



WOODSTOCK VILLAGER

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Town of Thompson announces Co-Veterans of the Month

THOMPSON — Retired Army Col. Joel T. Hiatt and his wife, Retired Navy Capt. Kathleen A. Hiatt of Lowell Davis Road, North Grosvenordale, have been selected by the nominating committee to be recognized and honored as the February 2026 Co-Veterans of the Month for the Town of Thompson.

It seemed appropriate that February being the month when Valentines are celebrated was just perfect to honor this longtime military husband and wife partnership together as they have both retired from lifelong Military Careers with significant distinction and honor.

Vietnam War veteran Col. Joel T. Hiatt served his country in the United States Army with distinction for 32 years, from 1965 to 1997. He began his military career at Fort Ord, Calif., where he reported for his basic training. He then attended Medic Training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Just prior to graduation, Hiatt was selected to continue training at the Medical Field Service School as a Medical Laboratory Technician, and he was subsequently offered a year-long Advanced Medical Laboratory Course which provided him with 30 semester hours of College Credit. This offer required a two-year military extension from the date of completion. After graduation, Joel was chosen to remain as an instructor in Microbiology. This opportunity changed the course of Joel's future. He taught there until January 1968 when he was assigned to the 44th Med Brigade in the Republic of Vietnam, arriving just in time for Tet '68. Upon his return to the States, SSG, E-6 was faced with some difficult decisions. A substantial monetary bonus and a college free degree with full pay and allowances were tempting enough that Joel became a "Lifer" and was assigned as the NCOIC of the Blood Bank at the Brooke Army Medical Center back at Fort Sam Houston.

In 1973, the Army, having decided that he would not make a good NCO, commissioned him and assigned him to the 130th Station Hospital in Heidelberg, Germany as the Officer in Charge of the Medical Laboratory and Blood Bank. As an Officer, several different school/training opportunities were offered. Colonel Hiatt chose the Army Baylor University program for a Masters in Health Administration. Not only did this program result in a graduate degree, it also "issued" him a wife, then a Lieutenant Commander, in the Nurse Corps, USN (who now, 42 years later, celebrates his co-veteran of the month with her). A true long-lasting

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Quiet Corner Peer Support Group hosts grand opening



Jason Bleau

The Quiet Corner Peer Support Group cuts the ribbon to officially open their new facility at 128 Wauregan Rd. in Danielson.

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

new facility at 128 Wauregan Road in the Danielson borough of Killingly.

DANIELSON — It was a day of celebration, but maybe more so of hope, on Jan. 31, as the Quiet Corner Peer Support Group finally opened the doors of its

new facility at 128 Wauregan Road in the Danielson borough of Killingly.

The celebration was attended by state and local officials, several fire departments, and supportive citizens and stakeholders from communities across the

Quiet Corner to acknowledge the Peer Support Group's mission to end the stigmas surrounding mental health for first responders who take it upon themselves to help the community at their worst moments and for many suffer silently from the mental

impacts of the job. Now they don't have to suffer or feel alone anymore. This new facility will give them a place where they can seek help and support to tackle their trauma head on and

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Amplisound welcomes new audiologist



Courtesy

Amplisound of Putnam and Vernon recently added Audiologist and UConn graduate Dr. Stephanie Rand to their staff.

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

PUTNAM — Amplisound, a local hearing care center based in Putnam and Vernon, recently announced the addition of a new audiologist to their crew who comes with a home-grown background as a UConn graduate and love for the field that derives from her own experience as a patient with hearing issues at a young age.

Dr. Stephanie Rand, Au.D. CCC-A, received her Doctorate of Audiology from the University of Connecticut in 2022 and has fully embraced the small-town, private practice mentality

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Scramble the Duck predicts six more weeks of winter



EASTFORD — On Feb. 2, Scramble the Duck predicted six more weeks of winter. After stepping out from his house into the cold winter weather, Scramble saw his shadow. A scroll read by his handlers announced his winter forecast.

With his record of 100 percent accuracy, Scramble is trustworthy and his predictions should be heeded.

As the opening speech by Isaac Torcellini noted, "The quacks that we interpret for you today have a legacy of accuracy. They come from a duck who is well educated, spends his time enjoying and studying the weather, and above all is working to maintain the honor of his prognostication discipline."

After Scramble saw his shadow, the speech read by duck handler Karissa Howard said:

"The sun looks pale.
The wind is blowing cold.
The spring will stay quiet."

The winter is bold!
Six more weeks of winter to behold!"

Scramble's prediction was met with acclaim by his fans.

After the ceremony, State Sen. Jeff Gordon and State Rep. Pat Boyd presented Scramble with a citation from the Connecticut General Assembly, noting his accuracy and thanking him for his service to the community.

Scramble the Duck is an accurate alternative to groundhogs like Punxsutawney Phil, Connecticut Chuckles, and others. Unlike any groundhog, Scramble has a perfect accuracy record of predicting spring and winter, along with a Ducktorate in weather prognostication from Stormy Heights academy.

For more information about Scramble the Duck and to see photos and videos of the event, see scrambleduck.org.

Pomfret Historical Society Fireside Chat to feature “The Amazing Mrs. Whistler”

POMFRET — The topic for February's Fireside Chat presented by Pomfret Historical Society at the Vanilla Bean Café Feb. 20 at 7 p.m. will be “The Amazing Mrs. Whistler,” the mother of famed artist James Whistler. The Whistlers spent two years in Pomfret while James and his brother William attended school.

Whistler's mother, Anna McNeill Whistler, blew into Pomfret in December of 1849 to settle her husband's probate and enroll her sons James and William in Roswell Park's Christ Church Hall Academy. Her husband, George Washington Whistler had

died of cholera in Russia in April of 1849 while designing and building the railroad from St. Petersburg to Moscow for Tsar Nicholas. After packing up the household in Russia and shipping her husband's body to Stonington, CT for burial, she focused her attention on educating her sons at the reputable academy in Pomfret. She met with the Pomfret probate judge, in December of 1849, rented a house just west of the Vanilla Bean from Mrs. Hannah Searles, and arranged to have the family furnishings and belongings shipped to Pomfret by train. A force to be reckoned with, Anna Whistler dug into and

became an integral part of Pomfret Street from 1850 – 1852 when “The Street” (as it was called) was thriving with commerce and high society. Anna Whistler's world gives us a sneak preview of Pomfret's Gilded Age, the topic of the March Fireside Chat.

Bring a friend, settle in for food, and drink from the Vanilla Bean menu and enjoy a delightful program that sheds light on the artist James Whistler and his mother.

Program from 7 – 8 p.m. Arrive early to order food and get a good seat. For more information, contact windsong@snet.net or call 860-465-7228.



Gordon honored with COST's Town Crier Award



PLANTSVILLE — The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST), which represents 115 smaller communities throughout Connecticut, presented Sen. Jeff Gordon (R - Ashford, Chaplin, Coventry, Eastford, Ellington, Hampton, Stafford, Thompson, Tolland, Union, Vernon, Willington, and Woodstock) with a Town Crier Award at its annual meeting on January 28 at the Aqua Turf in Plantsville, Connecticut.

COST's Town Crier Award was established to recognize and honor state lawmakers and public officials who have distinguished themselves as outstanding advocates on issues affecting Connecticut's small towns.

“Sen. Gordon has proven to be very responsive in addressing concerns facing

Connecticut's small towns, tackling a wide range of issues in a thoughtful

manner,” said Betsy Gara, COST Executive Director, in presenting the award. “His expertise on zoning and land use issues has been instrumental in voicing concerns with top-down, one-size-fits-all approaches to housing development,” Gara said.

“In addition, Sen. Gordon has played a leadership role in addressing issues related to the resident trooper program, which small towns rely on to protect public safety. He has also supported efforts to increase the state Medicaid reimburse-

ment rate for ambulance services to ensure that residents have prompt access to emergency medical care,” Gara added. “COST is honored to present a Town Crier Award to Sen. Gordon for his staunch advocacy on behalf of the state's small towns.”

This year's other Town Crier Award recipients are:

State Sen. Rick Lopes (D – Berlin, Farmington, and New Britain)

State Rep. Jaime Foster (D – East Windsor, Ellington, and Vernon)

State Rep. Tony Scott (R-Easton, Monroe, and Trumbull)

Founded in 1975, The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) is an advocacy organization committed to giving small towns a strong voice in the legislative process. Its members are Connecticut towns with populations of less than 35,000.

Thompson Middle School announces honor roll

N O R T H GROSVENORDALE — Tourtelotte Memorial High School has released its honor roll for the second quarter of the 2025-2026 school year.

Grade 9

High Honors: Shyla Beckett, Payton Bolte, Deegan Bryniarski, Hazel Clavette, Logan Delicata, Jeylia Denham, Emma Fournier, Saylem Kratzer, Sophia Kus, John Lowe, Paris Lowe, Andrew Marquette, Daniika Minarik, Gia Reynolds-Rankin, Shawn Senni, Cameron Snow, Adylin Stewart, Levi Tucker, Nana Baffour-Gymah

Honors: Ari-lynne

Brunelle, Braeden Carlson, Christopher Herlihy, Alexis Light, Lilah Spearin, Jayden Watkins

Recognition: Bryce Davidson, Sadie Houle, Bentley Plaza, Parker Smith

Grade 10

High Honors: Jeremi Helwig, Madison Marchitelli, Dominic Muscato, Madison Perry, Naisha Ruiz Aquino, Gabriella Santos

Honors: Bryant Fleming, Brookelyn Pearson, Brody Vincent, Ryan Walsh

Recognition: Timmorthy Beaudoin, Jaydin Sevigne

Grade 11

High Honors: Gabriel Bourget, Maddison

Carlson, Estela Freitas, Thomas Kenadek, Calleigh Levesque, Billie Lewis, Tanisha Patel, Mabel Perreault, Samantha Podgorni, Haley Russell

Honors: Dylan Axtell, Amelia Brousseau, Nicholas Lavallee, Ella Martin, Kayone Masterson, Jordyn Poplawski, Chyanne Rock, Matthew Rybacki, Cae Sarto Barros

Recognition: Alexis Andrews, Jordan Burns-Studley, Kaleb Laporte, Ayden Rogers

Grade 12

High Honors: Bailey Benton, Deanna Burress, Nicholas Cunningham-Ingram, Julia Lewis, Briana Martin, Ember Merrill, Noelia Reed, Ava Tucker, Kevin Vescera

Honors: Isabella Barrows, Logan Boss, Dylan Bryniarski, Alex Davis, Gia DiPasquale, Summer Dutram, Vivianna Hill, Cole Hopkins, Caitlyn L'Heureux, Colby Lewis, Sahara Moore, Tyler Parkin, Alexis Phav, Nathan Richardson, Tyler Shead, Makenna Sheridan, Laci Senni, Joshua Tackson

Recognition: Joseph Annese, Quintin Cabral, Cristian DeJesus, Jordan Fitton, Aidan Ford, Amaya Munoz, Isabella Stewart

T H O M P S O N — Thompson Middle School has released its honor roll for the second quarter of the 2025-2026 school year.

