skeptics to question their authenticity. Padre Pio humbly attributed all his gifts to God, famously saying, "I only want to be a poor friar who prays."

For all the awe he inspired, skepticism followed him, too. Was the stigmata self-inflicted? Were the stories exaggerated by adoring followers? In the 1920s, the Church temporarily restricted Padre Pio's public ministry, citing concerns about the authenticity of his wounds and the intensity of his following. These questions persist but don't diminish the enduring

allure of his legacy.

Of all the mysteries tied to Padre Pio, none are as dramatic—or as spine-tingling—as the stories from World War II. San Giovanni Rotondo, where Padre Pio lived, was under threat from Allied bombing campaigns. Intelligence reports indicated German munitions near the town, making it a likely target.

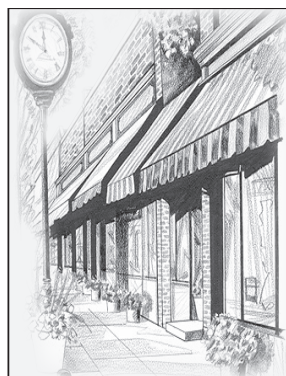
But according to eyewitness accounts, strange things happened whenever Allied planes flew near the area. Pilots reported seeing a figure in the sky—a monk with outstretched arms—forcing them to veer off course. Bombs either dropped harmlessly into nearby fields, or missions were abandoned altogether due to unexplained mechanical failures. These stories,

Turn To **POSITIVELY** page A10

## LEGALS

### PUBLICATION NOTICE LIQUOR PERMIT

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# Selection and care of living holiday trees

Dress up a potted dwarf spruce, Norfolk Island pine, lemon cypress or topiary Rosemary or lavender plant for the holidays and enjoy its beauty all year. Add a bit of garland and a few small ornaments for a festive effect.

Norfolk Island pines have long been decked out and displayed for the holidays. Smaller specimens can be placed on a tabletop, and larger ones can be used as indoor floor plants when space allows. Grow Norfolk Island pines in a cool well-lit location free of hot and cold drafts. Occasionally, turn plants growing in front of windows to ensure even growth.

Avoid low humidity and dry soil, often resulting in dry brown needles and branches. Use a gravel tray to reduce your workload and increase your growing success. Place pebbles in the plant saucer and set the container on the pebbles so it rests



**GARDEN MOMENTS**  
• • • • •  
**MELINDA MYERS**

above any excess water that collects in the saucer. Water thoroughly and often enough to keep the soil slightly moist. The excess water that collects in the saucer increases humidity around the plant.

Tabletop lemon cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa* 'Goldcrest Wilma') trees have filled the benches at garden centers and florists for the past few holiday seasons. Their fragrant chartreuse needles and upright conical shape make them a cheery addition to your winter décor. Grow them in a brightly lit location near a draft-free window

and water thoroughly when the top few inches are dry to the touch. Those who garden in zones seven to ten can move them into their landscape or add them to their outdoor containers after the danger of frost has passed. This dwarf variety can eventually reach six feet tall and three to four feet wide.

Enjoy the beauty, fragrance, and flavor of a topiary Rosemary tree. Grow it in a brightly lit location and water thoroughly when the top few inches of soil begin to dry. Regularly trim the branches to maintain the upright tree shape. Use clippings to season your favorite holiday dishes.

Consider growing a tree-shaped lavender plant this holiday season for its attractive foliage and calming fragrance. Grow your lavender in a south-facing or other sunny window. Find a cool spot in your home

away from hot and cold air drafts. The cooler air helps increase your indoor growing success. Water it thoroughly when the top inch of soil is dry to the touch. Pour off any excess water that collects in the saucer.

If you want a tree that can be moved outdoors into the landscape or a container in hardiness zones two to six, consider growing a tabletop dwarf Alberta spruce tree (*Picea glauca* 'Conica'). Grow it in a very cool bright location indoors. Water thoroughly as needed pouring off any excess water that collects in the saucer.

If the buds break and new growth appears, wait until the danger of frost has passed to move it outdoors. Just change out the seasonal decorations and enjoy it on Valentine's Day, Easter, and any spring holiday celebrations. Grow it outside in a sunny location protected from winter wind and sun to prevent



Melinda Myers

**Lemon cypress trees add interest and texture to this poinsettia display.**

the needles from drying. Watch for spider mites which are a common pest on this landscape plant.