Grade 5

High Honors: Sonya Apley, Margaret Axtell, Ellouise Baldwin, Rose Black, Annabelle Chrzanowski, Reed

Honors: Louise Kennedy, Aubrey Maliff, Charlotte McGlynn, Brody Nichols, Jessa Perron, Nathan Rybacki, Henry Tilton, Jude Travinski, Molley White, Clayton Young

Honors: Apraku Adinkrah, Aiden Arnett, Bodhi Aubin, Bradley Bond, Shawn Botelho, Macie Freeman, Noelia

Frempong, Noah Horniak, Sierra Howard, Aura Landry, Zachery Mayer, Maeve Murzycki, Delaney Pacheco, Keena Parent, Pranshu Patel, Harrison Poirier, Colton Ross, Izabela Sarto Barros, Lena

Seney, Brody Zabka

Recognition: Carter Gravel, David Greene, Waylon Mead, James Pageau

Grade 6

High Honors: Maica Abrajano, June Bardellini, Bailey Yong

Quinn Cooney, Amelia Hendrickson, Jeffrey Kuras, Emma Moriarty, Patrick Paquette, Sierra Vallee, Jessie Wuensch

Honors: Kyleigh Akana, Sophia Benoit, Isaiah Blaise, Callan Bolte, Lance Burden, Avan Cady, Mason Caya, Olivia Desjarlais, Chloe Faucher, Brielynn Fijol, Lillian Kiley, Heaven

Labonte, Isabella Leveille, Reis Mailloux, Elsa Monahan, Cain Peck, Trent Plaza, Connor Rauh-Sarr, Brooke Renaud, Henry Rivers, Ava Tremblay, Alannah Tsouridis, Jonas Tucker

Recognition: Austin Auger, Christian Burns, Ryler Hachey, Nathan Jacobson, Ethan Meyers, Jacob Racine, Emmett Salvas, Ruth Saurman, Lillian Speroni, Jase Tsouridis

Honors: Parker Beck, Cole Benoit, Annabelle Estabrook, Ezerik Johnson, Piper Kus, Damyen Lowe, Logan McCarthy, Jasmine McCutcheon, Bryce Rock

Recognition: Ethan Cayer, Caleb Desjardais, Bentley Fazzina-Tebo, Tripp Hoenig, Jakub Krupa

Grade 8

High Honors: Kiley Audette, Lacey Barnett, April Boudreau, Brooke Caya, Matthew Chrzanowski, Madyson Grazulis, Amelia Hachigian, Maya Khaomongkhoun, Owen McBrien, Lucy Miller, Allison Rivers, Amelia Senkhamtar

Honors: Stephen Andrews, Leah Bourbeau, Gage Cady, Alexis Fiske, Aiden Girard, Samiah Lafleche, Elizabeth Lemay, Laura Logsdon, Jack Lyon, Nathan Lyon, Ellyana Mayo, Jayden O'Connor, Colin Peckham, Summer Warburton, Logan Wedda

Recognition: Jordan Aponte, Jacen Beaudreault, Lily Kimball, Michael Kingsbury, Liam Maliff, Rylee Parkin, Dante Warren

Grade 7

High Honors: Kasandra Beckett, Joshua Boss, Emily Cabral, Hailey Caverly, John Clarke, Jezarya Denham, Ella DiCicco, Joshua Freitas, Chloe Gillon, Mitchell Murzycki, Jaeda Rose, Grace Roy, Tanner Saad, Kinslie Stewart, Julianne Valby, Elizabeth Vescera, Bailey Yong

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Day Kimball Health names Gina Ryder December Employee of the Month



Gina Ryder

PUTNAM — Gina Ryder, patient access representative for the Emergency Department at Day Kimball Hospital, has been named employee of the month for December 2025.

Ryder joined Day Kimball Health (DKH) in October 2024, bringing four years of experience as an

administrative assistant and a life and health insurance agent license. Within six months, she assumed an additional role as a trainer, reflecting her strong work ethic and willingness to support both colleagues and department operations.

In her current role, Ryder is responsible for accurately and efficiently registering patients in the Emergency Department. She also assists patients and families during stressful situations by providing guidance and reassurance, helping support a timely and smooth care experience.

"Gina exemplifies the compassion, teamwork, and professionalism that define DKH," said Kyle Kramer, CEO of Day Kimball Health. "Her ability to balance accuracy, efficiency,

and empathy, especially in our fast-paced Emergency Department, makes a meaningful difference to our patients and their families. We are grateful for her contributions and proud to recognize her as our December Employee of the Month."

"I'm honored to be recognized and grateful to be part of such a supportive team," said Ryder. "This acknowledgement motivates me to continue supporting my colleagues and contributing to DKH's goals."

Originally from Brooklyn, New York, Ryder now resides in Sterling, Connecticut, with her family. Outside of work, she enjoys crocheting and is currently working on a temperature blanket. She also plans to take advantage of DKH's educational benefits

to pursue a career as an X-ray technician.

About Day Kimball Health

Day Kimball Health is a nonprofit community healthcare system composed of Day Kimball Hospital, Day Kimball Medical Group, Day Kimball Health at Home, and healthcare centers in Danielson, Dayville, Plainfield, and Putnam. Its service area includes Northeast Connecticut as well as nearby Massachusetts and Rhode Island communities. Day Kimball Health's comprehensive network employs more than 1,000 staff, including nearly 300 associated, highly skilled physicians, surgeons, and specialists. Its Web site is daykimball.org.

Poets at Large readies for first event of 2026!

POMFRET — Poets at Large will begin its seventh year on Feb. 21 at 7 p.m. at The Vanilla Bean Café, 450 Deerfield Rd., in Pomfret. That Saturday night, poets Denise Abercrombie and Sean Frederick Forbes take the stage.

Abercrombie's work has appeared in numerous publications, including Minnesota Review, Fireweed, Connecticut Review, Phoebe: Journal of Feminist Scholarship, Theory, and Aesthetics, E.O. Smith High School, and lives in Storrs, Connecticut.

Quinebaug Valley Senior Citizens Center welcomes Medicare expert

BROOKLYN — Quinebaug Valley Senior Citizens Center at 69 South Main St., Brooklyn, will be hosting Laura Crews from Senior Resources Ship Center on Monday, Feb. 9 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. She will speak on Medicare. An informative overview will be presented.

Medicare can be a lot to understand. So, if you are confused about Medicare or have questions, she will be able to help you.

Plan to attend.

To register, please call QVSCC at 860-774-1243. We look forward to you joining us.

Alicia Tiffany named to University of Bridgeport Dean's List

BRIDGEPORT — Alicia Tiffany of Thompson was named to University of Bridgeport's Fall 2025 Dean's List.

Tiffany was among more than 325 students named to the Fall 2025 Dean's List.

To be named to the Dean's List, a student must have a term grade point average of between 3.2-3.69.

University of Bridgeport offers career-oriented undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees and programs for people seeking personal and professional growth. The University promotes academic excellence, personal responsibility, and commitment to service. Distinctive curricula in an international, culturally diverse, and supportive learning environment prepare graduates for life and leadership in an increasingly interconnected world. The University is independent and non-sectarian. www.bridgeport.edu

Yale Global Health Review, Earth's Daughters, English Journal, Waking Up to the Earth: Connecticut Poets in a Time of Global Climate Crisis, Writing on the Edge. She helps coordinate Curbstone Foundation's Poetry in the Julia de Burgos Park series in Willimantic. Abercrombie teaches theater and creative writing at

Forbes is widely published and is the author of *Providencia*. Forbes is an Associate Professor at UCONN and a summer instructor for the Yale Young Writers Workshop at Yale University.

There will be no admission charge for this winter/spring series, though donations are welcome.

PAL Coordinator Karen Warinsky said, "Due to the generosity of our sponsors this season, we will be able to present these readings free of charge. We pay featured readers a small stipend for their time and travel. Our featured poets bring their books to sell, so we are hoping patrons will be generous in supporting

the poets by buying their books."

Poets at Large has brought more than 120 published and awarded poets to the area since 2020 and dozens of people have participated in the open mic portions during that time.

Poets at Large is a project of Windham Arts. All events are ADA compliant and are recommended for ages 16 and up. These readings are sponsored in part by Linemaster Switch, WHZ Financial Advisors, bankHometown, The Putnam Area Foundation and Charter Oak FCU. Contact karen.warinsky@gmail.com to sign up for the open mic. Five-minute max as time allows.

Celebrity Bartender Night to benefit Interfaith Human Services of Putnam

PUTNAM — The Putnam Democrats invite the community to a Celebrity Bartender Night at Montana Nights Axe Throwing benefitting Interfaith Human Services of Putnam Feb. 19 from 5:30-8:30 p.m.

The lineup of bartenders for the evening includes Jeff Bousquet and Elizabeth Beman at 5:30 p.m.; Scott Pempek, Peter Vitale, and Lauren Heidelberger at 6; Barney Seney, Jim Rivers, and Joe Carvalho at 6:30; Sherri Vogt, Leah Pollard, and Gloria Marion at 7; John O'Keefe, Dr. Lee Wesler, and Mike Bogdanski at 7:30; and Steve and Leia Faucher and George Tsanjoures at 8.

Interfaith Services of Putnam is a 501(c)3 non-profit charitable organization supporting Daily Bread, the Diaper Bank, NU2U Clothing Closet, Pathways 2 Success, and providing fuel and energy assistance, homelessness and rental assistance, and resources for area seniors.

New Al-Anon meeting in Pomfret

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

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

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

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

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The importance of continuity in a changing place

Change is inevitable, even in towns that pride themselves on tradition. In northeastern Connecticut, it often arrives quietly. A familiar storefront changes hands. A long-standing business updates its look. A new family moves into a house that has seen generations come and go. These shifts rarely announce themselves, but over time they shape how a community feels.

What anchors towns like Putnam, Woodstock, Thompson and Killingly is not the absence of change, but continuity. The sense that while some things evolve, the core of the community remains recognizable.

Continuity shows up in routines. It is the expectation that certain services will still be there when needed, that familiar faces will still be part of daily life, and that the character of a place will not vanish overnight. It is what allows residents to adapt without feeling unmoored.

This balance between change and continuity matters more than ever. Communities that lose their sense of continuity can begin to feel interchangeable, stripped of the qualities that once made them distinct. On the other hand, places that refuse all change risk stagnation. The challenge lies in moving forward while respecting what has worked and endured.

In this region, continuity is often maintained through relationships rather than policies or plans. People remember how things were done, pass along local knowledge, and keep informal traditions alive. These are not written rules. They are habits, expectations, and shared understandings that shape everyday interactions.

That continuity also provides reassurance. In uncertain times, knowing that some aspects of local life remain dependable creates stability. It allows residents to focus on what matters most: family, work, and connection to place.

As northeastern Connecticut continues to evolve, the goal is not to preserve the past unchanged, but to carry forward what gives these towns their identity. Continuity does not prevent progress. It gives progress a foundation.

And in the long run, that foundation is what keeps a community from becoming just another dot on the map.

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

Power to the people

To the Editor:

We the People. These are the first three words, and arguably the most important words in the United States Constitution. Our founding fathers, and authors of that document, were very learned people, they studied history, and they knew why democracies and republics fail. They attempted to create a government that would bypass many of these problems, and could hopefully survive. They modeled their new government looking at Greek Democracies, and Roman Republics, but their greatest influence was the Haudenosaunee or the Six Nations, more commonly known as The Iroquois Confederacy. This was the first recorded democracy on this continent, and predates Columbus by as much as 300 years or more. This confederacy included the three equal branches of government that we have named the Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches.

In the original Constitution, We the People directly vote for our representatives in congress, who serve two years. We also elect our local governments, and they appoint our Senators. The president is elected by the Electoral College, with electors selected from the various states, in numbers representing their population – same as the House of Representatives. The 17th Amendment, ratified in 1913 changed how senators were appointed to a direct vote by the people. This is a slide to democracy that alters what our founders intended. They knew then, as now, that the majority of the population is not well educated, and democracies fail because people will almost always vote their own selfish interest. Starting in 1824, some states, and today most, began to utilize a "Winner Takes All" strategy for appointing presidential electors. This increases the chances that a president can be elected with a minority of the popular vote. I don't think the founders would have approved of any of these changes. But the biggest mistake in the Constitution was to not put removal of a politician in the hands of We the People. In the original document, the only way to remove a president from office was through impeachment for "Treason and other High Crimes and Misdemeanors."

To the Editor:

The divisions in the American political landscape are something that has caused discord from the time of the Republic's inception to this day. Debates on government policy are ingrained in its society, and have spanned the community spectrum from town halls to taverns, from the stage to the street, to the TV, radio and now the internet.

But throughout its 250 years, the one media that has stood the test of time is the American newspaper; our Villager is just one of the current iterations in this venerable tradition. Everyone has, and is entitled to, their opinion. We may disagree on principles, but in the end, we all share both a love and respect for the United States of America.

What is best for the country has always differed starting from the nation's inception, and continues to this day. Beginning with the battle between Loyalists and Patriots, continuing to the years leading up to, during, and following the Civil War, through the fights for women's and civil rights, America has evolved to where we stand today. In the past, the vitriol was filled with true violence. Its history is peppered with hangings,

tar and feathering, lynchings, arson and killings.

In fact, the more recent history has been a relatively quiet one save the occasional limited destruction of a downtown by riot, and of course,

the Jan. 6 unprecedented attack on the Capital building.

However, the one thing that seems to have changed is the proliferation of social media

and in turn the rapid explosion of misinformation.

Yes, the printed press has always had its bias and many times they take some "literary license" but the reporting itself for the most part is edited and fact checked.

Today, anyone can say anything on Facebook

or on a podcast. The editing and due diligence are

lacking especially as many "influencers" are profiting from manipulating their listener's beliefs.

So, despite one's best intention, trying to present

an argument that is based on false data renders

any intelligent discourse infeasible.

This is what makes debate on the issue of

illegal immigration so difficult, and one of the

most misunderstood factors is the belief that the

Democratic Party as a whole is somehow encour-

aging the influx of migrants to augment its voter

rolls. For the record this is simply not true. For

one thing, only citizens can vote in our elections.

Our system is the most guarded in the world and

despite what Mr. Trump may say, there have only

been 10 instances of any illegal immigrant voting

since 1980. In addition, President Obama was

not called "the Deporter in Chief" for nothing.

Expulsions under his watch were at record lev-

els, and even higher than Mr. Trump's first term.

Lastly Latinos who make up the bulk of migrants

swung their votes to Mr. Trump to help him carry

the last election.

Regardless, there are very few citizens who believe unchecked illegal immigration is good for the country, it's the solution that divides us.

The small triumphs we rarely applaud

We are very good at celebrating the big victories. We mark promotions, graduations, championships, and anniversaries with cards, banners, and cake. But I have come to believe that the real backbone of life in Northeast Connecticut is built on a different kind of success, the small triumphs that happen quietly and go almost

CORNER completely unnoticed.

OF Take the

KINDNESS simple act

BY CHIP getting through a

tough day

with

out letting it harden you. No one

hands out medals for staying patient in a long line or keeping

your temper when the car

ahead of you refuses to move

on a green light. There is no

applause for choosing to be

polite when it would be easier

to be short. Yet these moments,

stacked one on top of another,

shape the tone of our communi-

ties more than any ribbon-cutting

ceremony ever could.

I see these small triumphs

everywhere. I see them in the

early morning workers pulling

into parking lots before the sun

has fully decided to show up.

I see them in parents juggling

schedules, sports practices, and

grocery lists with the skill of

seasoned air traffic controllers.

I see them in older neighbors

who move a little slower now

but still take the time to shovel

a walkway or bring in a stray

trash barrel before the wind

carries it off.

There is something deeply

respectable about showing up

day after day, even when enthu-

siasm runs low. We don't talk

much about endurance any-

more, but it remains one of

the most important qualities a

person can have. Endurance is

what gets you through a long

winter stretch of gray days.

It's what carries you through

months that feel heavier than

others. It's what allows fami-

lies, friendships, and towns to

hold together when life applies

steady pressure.

When my own kids were

younger, I used to think suc-

cess meant big milestones. First

steps. First report cards. College

acceptance letters. Now that

they are grown and building

lives of their own, I see that

the more meaningful victories

were quieter. Making it through

a hard week. Learning to apol-

ogize. Choosing responsibility

over convenience. Those les-

sons didn't arrive with certifi-

cates, but they stuck.

Living in our little corner

of the state teaches you some-

thing about modesty. People

here tend not to boast. They

fix what's broken, help when

needed, and move on. There

is pride, certainly, but it is the

kind that shows up in action

rather than words. You can see

it in well-kept yards, in volun-

teer fire department breakfasts,

in the steady hum of small

businesses opening their doors

each morning.

Of course, not every day feels

triumphant. Some days feel like

a collection of minor defeats.

The coffee spills. The meet-

ing runs long. The phone rings

when you finally sit down. But

even on those days, there is a

quiet victory in simply carrying

on without becoming bitter.

As I get older, I find myself

measuring success differently.

It is no longer about how fast

I move or how much I accom-

plish in a single day. It is about

whether I treated people fairly.

Whether I listened more than I

spoke. Whether I left things a

little better than I found them.

So, here is my propos-

al. The next time you make

it through a day that tested

your patience, your energy, or

your good mood, take a second

</

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Epstein, power, and the failure of accountability

To the Editor:

Decades after Jeffrey Epstein sexually abused and trafficked over 1,000 victims, primarily young girls and women, many questions remain unanswered, not because evidence is lacking but because the powerful elite have yet to be held accountable.

Epstein's crimes were not hidden. They were reported to police, documented by journalists, and corroborated by survivors long before Southern District of Florida U.S. Attorney Alexander Acosta, without notifying or interviewing any of the victims, negotiated a sweetheart deal with Epstein. That deal provided blanket immunity to him and all his "named and unnamed co-conspirators." Courts later confirmed that the victims were denied their legal right to be consulted before the plea deal. The Department of Justice (DOJ) acknowledged this was a violation. In 2008, Epstein was sentenced to 13 months in jail and was allowed to leave prison on work-release daily during which additional abuse occurred. Despite this egregious failure of justice, Trump appointed Alexander Acosta to his cabinet as Labor Secretary during his first term.

One of Trump's 2024 campaign promises was if elected, he would release the Epstein files. He later dismissed the documents as a Democrat-led "hoax." If he really cared about the victims and wanted the files released, he would have directed the DOJ to release them.

Trump's current appointed Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, Epstein's ex-neighbor, claimed Epstein "was the greatest blackmailer ever and may have traded the feds video of his rich and well-connected associates getting massages from young women in exchange for a controversial 2008 plea deal." Where are those videos?

Recently, an estimated three million documents related to Epstein were released. Others remain sealed or overly redacted. It's hard to fathom that the U.S. government has assimilated all this data and the men involved have never been investigated or held accountable. This latest batch of documents included very disturbing allegations about Trump and Epstein that the FBI received as tips through its National Threat Operations Center. Tips are meant to trigger investigations, not silence. Why weren't these tips aggressively investigated? It has been reported that the president is mentioned more than 3,000 times in files related to the Epstein case.

According to the survivors, "this latest release of Jeffrey Epstein files is being sold as transparency, but what it actually does is expose survivors. Once again, survivors are having their names and identifying infor-

America's best hope

To the Editor:

America's best hope to survive Donald Trump's disastrous reign is the rest of the world. Trump's crazy foreign policies, his bullying of our traditional allies with tariffs, and his threats to take over their countries and territories by any means necessary, are finally making foreign leaders realize that there is only one way to deal with him—stand up to the bully. They understand that our government no longer follows the traditional "American values" that once inspired the free world but has adopted the "might is right" approach to other nations.