These plants also make great gifts for the holidays and for the host or hostess. You and your gift recipients will enjoy the beauty of these plants throughout the holidays and beyond.

Melinda Myers has written over 20 gardening books, including *Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd*

*Edition and Small Space Gardening. She hosts The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" instant video and DVD series and the nationally syndicated Melinda's Garden Moment radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine. Myers' Web site is www.MelindaMyers.com.*

# The Quiet Corner's cranberry connection

**BUY A SPECIAL GIFT FOR A LOVED ONE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!** The Killingly



**KILLINGLY AT 300 MARGARET WEAVER**

Historical & Genealogical Society has books, maps, postcards, photos, tote bags and gift certificates for sale. Shop Wednesday and Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. during the Historical Center's regular hours.

**Holiday Hours:** The Killingly Historical & Genealogical Society will be closed Christmas

Day, Wednesday, Dec. 25 and New Year's Day, Wednesday, Jan. 1. It will be open as usual on Saturday, Dec. 28 and Saturday, Jan. 4.

I made cranberry orange relish for Thanksgiving, and am guessing that many of you had cranberries in one form or another over the holiday. I remembered that a number of years ago, I had seen references to local cranberry picking in Windham County Transcripts, extracted by Marilyn Labbe. How nice it was to be able to put "cranberry" in the online version of the Transcripts from Killingly Public Library. Here are a few of the hits from the more than 130 which appeared.

The Wednesday, July 12, 1882 Transcript carried an ad for a cranberry farm for sale: "For Sale. **CRANBERRY FARM!** Situated in the town of Killingly about two miles from Danielsonville. Farm

contains about 120 acres of smooth, easy land; well watered and fenced; a few hundred cords of wood. A fair supply of common fruit and a 20 acre Cranberry Meadow, which has yielded in a single season \$864 worth of berries. Buildings Fair. (They included a two-story house, a tenement house, barn, sheds.)

Crops all in and doing well--corn, potatoes, oats, etc. and to make quick work we will put in the stock and tools--4 splendid cows and a good horse...\$3,200...The cranberry meadow alone can easily be made worth the price of the whole farm. The owner is about to change his residence and it must go at once." Apply to Palmer & Preston." (p. 4).

Killingly was not the only town with cranberry meadows. "Cranberry picking commenced this week at Mr. Dawley's, Plainfield, and we notice a number of pickers busily at work last week in some parts of Sterling. The crop promises well, but will not be equal to that of last year." (WCT, Wednesday, Sept. 15, 1886, p. 2).

1897 was apparently not a very good year for cranberries. "The cranberry crop was harvested last week and proved to be the smallest yield in many seasons." (WCT Sept. 8, 1897, p. 5). In fact, it was also a bad year for the potatoes. The same South Killingly column noted, "Potatoes are rotting badly. In some case one-half the tubers are worthless."

much of what we hear is faith-driven embellishment, and how much points to something beyond human understanding?

He once remarked: "In books we seek God; in prayer we find him..."

Perhaps it is that unwavering belief in prayer and divine intervention that makes stories of Padre Pio so compelling.

Whether or not Padre Pio truly appeared as a "flying monk" to Allied pilots, the fact remains: his life continues to captivate millions.

As we consider these extraordinary tales, we don't have to decide whether they are fact or fiction. Instead, we can marvel at their ability to inspire and remind us of the mysteries that surround the human experience.

During our time of division and uncertainty, perhaps the most valuable takeaway from Padre Pio's life is his simple yet profound message: "Pray, hope, and don't worry."

Today, we turn on the television for an evening's entertainment. A column in the above Transcript caught my fancy. Area residents in 1886 had the option of quite a variety of local programs. "The People's Course. The tenth season of these popular series of entertainments will open in Music hall (now Killingly Town Hall), Tuesday evening, Oct. 12, with a grand concert by Herr Andros' Alpine Choir and Tyrolese Co., a talented company of foreign musicians, promising several of the most celebrated Swiss and Tyrolese yodelers and warblers. Their program is varied, including vocal solos, duets, choruses, etc. and selections for their native instruments--the gigillrs, Alpine violin, harp, zither, mandolita, dulcimer, etc. On Oct. 28th Maj. Dane will give his most thrilling lecture, "The Great Naval Battles of the Rebellion." (Ibid, p.2).

At least in that year, 1897, the Brooklyn Fair was held several weeks later in the season than it is now (unless there were two fairs) "Windham County Fair! Brooklyn. Sept. 14,15 & 16, '97. The Finest Attractions ever shown at the Windham County Fair. Wednesday, 15th will be Governor's Day! Gov. Lorrin A. Cooke and the members of his staff, Congressman Russell and other distinguished visitors will be present. Addresses will be made from the stand at one o'clock. Mechanics Band of Danielson, Prof. Harry White, director, will furnish music during the day. One of the World's Latest Wonderful Inventions, the Horseless Carriage will be exhibited on the track the entire day. This feature is sure to attract thousands of interested visitors. Don't fail to see Master Albert Brunell, age 9 years, and his sister Eva, age 6, the Youngest Trick and Fancy Bicycle Riders in the World...Two Grand Horse Races...Thursday, the 16th, Music by the Brooklyn Band."(WCT Sept. 8, 1897, p. 5).

I am always intrigued by the ads and tidbits I find when researching a topic; expect the domino effect--a meandering. In the Wednesday, September 22, 1886 Transcript I found an ad for "The Elegant New Steam Yacht 'Ethel' at Alexander's Lake, Dayville, Connecticut. This Steamer is now running under the experienced engineer, Capt. C. F. Cobb. It has a government steel boiler, and is 42 feet 6 inches long, 10 feet wide. It is one of the largest and staunchest boats on fresh water in Connecticut and can be chartered. Fare to Wildwood Park, 10 cents; a 5 mile trip around the lake 20 cents; children under 12 half fare. Wildwood Park is a fine place for picnic

parties. On the grounds will be found a good dance hall, base ball ground, band stand, swings, hammocks, croquet grounds, etc. Wildwood Park House is situated on the beautiful lake, in a lovely pine grove, where you will find good boating, bathing, fishing and hunting, and splendid drives. Private parties are accommodated a short notice with the best of everything the market or farm can supply. The rooms are large and airy. Connected by telephone. Neither hop beer nor liquor sold or allowed on the grounds. Bassett & Cobb, Prop's" (p.3).

As for the cranberry hit, which put me on that page, it was another farm for sale. "Farm of 115 acres... Good cranberry meadow; will pick this year 60 bushels of berries..." Contact Lloyd's Insurance and Real Estate Agency, Savings Bank Building, Danielsonville"(p.3).

One last cranberry tidbit, which shows how widespread cranberry picking was in Northeastern Connecticut. From the Woodstock entries-- "Many have been attracted to the Bowen and Smith Cranberry bog lately to watch the work of gathering and preparing for shipment the large crop. The bog has presented a lively and animated scene with its 110 pickers in even rows and its workers on the edges, also a tent pitched near by and horses hitched to the trees. The work has been interesting to watch, each picker allotted a space about three feet wide, marked by strings, and they were required to pick cleanly. The berries were then carried to the separator and there quite a process gone through to prepare the berries for market. One hundred and sixty different persons have received employment, 110 being counted upon the bog at one time, that day 44 barrels were picked and all delivered that night in Putnam and shipped to New York..." (WCT, Oct. 21, 1885, p. 3). All extracts from the online Transcripts are on the Killingly Public Library Web site (www.killinglypl.org).

Enjoy your cranberries and all the other tempting treats that go with the holiday season.

One last holiday thought. Do you remember when "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas" first made an appearance? "The first recorded version of (the song) was made by the Italian American crooner Perry Como, in 1951, and was a Top 20 US hit. That same year, the treble-voiced Bing Crosby also recorded the song, but his version wasn't as successful. Since then, Willson's Christmas cracker has shown a durability that is the hallmark

of all great festive songs: it has been covered over 200 times, with Johnny Mathis, Dionne Warwick and Harry Connick, Jr, among the distinguished names who have put their mark on it." (www.thisisdig.com/feature/its-beginning-to-look-a-lot-like-christmas-michael-buble-song-story/)

Margaret M. Weaver Killingly Municipal Historian, December 2024. 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 at www.facebook.com/killingly-historicalsociety. Mail for the Killingly Historical & Genealogical Society, Inc. or the Killingly Historical and Genealogical Center should be sent to PO Box 265, Danielson, CT 06329.