Trump's foreign and economic policies are working to hurt the US and world democracies and benefit dictatorial regimes in China and Russia. China's trade surplus surged to a record level and exports increased in 2025 in spite of Trump's tariffs. We have lost tens of thousands of manufacturing jobs during Trump's second term. Bankruptcies are at record highs and we have 800,000 homeless people while Trump has increased his family's wealth by \$2.5 billion. Even the stock market that Trump loves to tout as proof of his great economy has severely underperformed most foreign markets. He hasn't the interest or mental capacity to concentrate on addressing Americans' needs.

Our traditional democratic trading partners realize that the US is no longer reliable but acts on the bully's whims. As a result, Canada and others are making new trade agreements with China. For example, Canada has agreed

mation exposed, while the men who abused us remain hidden and protected. The justice department cannot claim it is finished releasing files until every legally required document is released and every abuse and enabler is fully exposed."

Meanwhile, Ghislaine Maxwell, Epstein's longtime associate and co-conspirator, has stated in court filings that four Epstein employees and at least 25 men reached "secret settlements" to avoid being named publicly. If those individuals are innocent, the rationale for secrecy deserves scrutiny.

Financial records, flight logs, calendars, and contact lists obtained from Epstein's estate point to a wide-ranging operation that spanned decades and continents. Epstein did not act alone. He did not fund himself. He did not traffic victims without assistance. Yet, accountability has been narrowly confined to two names: Epstein, who is dead, and Maxwell, who is imprisoned.

Sexual violence overwhelmingly affects the most vulnerable. According to statistics compiled in the U.S., someone is sexually assaulted nearly every minute. Every nine minutes, that victim is a child. When perpetrators are wealthy or well connected, justice too often slows or stops entirely.

The Epstein case has become a symbol not only of horrific abuse, but of how institutions fail when confronting power.

Justice for the victims requires:

- The release of Epstein-related documents with survivors protected and perpetrators scrutinized.
- A clear public accounting of which allegations were investigated, which were not, and why.
- Congressional oversight into the use of non-prosecution agreements in cases involving child sexual abuse.
- An end to secret settlements that shield alleged abusers from public accountability.

This is not a partisan issue. It is a rule-of-law issue.

Citizens who care about women, children, and equal justice should demand answers from Congress, the Department of Justice, and the White House—regardless of who holds office.

Call your representatives. Ask where the investigations stopped. Ask why names remain hidden. Ask why survivors continue to pay the price for crimes committed against them.

Silence protects abuse. Delays protect power.

LISA ARENDS
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Reflections on memory, fear, and moral courage

To the Editor:

Recent images of masked, heavily armed, and unidentified ICE agents deployed into American cities and towns have struck a deep and painful chord for many of us. For families shaped by Holocaust survivors—and for their children and grandchildren—these scenes are not abstract. They echo images etched into family memory: uniforms without names, sudden raids, state power divorced from accountability, and fear following people into their homes, schools, houses of worship, and onto their streets.

For me, these images are inseparable from my mother's recollections of terror as she hid with her mother and sister from Nazi roundups in the Vilna Ghetto—holding their breath, listening for footsteps, fearing a knock on the door, knowing discovery could mean disappearance. That fear did not end with liberation; it lived on in memory, vigilance, and the lessons passed to the next generation.

Watching Americans today object to these tactics raises an unavoidable question: might some outcomes during the Holocaust have been different if ordinary citizens and political leaders had resisted earlier, more visibly, and in greater numbers? History does not allow us to test such scenarios, but it does leave us with responsibility. Memory is not meant only to mourn; it is meant to teach and warn.

The lesson carried forward is not that history repeats itself in identical form, but that moral choices always present themselves. If we learned anything from the Holocaust, it is that silence and indifference have consequences. So does the courage to speak, to protest, and to insist that fear must never become an accepted instrument of public policy.

That responsibility feels especially urgent as we mark 250 years since the adoption of the Declaration of Independence—a document that grounded this nation's legitimacy in the radical idea of inherent human dignity. Its words were meant not just to inspire, but to guide conduct, especially in moments of fear and crisis.

The strength of a democracy is measured not only by the words it proclaims, but by the actions it tolerates. History rarely announces its turning points in advance. It asks whether ordinary people recognized a moment when conscience required attention—whether they chose not silence, but witness: a cellphone raised, a whistle sounded, a neighbor standing nearby, a letter written, a vote cast. This is such a moment. The question is not whether today is yesterday, but whether we will recognize the warning signs that, in Europe, were visible long before catastrophe became undeniable.

NORM BERMAN
BROOKLYN

ICE

To the Editor:

"invading" a state with no international borders that has and estimated 90,000 to 130,000 undocumented immigrants while we do not see any similar "invasion" with 2.1 million undocumented immigrants in Texas or 1.6 million in Florida.

A few facts that are frightening. ICE is the 13th largest military organization in the world. In 2024, ICE had about 10,000 "agents." In 2025, under Donnie Despot, it ballooned to about 22,000. It has a larger budget than the FBI. This is clearly a "death by a thousand cuts" process to establish an empire a bit at a time.

Oh, yes. Thanks to the 70 or so of us who came out in 15 degree weather Saturday to protest ICE. And to the many drivers going by who showed their support by honking and waving. We must not lose this crusade to win back America.

STEPHEN ETZEL
PUTNAM

Auction news and goodbye

It's been a few weeks since I shared the latest auction news, and plenty has taken place since then.

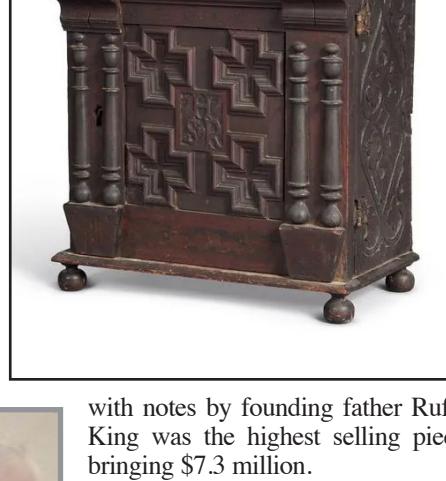
Beginning with local news, a Western Massachusetts historical society recently consigned a piece of furniture for auction that generated significant funds for the group. I've noted in previous columns that most antique furniture has dropped in value over the years. This piece was certainly an exception. The Swift River Valley Historical Society's website describes themselves as "the leading resource in preserving the artifacts, stories and records of the lost towns of the Quabbin Valley." It is the historical society for the towns of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich, and Prescott. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts took residents' properties in those four towns by eminent domain, and everyone had to relocate by April 28, 1938. The land was flooded several months later to create the Quabbin Reservoir, which provides water to the Eastern part of the state.

The Swift River Valley Historical Society had a cabinet from 1677 that had been donated by Annie Frances Ballard, according to the Greenfield Recorder. Ballard was a descendant of one of the cabinet's original owners. The cabinet door was crafted with two sevens for 1677 and a heart with the initials of Symon and Rebeckah Horne. They were an Andover, MA, couple who commissioned the cabinet after the birth of their first son. It was kept in a temperature-controlled room, but the historical society could no longer secure and insure it.

It sailed past the auction estimate of \$600,000 to \$800,000, selling for \$1,636,000 earlier this month. According to the Greenfield Recorder, the historical society will use the funds to make their "building accessible for people with disabilities, and mak[e] the facility more user-friendly for archivists and historians."

An auction of memorabilia related to our nation's history also took place earlier this month, with two George Washington paintings selling very well. A 1783 painting depicting Washington as a general by Charles Peale Polk brought \$577,850, while a Gilbert Stuart portrait of Washington went for \$2.8 million, according to Artnet News. A printed copy of the Declaration of Independence from 1776 sold for \$5.6 million, and a printed copy of the Emancipation Proclamation signed by Abraham Lincoln earned \$6.7 million.

A draft of the United States Constitution



with notes by founding father Rufus King was the highest selling piece, bringing \$7.3 million.

A more contemporary item set an auction record in November. Auction records for sports memorabilia and comic books are frequently being broken, and a rare Superman 1939 first issue comic book has done it again. The comic book was discovered by three brothers who were cleaning out their mother's attic, according to an AP article. The copy graded a 9.0 out of 10, remarkable for an issue that old. It went up, up, and away, fetching over \$9 million.

I've greatly enjoyed the 10-plus years I've been writing this column. It's been wonderful meeting many of you who've invited me to appraise items at local appraisal events, asked me to lecture about antiques, have consigned items with me, or have taken the time to email me about articles I've written. Our workload has been increasing every year, leading me to take a hiatus from writing. Please keep my contact information in case you may need help in the future. Once again, thank you to everyone who has read this column and thank you for your support.

Our single-collector Civil War auction starts next week. The following sale will include fine jewelry, sterling silver, art, and other antiques and collectibles. We'll be running a major sale with sports cards and memorabilia in the summer. We are accepting consignments for our next two sales. Please visit our website <https://centralmassauctions.com> for links to upcoming events.

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

OPENING

continued from page A1

push through the pain for a brighter tomorrow.

CEO and President Dr. Kevin McNeill, a former police officer and firefighter who himself has experienced the trauma of these jobs first-hand, welcomed the large crowd by speaking of the importance of their mission which many have called the start of something that could grow much larger than the Quiet Corner into a state or even national movement.

Dr. McNeill used a seemingly out-of-place painting of a buffalo on the facility's

wall to help define their mission. As he explained, buffalo do not run away from storms. They run through them, feeling the pain of the rain but eventually coming through to the other side while other animals may run away from the storm, destined to face it eventually despite their avoidance. This mentality is at the core of the Peer Support Group's mission to help first responders push through the storm of their trauma rather than running from it.

"When trauma hits, we run, we push it down. We stay busy, we joke, we drink, we bury our anger and call

it strength. Avoidance feels like survival in the moment, but it keeps us trapped and the farther we run the longer the storm follows until one day we realize we aren't escaping it at all," McNeill said. "We're running alongside it. Trauma doesn't disappear when we ignore it. It waits. It gathers steam. Eventually it demands to be faced. You can outrun the calls, the memories, the images, and the feelings for a while, but the storm always catches up — Courage isn't absence of fear. It's movement in spite of it."