## KILLINGLY CHRONICLES

Dec. 8 – Dec. 14

**TOWN HALL MEETINGS** (agendas and minutes at www.killingly.org)  
Tuesday the 10th  
Regular Town Council Meeting (KPS Central Office – Conference Room A) 7 p.m.  
Wednesday the 11th  
Agriculture Commission Meeting (Room 102 – Town Hall) 7 p.m.  
Board of Education Meeting (KPS Central Office – Conference Room A) 7 p.m.  
Thursday the 12th  
All town buildings will be closing at noon for an employee holiday luncheon.  
Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting (Room 102 – Town Hall) 7 p.m.

**COMMUNITY EVENTS**  
Lit Loot Bag (Ages 13-18) (Library) Continuing until Dec. 10  
Sunday the 8th  
A Seussified Christmas (The Little Theater on Broad Street) 2 p.m.  
Monday the 9th  
An Epic Book Quest (Ages 13-18) (Library) All Day  
Wonderful Ones and Twos (Library) 9:30 to 10 a.m.  
Monday Mystery Matinee (Ages 18+) (Library) 1 to 3 p.m.  
Tuesday the 10th  
Holiday Season Kids Cook (All Ages) (Library) All Day  
Moving & Grooving (Ages 1-5) (Library) 9:30 to 10 a.m.  
Bingo (Ages 18 and up) (Library) 2 to 3 p.m.  
Wednesday the 11th  
Virtual Story Time (Ages three and up) (Library) 10 to 10:30 a.m.  
Little Listeners (Ages 2-5) (Library) 11 to 11:45 a.m.  
Virtual Author Talk: Laura Dave (Library) 2 p.m.  
How the Grinch Stole Christmas Interactive Movie (Ages 13-18) (Library) 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.  
Chess Club (All Ages) (Library) 5 to 6:30 p.m.  
Friday the 13th  
A Seussified Christmas (The Little Theater on Broad Street) 7 p.m.  
Saturday the 14th  
Photography Contest (Ages 18 and up) (Library) All Day  
Breakfast with Santa (Killingly Community Center/KPRD) 8 to 11 a.m.  
A Seussified Christmas (The Little Theater on Broad Street) 7 p.m.

**KILLINGLY PARKS & RECREATION PROGRAMS/ EVENTS COMING UP...**  
Relaxation and Guided Meditation – Session 2 – Nov. 5 through Dec. 17 – Tuesdays (Killingly Community Center)  
Virtual High Five 2024 (Killingly Community Center/KPRD) (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday)  
Baseball Hit Club – Dec. 1 through Jan. 19 – Sundays (Killingly Community Center)  
Softball Winter Clinic – Dec. 1 through Jan. 19 – Sundays (Killingly Community Center)  
Senior Christmas Celebration – Monday, Dec. 16 (Killingly Community Center/KPRD)  
Homeschool Art Club – 3 Month Session - Tuesdays  
January – Drawing and Painting  
February – Intro to Mixed Media  
March – Maker Madness  
Jan. 7 through March 25 (Killingly Community Center/KPRD)

Check out the Killingly Parks and Recreation website for more daily class schedules, camps, trips and events! For updates and changes, please visit the calendar on the Town of Killingly Web site at www.killingly.org.

## POSITIVELY

continued from page A9

while captivating, lack corroboration in wartime records and are primarily based on post-war testimonies.

One American pilot, shaken by what he described as a vision of a monk in the air, visited San Giovanni Rotondo after the war. When he saw Padre Pio, he recognized him immediately as the figure who had appeared before his plane.

This account and others like it were popularized by author Frank Rega in "Padre Pio and America."

While these stories border on the unbelievable, they come from multiple sources. Even skeptics wonder: How was the town spared when so many others weren't? Could these be tales of coincidence and wartime imagination, or were they miraculous interventions?

Stories like these invite both awe and doubt. How



# OBITUARIES

## Paul M. Chappell 82

Paul M. Chappell 82, formerly of Putnam and Chaplin, died November 20, 2024 in Bloomfield. He was born October 1, 1942 in Willimantic, son of the late Benjamin and Pearl (Lyon) Chappell.

He was a resident of Putnam group home for many years. Paul enjoyed ceramics and was an avid walker and swimmer. In 1994 and 1996 he won Gold in Fast Walking at the Special Olympics. Paul was a descendant of General Nathaniel Lyon, who was the

first Union General killed in the Civil War.

He is survived by two cousins Oliver Spalding Chappell, Esq. of Naples, FL and Shirley Chappell Mustard of Willimantic.