Dayville Fire Company Chief Michael Shabenas,

who serves as Vice President of the Quiet Corner Peer Support Group, seconded his colleague's sentiments and promised first responders that they will always be there to help from this day forward.

"For every first responder veteran out there, you have served your community and your country with respect. It's time for us to start serving you," said the Chief. "Enough is enough. You go home and you suffer in silence. We have to end that stigma. These doors are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We don't have business hours because we know mental health does

not have business hours — we are going to work together. We are going to end the stigma."

The event was capped off with a ribbon cutting and the presentation of citations from both the State Senate and House as well as The Key to Killingly presented by the Town Council.

The Quiet Corner Peer Support Group has gained much attention and steam over the past year, with many local companies and organizations lending a hand to help furnish and support their new permanent home in Danielson. Possibly the most publicized contribution was from

the town of Killingly itself. In June, the Town Council earmarked \$166,000 in Opioid Settlement Fund money for the cause seeing the program as an important asset to help provide an essential service to local first responders. That money helped secure the new building and hire personnel to grow the Quiet Corner Peer Support Group into what it has become today.

Information about the Quiet Corner Peer Support Group can be found at qcps.net. The center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week for all first responders in need of assistance.

VETERANS

continued from page A1

Love Story which is just perfect so it seems, for a Valentine's Veteran of the month recognition together.

Subsequent assignments included the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. as Pathology Laboratory Manager, Secretary to the General Staff/XO, and becoming the first Army allied scientist to attend the Army Command and General Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas were some of his assignments during the next decade.

His next deployment, Hiatt was assigned to the Army's Medical Research and Development Command responsible for all foreign medical research contracts in Foreign Countries like Brazil, Israel, Korea and Kenya. Hiatt was then selected to command the U.S. Army Biomedical Research and Development Laboratory at Ft. Detrick, Maryland. This assignment included executing Base Realignment and Closure assignment (BRAC) for the Laboratory. Colonel Hiatt transferred all missions to other commands, including some to the Air Force. After successful completion of

his downsizing orders, he was selected to command the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine in Natick, Mass., where he completed his final four years of service as a Commander. At the conclusion of this deployment, Hiatt retired from a long and impressive 32-year military career with distinction and honor. For his long tenure as a Healthcare Administrator Officer and a Clinical Laboratory Officer, Hiatt was awarded many awards, including two Legion of Merit Awards, three Meritorious Service medals, The Joint Service Commendation Medal, The U.S. Army Commendation Medal, The Army Achievement Medal, The Army Superior Unit Award, two Army Good Conduct Medals, two National Defense Service Medals, five Vietnam Service Medals, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, two Overseas Service Ribbons, and the Army Service Ribbon.

After retirement from the Army, Hiatt became a Certified Master Gardener, a Helicopter Pilot and a Fixed Wing Pilot. He also gave back to his community by serving as a member and Chairman of the Small Cities and Economic Development Committee and for a number of years as a Member of the Town of Thompson Board of Finance. He jokingly states that in retirement he now serves at the beck and call of a demanding Welsh Corgi, and one not so demanding, retired Navy Captain. In addition, Joel and Kathleen have two adult children, two grandsons and five great grandchildren that keep them young and busy. The following is that Navy Captain's Story.

Vietnam Era Veteran Capt. Kathleen A. Hiatt served her country in the United States Navy with distinction from 1972 to 2000.

Kathleen began her military career in August, 1972

able to talk to people and really getting to know them. I think that's easier to do with a smaller practice in the community that we have in both locations."

Dr. Rand's job involves testing hearing and the function of the ear, diagnostics, recommendations for hearing aids or other assisted devices, and any recommendations for further consultation for medical intervention as well as working with patients in the process of adjusting them to their hearing devices. She feels hearing health is often overlooked, but it is essential to long-term personal health.

"A lot of times, hearing gets pushed aside. People address their eyes and their physical body, their muscles, but they kind of forget about their ears which interact a lot with the brain and so getting your hearing checked and treated if you have any hearing loss is important for cognitive health and longevity," Rand stated. "There's a lot of research recently looking at the connection between hearing loss, cognitive decline, and even dementia, so it's important that if you have suspicions about hearing loss you at least get it checked out and even if it's not bad right now just continue to follow it."

Dr. Rand and the rest of the Amplusound crew can be contacted at 860-792-5565 in Putnam or 860-792-5728 in Vernon.

as an Officer Candidate Hospitalman (student) in the School of Nursing at the University of Connecticut. As a student, she applied for, and received, a full-time scholarship from the

U.S. Navy as part of the Vietnam Era Navy Nurse Corps Scholarship Program. Kathleen remained a full-time Student while enlisting as an (E-3) in the Navy, and was commissioned as a Navy Nurse Corps officer (Ensign) in November 1973. From 1974 until 1981, Kathleen was a Staff and Charge Registered Nurse responsible for direct patient care and education of paraprofessional personnel (primarily Navy Hospital Corpsmen) in a variety of Navy Medical Facilities in Oakland and San Diego California, and Adak, Alaska. Her major clinical specialty included post-surgical and surgical intensive care nursing. From 1981 to 1983, Kathleen attended the Army-Baylor University program in Texas and completed all aspects of her Masters Degree in Health Administration, being awarded her MHA by Baylor University in July, 1983.

From 1983 until retirement from her Navy career in 2000, Kathleen assumed numerous high ranking and extremely important positions and achievements in a very storied and impressive Navy career. Among those included as a Medical Operations Analyst at the Naval Command Center in Washington, D.C. involving all aspects of planning for the delivery of health care to authorized beneficiaries in both peacetime and contingency situations from 1983 to 1986; as a Senior Health Facilities Planner for the Defense Medical Facilities Office in Washington, D.C. She provided project development and implementation of data preparing briefings to key military and Congressional sponsors from 1986 to 1989.

In August of 1989, Kathleen was selected as the first Navy Nurse to attend the College of Naval Command and Staff which is part of the Naval War College in Newport, R.I. Attendees are selected from all eligible Officers in the Navy. Since being the first Navy Nurse selected in 1989, there has been a Navy Nurse in each subsequent class. She was awarded her MA in National Security and

Strategic Studies in June of 1990 having completed all aspects and degree requirements. Having a Navy Nurse presence in this program fosters understanding of the role and contributions of the Navy Nurse Corp to the mission of the Navy and to our national security.

From 1990 to 1994, Kathleen was the Assistant to the Director of the Navy Nurse Corps for Plans and Analysis of the U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery in Washington, D.C. Among her many responsibilities that this position required were conducting comprehensive research and analysis of significant health care trends and professional nursing issues including forecasting requirements for nursing care, nursing education and specialty development for the Navy Nurse Corps. Working with a multidisciplinary team to determine the Navy's bottom line for medical department manpower, surveying and analyzing training and practice issues of all nurses deployed to the Persian Gulf in support of Operation Desert Storm/Desert Shield, and so much more. During this assignment Captain Hiatt also served on the Navy Nurse Corps Executive Committee for strategic Planning and served as a Member of the Professional Review Board.

From 1994 to 1997, Kathleen was the Executive Officer for the Naval Medical Clinic in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. There, she was responsible for the day to day operations of 4 geographically separate clinics at an annual budget of \$6.2 million and 175 Navy personnel in the delivery of health care, preventive medicine, industrial hygiene and occupational health in support of the Naval Shipyard and Naval Air Station.

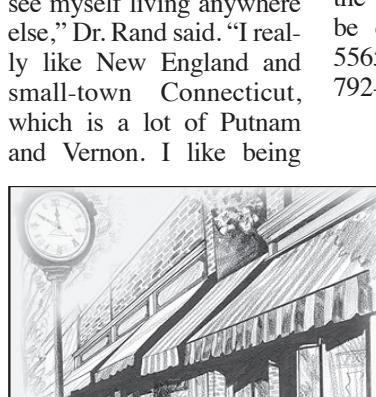
From 1997 to 2000, Kathleen was both the Commanding Officer at the Naval Ambulatory Care Center (formerly the Naval Hospital) in Groton, Conn. and the Deputy Commander of the Naval Health Care New England, where she was one of the key architects in develop-

ing and implementing an organization that successfully merged three separate geographically distant Navy Medical commands into a single effective coordinated unit that provides medical care and support to members of all the uniformed services spanning seven states reducing costs by \$450 million annually.

For her years of service to the U.S. Navy, Kathleen received numerous awards. Among them are Legion of Merit Award, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, three Meritorious Service Medals, the Navy Commendation Medal, two National Defense Service Medals, the Navy Overseas Service Ribbon, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense Badge. She also received the Josephine A. Dolan Distinguished Service Alumni Award from the University of Connecticut School of Nursing, and was awarded the William Sowden Sims award as a Naval War College Student who best displayed high standards of academic performance and community service.

Since her retirement, Kathleen has been an Assistant Dean at the University of Connecticut School of Nursing responsible for the Academic Advising Center, and strategic planning for the School, a Member of the State of Connecticut Allied Health Workforce Policy Board, a Member of the Town of Thompson Board of Selectman from 2005 to 2009, a Member of the TEEG Board of Directors, a Member of the Town of Thompson Housing Authority Board, a member of the Board of Directors of the UConn School of Nursing Alumni Society, a Member of the UConn School of Nursing Advisory Board, a Member of the Friends of Thompson Public Library Board, has chaired many Book Sales for the Thompson Public Library, has chaired the Woodstock Area Garden Club and is a Member of The Navy Nurse Corps Association, a Member of the Women in Military Service to America, and is a Member of the Connecticut Master Gardener Association.

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Eastern releases fall Dean's List

WILLIMANTIC — Eastern Connecticut State University recently released its Dean's List for the fall 2025 semester, in which 1,311 students were recognized for maintaining high GPAs.

Among the local students are:

Madison Bill of Danielson, a full-time first-year who majors in English.
Dakota Bourbeau of Danielson, a full-time sophomore who majors in Biochemistry.
Payton Cathell of Danielson, a full-time senior who majors in Early Childhood Education and Sociology.

Austin Coporale of Danielson, a full-time first-year who majors in Communication, Film, and Theatre.

Gabrielle Lemery of Danielson, a full-time junior who majors in Sociology and Criminology.

Selina Metzermacher of Danielson, a full-time sophomore who majors in Criminology and Sociology.

Cynthia Vongkaysone of Danielson, a full-time junior who majors in Elementary Education and English.

Kaitlyn Becker of Eastford, a full-time sophomore who majors in Nursing.

Meadow Bulan of Eastford, a full-time junior who majors in Social Work.

Eric Mathewson of Eastford, a full-time sophomore who majors in Finance.

Yves Tercius of Eastford, a full-time senior who majors in Accounting.

Simon Morente-Uz of Killingly, a full-time junior who majors in English.

Serena Smith of North Grosvenordale, a full-time sophomore who majors in Criminology and Sociology.

Nickolas Chubbuck of Pomfret Center, a full-time senior who majors in Finance.

Nicole Cicchetti of Pomfret Center, a full-time senior who majors in Liberal Studies.

Katherine Collin of Pomfret Center, a full-time senior who majors in Social Work.

Iryna Huling of Pomfret Center, a full-time senior who majors in Criminology and Sociology.

Thomas Johnson of Pomfret Center, a full-time first-year who majors in Physical Education.

Alexis Laskoski of Pomfret Center, a full-time first-year who majors in Political Science and Philosophy.

Jonah McNamara of Pomfret Center, a full-time junior who majors in Art.

Ashley Abrams of Woodstock, a full-time first-year who majors in Exploratory Professional Studies.

Julian Baracz of Woodstock, a full-time senior who majors in History and Social Science.

Ava Basak of Woodstock, a full-time junior who majors in Finance.

John Bennett of Woodstock, a full-time first-year who majors in Business Administration.

Abigail Brown of Woodstock, a full-time senior who majors in Communication, Film, and Theatre.

Ethan Campbell of Woodstock, a full-time senior who majors in Biology.

Antonia Carminati of Woodstock, a full-time senior who majors in Early Childhood Education and Sociology.

Dylan Chamberlin of Woodstock, a full-time senior who majors in Computer Science.

Alexandra Cloutier of Woodstock, a full-time junior who majors in Social Work.

Ethan Craig of Woodstock, a full-time senior who majors in Political Science.

Leah Danis of Woodstock, a full-time sophomore who majors in Secondary Education and English.

Hannah Dean of Woodstock, a full-time senior who majors in Business Administration.

Maxine Dietrich of Woodstock, a full-time senior who majors in Undecided.

Brooke Goodell of Woodstock, a full-time first-year who majors in Early Childhood Education and Criminology.

Allison Griswold of Woodstock, a full-time sophomore who majors in Nursing.

Sophie Hanlon of Woodstock, a full-time senior who majors in Communication and Accounting.

Payton Keefe of Woodstock, a full-time senior who majors in Psychology.

Kevin Lewis of Woodstock, a full-time first-year who majors in Elementary Education and Art.

Emma Mitcham of Woodstock, a full-time sophomore who majors in Women's and Gender Studies.

Kim Putnam of Woodstock, a full-time senior who majors in Psychology.

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.

Danielson Legion post hosting Red Cross blood drive

DAYVILLE — L'Homme-Burdick Post 21 American Legion, Danielson, along with the American Red Cross, will be hosting a Blood Drive on Friday, Feb. 13 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Dayville Fire House.

Patrick Martineau earns Dean's List honors at Roger Williams University

BRISTOL, R.I. — Patrick Martineau, of Putnam has been named to the Fall 2025 Dean's List at Roger Williams University, in Bristol, R.I. Full-time students who complete 12 or more credits per semester and earn a grade point average of 3.4 or higher are placed on the Dean's List that semester.

About RWU

Roger Williams University offers professional studies and liberal arts programs, with campuses in Bristol and Providence, Rhode Island. We provide real-world learning that empowers students to become the changemakers and leaders our world needs next.

Area students named to Worcester State University Dean's List

WORCESTER, Mass. — Worcester State University congratulates Jake R. Taylor of Plainfield and Evelyn R. Cadman of Tolland on being named to the Dean's List for the fall semester of 2025.

Sawyer Stewart of Woodstock, a full-time junior who majors in Undecided.
Sierra Duplisea of Woodstock Valley, a full-time senior who majors in Psychology.
Grace Gronski of Woodstock Valley, a full-time senior who majors in Elementary Education and Spanish.

Colby Groves of Woodstock Valley, a full-time senior who majors in Elementary Education and Communication, Film, and Theatre.

Grace Pokorny of Woodstock Valley, a full-time first-year who majors in Nursing.

Lana Syriac of Woodstock Valley, a full-time sophomore who majors in Social Work.

Serena Smith of North Grosvenordale, a full-time sophomore who majors in Criminology and Sociology.

Faith Fournier of Thompson, a full-time junior who majors in Psychology.

Olivia Martocci of Thompson, a full-time first-year who majors in Elementary Education and Music.

Roman Azzolino of Brooklyn, a full-time junior who majors in Art.

Shayne Bigelow of Brooklyn, a full-time senior who majors in Health Sciences.

Savannah Buisson of Brooklyn, a full-time senior who majors in Business Administration.

Sierra Buisson of Brooklyn, a full-time junior who majors in Finance.

Kaylin Caisse of Brooklyn, a full-time senior who majors in English.

Megan Cassada of Brooklyn, a full-time senior who majors in Psychology.

Molly Crabtree of Brooklyn, a full-time junior who majors in Elementary Education and Liberal Studies.

Sydney Crabtree of Brooklyn, a full-time junior who majors in Elementary Education and Liberal Studies.

Isabelle DuBois of Brooklyn, a full-time junior who majors in Elementary Education and History and Social Science.

Chloe Forsten of Brooklyn, a full-time junior who majors in Sociology.

Julia Jarvis of Brooklyn, a full-time junior who majors in Mathematics.

James Koproski of Brooklyn, a full-time junior who majors in Data Science and Business Information Systems.

Josephine Palmer of Brooklyn, a full-time senior who majors in Communication.

Christina Skellinger of Brooklyn, a full-time senior who majors in Early Childhood Education and Psychology.

Madison Tatro of Brooklyn, a full-time senior who majors in English.

Emma Turner of Brooklyn, a full-time junior who majors in Psychology.

Morgan Beaudreault of Dayville, a full-time senior who majors in Elementary Education and Liberal Studies.

Trinity James of Dayville, a full-time junior who majors in Health Sciences.

Brenda Joubert of Dayville, a full-time junior who majors in Anthropology.

Sherrie Simoneau of Dayville, a full-time junior who majors in Health Sciences.

Jadyn Williams of Dayville, a full-time junior who majors in Business Administration.

Simon Morente-Uz of Killingly, a full-time junior who majors in English.

Olivia Hassett-Mellen of Putnam, a full-time senior who majors in Theatre and Performance Media and Political Science.

Jack Lomax of Putnam, a full-time senior who majors in Business Administration.

Kylie McArthur of Putnam, a full-time junior who majors in Elementary Education and Music.

Julia Trainor of Putnam, a full-time senior who majors in English.

To qualify for Dean's List, full-time students must complete a minimum of 12 credits in letter-graded courses with an average GPA of 3.5 or higher in the semester. Part-time students are eligible if they've accumulated 15 or more credits of letter-graded coursework with an average GPA of 3.5 or higher.

Eastern Connecticut State University is the state of Connecticut's public liberal arts university, serving upwards of 4,000 students annually on its Willimantic campus. A residential campus offering 41 majors and 68 minors, Eastern offers students a strong liberal arts foundation grounded in a variety of applied learning opportunities. Ranked among the top 25 public institutions in the North by U.S. News & World Report in its 2025-26 Best Colleges ratings, Eastern has also been awarded 'Green Campus' status by the Princeton Review 15 years in a row. For more information, visit www.easternct.edu.



How to Submit an Obituary

*Guidance in
Your Time of Need.*

Posting an obituary is a meaningful way to honor the life of someone who has passed, share the loss with the community, and support the grieving process. It celebrates their life, family, memories, and accomplishments while bringing people together in remembrance.

An obituary also helps loved ones find comfort and closure during a difficult time preserves the individual's story as an important part of the family's history and legacy.

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How to reduce your 2026 tax bill – and put your money to better use

Tax season is upon us, and many Americans instinctively focus on one thing: their tax refund. According to the IRS, the average refund in recent years has hovered around \$3,000. While receiving a refund can feel like a financial “win,” it often signals something less optimal: you paid more in taxes than necessary throughout the year.

From a planning perspective, the goal should not be to give the government an interest-free loan and wait for it to be returned. Instead, a well-designed financial plan aims to pay only what you legally owe in taxes and redirect excess cash flow toward saving, investing, and long-term wealth building.

Here's how thoughtful, proactive planning can help you reduce your 2026 tax bill and keep more of your money working for you all year long.

Understanding what really drives your tax outcome

A tax refund occurs when your tax payments and withholdings exceed your actual tax liability. While refunds may feel rewarding, they reflect inefficient cash flow management. Those dollars could have been invested, saved, or used to reduce debt throughout the year.

The true objective is tax efficiency – strategi-

ly managing income, deductions, credits, and timing so that your tax liability is minimized without overpaying.

Review and optimize your withholdings

One of the most effective first steps is reviewing your W-4 withholding elections. Life changes such as marriage, divorce, having children, buying a home, or changing jobs can significantly alter your tax situation.

Proper withholding allows you to:

Avoid large tax payments due at filing

Avoid unnecessary over-withholding

Free up monthly cash flow for saving and investing

The IRS Tax Withholding Estimator can help you recalibrate your withholdings based on your current situation.

Maximize retirement contributions to lower taxable income

Tax-advantaged retirement accounts remain among the most powerful tools for reducing current tax liability. It's critical to know the contribution limits and maximize them as much as possible. You can see a chart of contribution limits

for the 2025 and 2026 tax years on our Web site at whzwealth.com/tax-resources-center.

Each dollar contributed to a tax-deferred account can reduce your taxable income dollar-for-dollar, while simultaneously building long-term wealth. Self-employed individuals may have access to even higher limits through SEP-IRAs or Solo 401(k)s, allowing for substantial tax savings.

Leverage tax credits where available

Tax credits directly reduce your tax bill dollar-for-dollar, making them especially valuable. Depending on your situation, credits may include:

Child Tax Credit

Child and Dependent Care Credit

Earned Income Tax Credit

Education credits such as the American Opportunity or Lifetime Learning Credit

Energy efficiency and clean energy credits

Strategic planning ensures you don't leave valuable credits unused.