Funeral will be Saturday, November 30, 2024 at 11:00 AM at Smith and Walker Funeral Home, 148 Grove Street, Putnam, CT. Burial to follow in Grove Street Cemetery. Share a memory at [SmithandWalkerfh.com](http://SmithandWalkerfh.com)

## Mabel E. Green, 84



Mabel E. Green, 84, of Windham and formerly of Pomfret Center, CT, died peacefully on November 19, 2024. Mabel was born July 24, 1940 to Ralph D. Green and Ina (Buell) Green of Eastford, CT. Mabel

was a graduate of Becker College and worked as a secretary for many years. Later, she served as a home health aid and went on to hold various part time positions in retirement. She was a member of Trinity Episcopal Church in Brooklyn, CT, having served in numerous capacities there. Mabel worked in support of Learning in Retirement (LiR) and led a number of Christian retreats.

Mabel leaves her son, Maerik Lefkowitz, whom she reunited with in July 2020, her sister, Olive (and David) Bineau, and her close friend and foster sister, Rosemary Hills. She leaves behind many cousins, and beloved "Auntie Mabel" leaves behind twenty nine nieces and nephews, forty eight great nieces and nephews, seventy great great nieces and nephews and eight great great great nieces and nephews.

Mabel was a strong person. She persevered over many obstacles that would have broken the best of us, beginning at age 4 months when she

was severely burned in a house fire. Experimental skin grafting procedures were used on baby Mabel, which led to breakthroughs in treating severe burn victims including those in the 1944 Hartford Circus fire. She spent her first three years under medical care at Boston's Children's Hospital. When discharged, she went into foster care with the Mills family of Thompson. Mabel went through the Thompson School system and graduated from Tourtellote High School. Mabel had fond memories of her senior class trip to Washington DC., and she had an itch for further travel including visiting a number of National Parks and traveling to Peru and Argentina. Mabel had an independent and adventurous spirit. She drove herself to TX and lived there for two years before moving back to Connecticut. She also sailed on fishing windjammers in Maine helping with the rigging.

A Memorial Service will be held December 7 at 1:00 PM at Trinity Episcopal Church in Brooklyn, CT, followed by a burial service at Grove Cemetery, Route 198, in Eastford. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors, 6026 Kalamazoo Ave., SE #221, Kentwood, MI 49508 ( [phoenix-society.org](http://phoenix-society.org) ) or, to Trinity Episcopal Church, 7 Providence Rd., Brooklyn, CT 06234. Share a memory at [SmithandWalkerfh.com](http://SmithandWalkerfh.com)

## Napoleon J. Gauthier, Jr., 89



Napoleon J. Gauthier, Jr., 89, of Brooklyn, CT passed away on Saturday November 23, 2024, at St. Francis Hospital in Hartford. Napoleon (Nappy as he was referred to) was born on June 19,

1935, son of the late Napoleon J. and Olivine (Desmarais) Gauthier. He was the husband of the late Helen (O'Shea) Gauthier who passed away in 2020 after 63 years of marriage. Nappy is survived by his six children and spouses, Peter (Candy), Patrick (Cindy), Ann, Jimmy (Wendy), Cindy (Bob), and Daniel (Louise), 16 grandchildren, 23 great grandchildren and his brothers Paul, Norman, and David. Nappy was predeceased by his sisters Germaine and Cecile. Nappy grew up in Warren, RI where he and Helen would visit regularly throughout their lives. Family was the centerpiece of their lives. It was typical to have family gathering throughout the years with immediate and extended family that encompassed anniversaries, birthdays, Christmas, clambakes, the Bristol 4th of July

parade and many others. It was usual for these gatherings to have 50+ people in attendance eating, laughing, and playing games.

Nappy initially worked as a plumber for his father in Warren, RI, and then at Electric Boat in Groton for 37 years. At Electric Boat he fulfilled roles as a pipefitter, pipefitter supervisor, training instructor and a contract change analyst. Nappy served in the National Guard. He was a communicant of Our Lady of Lasalette Church in Brooklyn. Nappy loved to play cards (bridge, pitch, and cribbage) with his family and friends and was a good chess player.