Evaluate whether itemizing makes sense

With higher standard deductions, many taxpayers benefit from taking the standard deduction. The standard deduction for tax year 2025 is \$15,000 for single filers and \$30,000 for mar-

ried couples filing jointly; in 2026 those deductions rise to \$16,100 for single filers and \$30,200 for married couples filing jointly. But itemizing may still make sense if your deductible expenses exceed those thresholds.

Itemized deductions may include:

Mortgage interest

State and local taxes (up to the \$10,000 cap)

Charitable contributions

Medical expenses above 7.5% of AGI

Strategic charitable “bunching”—consolidating multiple years of donations into one tax year—can help push you above the standard deduction threshold when appropriate.

Use Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) strategically

HSAs offer a rare triple tax advantage: contributions are tax-deductible, growth is tax-free, and qualified withdrawals are tax-free. For both 2025 and 2026, contribution limits are \$4,300 for individual coverage and \$8,550 for family coverage, plus a \$1,000 catch-up for those age 55 and older.

When used as part of a long-term strategy, HSAs can serve as both healthcare funding and a powerful retirement planning tool.

Apply tax-loss harvesting in taxable accounts

If you hold investments

in taxable accounts, tax-loss harvesting can reduce your tax bill by offsetting capital gains. Losses can also offset up to \$3,000 of ordinary income annually, with unused losses carried forward.

This strategy is most effective when coordinated with an overall investment and tax plan.

Maintain strong records and plan year-round

Effective tax planning isn't a once-a-year activity.

Maintaining organized records and planning throughout the year allows you to make informed decisions before deadlines pass. More importantly, proactive planning allows excess cash flow—money that might otherwise become a refund—to be invested intentionally rather than refunded later.

The bigger picture: Tax planning as part of financial planning

At WHZ Strategic Wealth Advisors, our Plan Well. Invest Well. Live Well.™ process focuses on tax efficiency as part of a broader financial strategy. Reducing your tax bill isn't just about saving money—it's about improving cash flow, increasing investment potential, and building long-term financial confidence.

Rather than aiming for a large refund, the goal is to optimize your tax situation, align it with your life goals,

and ensure your money is working for you, not sitting idle.

If you're ready to develop a smarter, more strategic approach to taxes and financial planning, schedule a complimentary consultation with us at whzwealth.com or call (860) 928-2341. Let us help you create a strategy that delivers Absolute Confidence. Unwavering Partnership. For Life.

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

Black History has been part of America's story from the beginning



In clement Weather: In case of snow, freezing rain or mixed precipitation please listen to WINY for notices about the Killingly Historical Center closings. You may also call the Center's phone about 10:15 a.m. or later and see if anyone answers.

The Gertrude Chandler Warner Boxcar will be open during Putnam's Fire and Ice from noon to 4 p.m. Children will be able to craft a Valentine necklace. For additional information, please call (860) 207-6044 and leave a message.

February is Black History Month: As part of their America's 250 Anniversary programming, the Putnam Public Library and the Aspinock Historical Society will host "Slavery in New England" with Tom Kelleher (Old Sturbridge Village Historian) on Wednesday, Feb. 11 from 6-7:30 p.m. (Snow date-February 18). Tom's program explores "the peculiar institution" in the colonies, and how it has shaped New England Society from the 1600's through today. Putnam Municipal Complex.

As noted above, February is Black History Month. The year 1619 is often given as when the first enslaved individuals arrived in this country. However, history.com has much to say about earlier arrivals:

"Prior to 1619, hundreds of thousands of Africans, both free and enslaved, aided the establishment and survival of colonies in the Americas and the New World. They also fought against European oppression, and, in some instances, hindered the systematic spread of colonization. Christopher Columbus likely transported the first Africans to the Americas in the late 1490s on his expeditions to the island of Hispaniola, now Haiti and

the Dominican Republic. Their exact status, whether free or enslaved, remains disputed. But the timeline fits with what we know of the origins of the slave trade. European trade of enslaved Africans began in the 1400s. 'The first example we have of Africans being taken against their will and put on board European ships would take the story back to 1441,' says Guasco, when the Portuguese captured 12 Africans in Cabo Branco—modern-day Mauritania in north Africa—and brought them to Portugal as enslaved peoples.

"In the region that would become the United States, there were no enslaved Africans before the Spanish occupation of Florida in the early 16th century, according to Linda Heywood and John Thornton, professors at Boston University and co-authors of 'Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles and the Foundation of the Americas, 1585-1660.' 'There were significant numbers who were brought in as early as 1526,' says Heywood. That year, some of these enslaved Africans became part of a Spanish expedition to establish an outpost in what is now South Carolina. They rebelled, preventing the Spanish from founding the colony. The uprising didn't stop the inflow of enslaved Africans to Spanish Florida. 'We don't know how many followed, but there was certainly a slave population around St. Augustine,' says Heywood." (<https://www.history.com/articles/american-slavery-before-james-town-1619>).

By the time of the Declaration of Independence, there were approximately 450,000 enslaved individuals in the American colonies. This was about 90 percent of the total African-American

population and about one-fifth of the population of the infant United States. Some had hoped to have the Declaration itself take a strong stand against slavery, but that was not to be. However, individual states began to respond, and on July 2, 1777 Vermont became the first state to ban slavery. Some states chose instead to propose measures for gradual abolition. In 1780 Pennsylvania became the first state to pass an act for gradual abolition. In 1784 Connecticut passed the Gradual Abolition Act which stated that those children born into slavery would be freed by the time they reached 25. The age was lowered to 21 in 1797. Unfortunately, slavery was still practiced in Connecticut until 1848.

The first United States census in 1790 provides us with a list of individuals who had free non-whites and/or enslaved persons in their households in that year. In Killingly Zadock Spalding had 2 free non-whites; (Dr.) Penuel Hutchins had 1 free non-white and 1 enslaved individual; (Col.) William Danielson had one enslaved person; Samuel Danielson had 5 free non-whites and 3 enslaved individuals; Thomas Day had 1 free non-white; John Fuller had one enslaved person; Prudence A. Sanders (Alexander) had 1 enslaved person; Othniel Brown had one enslaved person; David Coop (Copp) had 1 free non-white; Resolved Johnson had one enslaved individual. There were two free non-white families listed in the 1790 Killingly census: Demas Cape with 6 in the household and Peter Fuller with 4 in his household (p.144-145). In Thompson Jacob Dresser had 6 enslaved persons and (Rev.) Nodiah Russell had 1. Lemuel Knap had 2 free non-whites. In Brooklyn Nathan Winter, Joseph Davison, Jr., and Daniel Cook each had one free non-white in their households. (Lawyer) Daniel Tyler, Ward Woodward, and William Darke, Jr. each had

one enslaved person; (Rev.) Daniel Fogg had 7 free non-whites and 4 enslaved individuals *; James Eldridge had 3 free non-whites and 2 enslaved persons; Jesse Miles had 5 free non-whites; (Gen.) Israel Putnam had one enslaved person; Benjamin Dayley had 3 free non-whites. Both Pomfret and Woodstock had a number of non-whites, both free and enslaved. Benjamin Cargill of Pomfret (for whom Cargill Falls is named and who had a mill complex on the WINY side of the Quinebaug) had 1 free non-white. General Samuel McClellan of Woodstock had one free non-white and 2 enslaved persons. When you look at the make-up/

occupations of the individuals who had enslaved individuals, you notice that a

number of them were military and religious figures

or doctors and lawyers--the wealthier or more prominent individuals in their

communities. (*According to Ellen Larned's History of Windham County, CT, Vol. II, Swordsman edition, Fogg was the rector of Trinity Episcopal Church, which you may remember was built by Godfrey Malbone, the area's largest slaveholder in the early 1770's. Perhaps some of Fogg's non-whites had belonged to Malbone who died in 1785). If you are ever tempted to say that slavery did not exist in Northeastern Connecticut, bite your tongue---think again. Sadly, it did! This month let us say silent words of thanks to those individuals who helped make our communities what they are today.

Again, I encourage you to attend "Slavery in New England" with Tom Kelleher (Old Sturbridge Village Historian) on Wednesday, Feb. 11 from 6-7:30 p.m. at the Putnam Public Library. I'm sure you'll find it very informative. (Snow date- Feb. 18).

Margaret M. Weaver Killingly Municipal Historian, February 2026. For additional information email me at margaretmweaver@gmail.com or visit the Killingly Historical Center at 196 Main St., Danielson, Wednesday or Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. or call 860-779-7250. Like us at Facebook at

www.facebook.com/killinglyhistoricalsociety.



ESPINOSA NAMED ECC ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

The Eastern Connecticut Conference named Putnam High School Freshman basketball player TJ Espinosa athlete of the week. Espinosa had a phenomenal couple games leading the Clippers to a 2-0 week. Last Tuesday vs Lyman Espinosa recorded a quadruple double in Putnam's 93-45 win. Espinosa finished with 21 points, 18 assists, 10 rebounds and 10 steals. Espinosa tied the Putnam individual game record for assists with Bob Chenail who had 18 vs Griswold on 2/4/1975. On Thursday vs Wilcox Tech, Espinosa missed 1 assist for having a triple double. Espinosa finished with 23 points, 11 rebounds and 9 assists in the 82-58 win. Espinosa averaged 22 points, 10.5 rebounds and 13.5 assists in the two games. The Clippers won its 8th game of the season to punch their ticket to the Division 5 State tournament for the first time in three years.

Killingly High School Weekly Sports Wrap-Up



The Week in Sports at Woodstock Academy

Girls Hockey

Fairfield Co-Op 4

Woodstock Academy co-op 3 (OT)

For a second consecutive game, the Centaurs co-op had to play four periods on Jan. 27, but this one did not go in their favor.

Fairfield, their hosts at the Sacred Heart University Rink, scored a power-play goal 3 minutes, 43 seconds into overtime to pick up the victory.

Zi Qing Biondo of Stonington High School and Waterford's Summer Discordia both had a goal and an assist for the Centaurs while Woodstock Academy senior Maci Corradi added the other tally.

Grace Lescault and Mia Auger both had assists for the Centaurs (2-10-1).

Wrestling

Fitch/Stonington 42

Woodstock Academy 36

Tied at 36, this match on Jan. 28 came down to the last struggle.

Jeff Alcoba pulled out the first period heavyweight pin for the Falcons (7-20, 3-2 Eastern Connecticut Conference Division II) to give them the six-point victory on the road.