Calling hours were held in Tillinghast Funeral Home 433 Main St. Danielson, CT on Monday December 2, 2024, from 9-10:30 AM followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at Our Lady of Lasalette Church in Brooklyn, CT at 11 AM. The burial service will be scheduled for a later date. Donations in lieu of flowers should be made to Boys Town. [tillinghastfh.com](http://tillinghastfh.com)

## Elsie A. Lawrence (Baker)



Pomfret Center, CT - Elsie A. Lawrence, 82, passed away on 11/26/24 surrounded by family at Westview Health Care Center, Dayville CT.

She was born 9/18/1942 in Putnam CT. She was the daughter of the late Thomas Baker and Alice Baker (Chase).

She graduated from Putnam High School, Putnam CT. She went on to attend nursing school at Day Kimball Hospital, Putnam CT, where she became a Licensed Practical Nurse.

After raising her children, she began work with Hull Forest Products, Pomfret Center, where she worked for 20+ years until he retired in 2014.

She was the wife of George B.

Lawrence for 53 years. He predeceased her in 2018.

She leaves sons, Thomas (Jennifer) Lawrence, Brian (Christine)

Lawrence, Bedford Lawrence and sister Nancy Di Bonaventura.

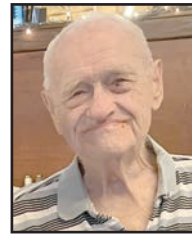
She is also survived by her 6 grandchildren: Carolyn Lawrence, Virginia (Jared) Palestini, Thomas Lawrence (Kate fiance'), Mary Lawrence (Clint), Taylor and Reid Lawrence. She was pre-deceased by her granddaughter Kaitlyn Marie Lawrence.

In addition she is survived by 4 great-grandchildren, Dawson and Cole Lutz and George and Frances Palestini.

Elsie will be remembered for her famous Family Sunday dinners.

A private graveside service will be held by the family.

## Theodore G. Farrow, 89



WEBSTER - Theodore G. "Ted" Farrow, 89, died Wednesday, November 20, 2024, at his home, peacefully in his sleep.

He leaves his wife of 67 years, Donna F. (Fitzgerald) Farrow; 2 sons, Douglas S. Farrow and his wife Joann of North Grosvenordale, CT and Timothy G. Farrow of Dudley; 5 grandchildren, Brian White, Thomas Farrow and his wife Cindy, Noelle Farrow and her husband Ray Ortiz, Joshua Farrow and his significant other Paula Lamie, and Andrew Farrow; 7 great-grandchildren, Josh White, Joshua Deloge, Clementine Farrow, Kinsley Deloge, Hazel Farrow, Charlotte Lamie-Farrow and Kayden Ortiz; a brother, Cedric Farrow of Shelburne, VT; nephews and nieces. He was preceded in death by his daughter Deborah Farrow in 2021 and by his sisters Evelyn Foss and Marjorie Cassidy.

He was born on November 1, 1935 in St. Johnsbury, VT and graduated from the Peacham Academy in 1953. He earned an Associate's Degree in Agriculture from the University of Maine and then completed 2 years of electrical courses at Worcester Junior College. He lived in Webster since 1965.

Mr. Farrow was a laboratory technician for New England Power; later Massachusetts Electric, for 33 years retiring in 1997. In that capacity he worked all over New England.

Mr. Farrow was a member of the United Church of Christ, Federated and was instrumental in establishing and running its Food Share Program with his wife Donna. He was also a member of the Webster Lodge of Masons and the Lodge of Masons # 92 in Danville, VT.

He was part of the pit crew for the #32 Fitzgerald Ford in Barre, VT from 1962 to 1965. In 1964 he was part of the team that won the Vermont State Championship.

He loved woodworking and built his first home in Vermont at the age of 21. He enjoyed using his tractor to mow his lawn and to plow people's driveways not for money but for homemade cookies.

A celebration of his life was held on Saturday, November 30, from 1:00 to 4:00 PM in Point Breeze Restaurant, 114 Point Breeze Road, Webster. Donations in his memory may be made to Venture Community Services, Attn: Day Hab One, 44 Morris Street, Webster, MA 01570. Funeral arrangements are under the direction of Scanlon Funeral Service, 38 East Main Street. [www.websterfunerals.com](http://www.websterfunerals.com)

## Mark Francis "Fitzy" Fitzgibbons December 29, 1950 – November 22, 2024



Mark Francis "Fitzy" Fitzgibbons passed away peacefully at his home in North Woodstock, Connecticut on November 22, 2024. He was 73 years old.

Mark was born on December 29, 1950, in Webster, Massachusetts. The son of Francis "Frank" and Anne "Kaye" (Kubik) Fitzgibbons, both of whom preceded him in death. He grew up in Quinebaug, Connecticut, and graduated from Tourtellote Memorial High School in 1968. He continued his education at Northeastern University, where he majored in criminal justice. Mark married Iona Ann Gold, and the couple lived in North Woodstock, Connecticut.

Mark dedicated much of his life to public service as a police officer at the University of Connecticut, where he served with distinction for 35 years, ultimately retiring as Captain. His unwavering commitment to his work and community left a lasting impact on all who knew him.

Mark enjoyed spending time with his family. He had a deep love for the outdoors and was an avid saltwater fisherman. Mark was a lifelong fan of the Boston Red Sox, the Celtics, the New England Patriots, and was devoted to the UConn Huskies. Mark also

had a passion for car racing and spent many nights at the Thompson Motor Speedway, with the Daytona 500 being one of his favorite annual events. Mark was also a coach for all four of his children in Little League baseball and softball.

He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Lonnie Fitzgibbons; his four children, Timothy Fitzgibbons and his wife Christine of Hopkinton, MA; John Fitzgibbons and his wife Amara of Worcester, MA; Patrick Fitzgibbons and his wife Meghan of Worcester, MA; and Kathleen Salter and her husband Thomas of Worcester, MA. Mark is also survived by his brother Neil Fitzgibbons of Kennesaw, Georgia. He leaves behind six cherished grandchildren: Matthew, Emily, Abigail, Mia, Olivia, and Isabel.

Mark will be remembered for his kindness, devotion, and the warmth he brought to all who knew him. His smile, laughter, and caring nature will be deeply missed.

A funeral service will be held on Saturday, December 14, 2024, at the Gilman Funeral Home in Putnam, Connecticut at 11:00 am.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research. For memorial guestbook, please visit [www.GilmanAndValade.com](http://www.GilmanAndValade.com).

## Robert P. Morris, 85



Robert P. Morris, age 85, of Webster died Sunday, November 24, 2024 at Harrington Memorial Hospital in Southbridge, MA, after an illness. Robert was born March 17, 1939 in Providence, RI. He is

the son of the late Antone and the late Doris (Knowles) Morris.

He is survived by his wife of 56 years Dorothy (Jordan) Morris, his children, daughters Cheryl Carr and her partner Tom Ziomek of West Melbourne, FL, Donna Morris of Mars Hill, NC and Gina and her husband Nick Mazares of Dudley, MA, and one son, Patrick Morris and his wife Tracie of Putnam CT.

He was blessed with grandchildren William Carr, Aaron Lieske and his wife Hannah, Damien Morris, Alyson Morris, and Julie Morris, and Great Granddaughter Nora Lieske. He also leaves his sister Priscilla Ferrell of Melbourne FL, and several nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by two of his sisters, Marilyn Dutch and Doris Houghton. He also sadly leaves his Golden Doodle, Abby, who he adored.

Bob retired from the Webster Post Office as Head of Maintenance in 2002. He and Dot then enjoyed 10 years of their retirement in North Carolina, living on a golf course they played daily. They subsequently moved back to Webster, MA where they had previously

lived for many years.

Bob was very handy and could repair virtually anything. He was an avid sports fan, and enjoyed watching all the Boston sports teams, golf, and car racing. As a car enthusiast

he could tell you the make, model, and year of most cars, as well as having a passion for riding motorcycles. He was very quick-witted; whether with a joke, or to the answers to questions on Jeopardy. Bob loved Rock & Roll, Blues, and Country Music. This love of music stems back to listening to Alan Freed on AM radio in the 1950's. Bob was a great storyteller and conversationalist, and time could pass swiftly hanging out with him outside on the deck on a nice summer day. Above all, Bob loved to spend time with family and friends. Because he kept his refrigerator so low, he could proudly offer his guests "the coldest beer in town." After a life well-lived, Bob will be missed by many.

The funeral was held at 10:00 am on Monday, December 2 at Bartel Funeral Home & Chapel, 33 Schofield Ave., Dudley, MA. Burial followed in East Thompson Cemetery, Thompson, CT.

Calling hours were held on Monday, December 2 from 9 AM to 10 AM at Bartel Funeral Home, 33 Schofield Avenue, Dudley, MA.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Alzheimer's Association

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[www.smithandwalkerfh.com](http://www.smithandwalkerfh.com)

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