Sam Arsenault, Elijah Simmons, Sohaib Hashimi, and Elijah Polen all added pins for Fitch/Stonington.

Owen Hamilton, Aidan Soukaloun, Jake Henderson and Jameson Costa recorded pins for the Centaurs (2-11, 1-3).

Boys Hockey

E.O. Smith/Tolland 6

Woodstock Academy 1

Alex Haggerty scored his first-ever goal for the Centaurs (0-12) off an assist from Cam Perreault late in the third period on Jan. 28, but the visiting Bucks already had the game well in hand.

E.O. Smith/Tolland (3-8) got a goal in the first period and then just about clinched the win with three goals in a minute and a half in the second.

Michael Iacampo scored two of his three goals in that brief span and Jack DiStefano had two of his three assists in the second period for the Bucks.

Boys Basketball

Killingly 66

Woodstock Academy 55

The Trailblazers took sole possession of first place in Division II of the Eastern Connecticut Conference with the win over the Centaurs on Jan. 28.

Quin Crowley led Killingly (8-4, 3-0) with 24 points while Quinn Sumner added 17.

Drake Abdullovska paced Woodstock Academy (6-5, 2-1) with 22 points with Xavier Matwiej tossing in 14.

Woodstock Academy 55

Fitch 51

The Centaurs may have opened some eyes around the Eastern Connecticut Conference as they cooled off the league's hottest team on Jan. 29. Sophomore guard Drake Abdullovska scored 33 points, including 15-of-16 from the free throw line, two in the final seconds that secured the win for Woodstock Academy (7-5). Xawier Matwiej was the only other player in double figures with 12 points for the Centaurs.

Shane Smalls led Fitch (13-2), which saw its 11-game win streak come to an end, with 17 points and Si'kis Reels added 12.

Girls Basketball

Woodstock Academy 50

Killingly 34

The Centaurs defense stepped up on Jan. 29, as it allowed the Trailblazers just eight points in the first quarter and four in the third and went on to the double-digit victory.

Kaylee Saucier found success against the Killingly zone as the Centaurs senior finished with 14 points including four 3-pointers while Isabel D'Alleva-Bochain added 10 points and fellow senior Allison Camara had 11 rebounds to go with her eight points.

The win raised the Centaurs record to 9-4.

Ella Adams was the only player in double figures for the Trailblazers (6-7) with 11 points.

Gymnastics

Woodstock Academy 124.6

East Lyme 118.2

Captains Emma Long (32.6 All-Around) and Rhea Desota (32.05) led Woodstock Academy (5-2, 5-2 ECC) to the victory on the road Jan. 29. Long had a team-best 8.7 in vault while Desota had an 8.85 score on the floor.

Sylvi Otter led the Vikings in the All-Around with a 32.9 total. East Lyme (4-5, 3-5) did pick up a win over Killingly.

Boys Basketball

Killingly (8-4) took the win over Woodstock (6-5) at home on Jan. 28 to improve to 3-0 in ECC Division 2!

Final Score 66 – 55.

Quinn Sumner had a double-double of 17 points and 15 rebounds to lead Killingly, while Quin Crowley had 22 points and 6 rebounds!

Ethan Hall added 13 points, and Greyson Marquez had 8 points and 8 assists for Killingly!

Drake Abdullovska had 22 points to lead Woodstock.

The boys (now 9-4) took the win at home over Windham (4-9) on Jan. 30 behind a packed crowd on Youth Night in Killingly!

Final score of 85-59!

Quin Crowley had a game high 26 points, while Quinn Sumner had 21 points and 7 rebounds! Greyson Marquez added 12 points and 8 assists, and Ethan Hall scored 11 points!

Adonhes Rodriguez led Windham with 20 points, while Anden Gonzalez added 18 for the Whippets.

Girls Basketball

Killingly Girls Basketball (6-7) was led in a loss against Woodstock (9-4) on Jan. 29, behind 11 points and 7 rebounds from Amaya Spadola while Ella Adams added 9 points!

Final Score: Woodstock 50 - Killingly 34.

Kaylee Saucier had 14 points for Woodstock.

The girls (now 7-7) were led in a win against Amistad (1-15) on Jan. 31 behind 17 points from Ella Adams, while Amaya Spadola added 9 points, and Declyn Benjamin Adams added 8 points!

Final Score: Killingly 56 - Amistad

Putnam High Clippers win fourth straight game



Coach Deary talks to the team during last week's game against Hale Ray.



Camden Kell goes in for a layup in action against Plainfield.

with a distance of 13 feet 2 inches and Adalyn reached 12 feet 5 inches! Great job, ladies!

On to the gentlemen:

In the 55- meter dash, Killingly sent two of our best to compete in a field of 75. Ezekiel Benoit flew to finish 20th and Jackson Olson was putting in his turbos on his heat! In the 300m, we sent 4 of our best to compete against a field of 57. Zeke finished with a PR with a time of 41.55s; Jackson, Williams Polanco and Edward Purcell were all fighting hard to put in great times themselves! Williams also battled in the 600 where he put in work and fought hard! Our long-distance specialist, Calvin Vandale, was at it again for the 1600m and 3200m! He battled hard in both and put up a Season Record in the 3200! In the 55m hurdles, Jeremiah Smith has known nothing but 1st all season and took 1st yet again! In the High Jump, Jeremiah took 4th with a height of 5 feet 10 inches, way to fly! In the Long Jump, Aveion Janton- Adams finished 2nd out of 27 with an awesome jump for a PR of 20 feet 9 inches, Cooper Logee finished 8th with a great jump and Edward continues battling and flying! Lastly, in the Shot Put, Zeke, Jackson and Calvin could all be seen chucking their Shot Puts for great distances!

Awesome job, all. As always, you represented yourselves and Killingly incredibly proud! Soooo many stand-outs and PRs this meet, everyone put in the work, and oh ya it shows! ECCs are up next at the Coast Guard on Saturday. Let's keep this train rolling strong!

PUTNAM — The Putnam High Clippers won their eighth game of the season and fourth in a row on Jan. 28 to clinch a spot in the Division 5 State tournament.

The Clippers knocked off Hale Ray on the road 67-59.

Freshman TJ Espinosa led the Clippers with 21 points, 6 rebounds

and 6 assists and sophomore Camden Kell had 17 points, 9 rebounds, 7 assist and 4 blocks in the win. Sophomore Sam Jackel had a great night scoring a season high 14 points and adding 4 blocks. Senior Nick Devlin chipped in 9 points and added 6 rebounds as Putnam improves to 8-5 on the season.

The Clippers lost to division rival Plainfield High 68-61 Friday night to snap their four-game winning streak. Freshman TJ Espinosa led the Clippers with a double double, scoring 25 points and grabbing 11 rebounds. Espinosa also added three assists and three steals. Sophomore Camden Kell played real

ly well with 23 points, 9 rebounds and 3 blocks in the loss. Sophomore Sam Jackel added 9 points, 7 rebounds and a game high 6 blocks. Senior Nick Devlin chipped in 8 rebounds and 5 assists as Putnam falls to 8-6 on the season.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

February 6-13

Friday, Feb. 6

- Piano Men: Generations, live music performance, evening, Woodstock.
- Breezelene Winter Cinema Series, film screenings continue through Sunday, Garde Arts Center, Norwich.

Saturday, Feb. 7

- Saturday Book Club, 10 a.m., Woodstock.
- Scott Higgins' Comedy All-Stars: Stand-Up Against Cancer, 7:30 p.m., Woodstock Academy Bates Memorial Auditorium.
- 100th Annual JumpFest and U.S. Eastern National Ski Jumping Championships, through Sunday, Satre Hill, Holland/Brimfield area.

Sunday, Feb. 8

- Puppy Pals LIVE! Comedic Stunt Dog Show, 3 p.m., Woodstock.

Monday, Feb. 9

- Putnam Special Services District, 6

p.m., Putnam Municipal Complex.

- Putnam Mayor and Board of Selectmen, 7 p.m., Putnam Municipal Complex.
- Thompson Board of Education, 7 p.m., Thompson Town Hall or school location per agenda.

Tuesday, Feb. 10

- Putnam Economic Development Commission, 8:30 a.m., Putnam Municipal Complex.
- Putnam Veterans Advisory Committee, 6 p.m., Putnam Municipal Complex.
- Woodstock Board of Finance, 7 p.m., Woodstock Town Hall.
- Killingly Town Council, 7 p.m., Killingly

Town Hall.

- Thompson Inland Wetlands Commission, 6:30 p.m., Thompson Town Hall.

Wednesday, Feb. 11

- Killingly Board of Education, 7 p.m., Killingly Public Schools central office or posted meeting room.
- Thompson Housing Authority, 9:30 a.m., Thompson Town Hall.

Thursday, Feb. 12

- Woodstock Board of Education, 7 p.m., Woodstock Town Hall.
- Speed Dating (ages 35-49), 6 p.m., Taylor Brooke Brewery, Woodstock.



Courtesy

Great things are happening at Goodyear Early Childhood Center! Learning is better with friends—and a little fresh air! Our students turn the playground into a classroom of fun, laughter, and teamwork. Photo courtesy of the Killingly Public School District Facebook page.



Courtesy

Congratulations to Thompson Middle School seventh grade Social Studies teacher Alissa Lynch, who is the 2025/2026 Veterans of Foreign War Connecticut Teacher of the Year. She moves on to the National competition after receiving the award earlier this month. TMS students, faculty, staff, BOE members and her family & friends surprised her with a celebration on Friday morning during their PBIS monthly awards. Lynch is a Tourtellotte Memorial High School alum who returned to Thompson Public Schools three years ago. Photo courtesy of the Thompson Public Schools Facebook page.



Courtesy

Fun was on the menu at Killingly Memorial School last week with a National Pizza Week Pizza Showdown! To end National Pizza Week, Mr. Jonasch faced off against a surprise competitor to see whose pizza would come out on top. Secret challenger Mr. Johnson brought a student favorite—stuffed crust pizza—while Mr. Jonasch went bold with Hawaiian pizza. The results are in, and stuffed crust wins with 208 slices consumed, vs. Hawaiian with 98 slices. Thanks to everyone who joined the pizza challenge—what a delicious way to celebrate! Photo courtesy of the Killingly Public School District Facebook page.



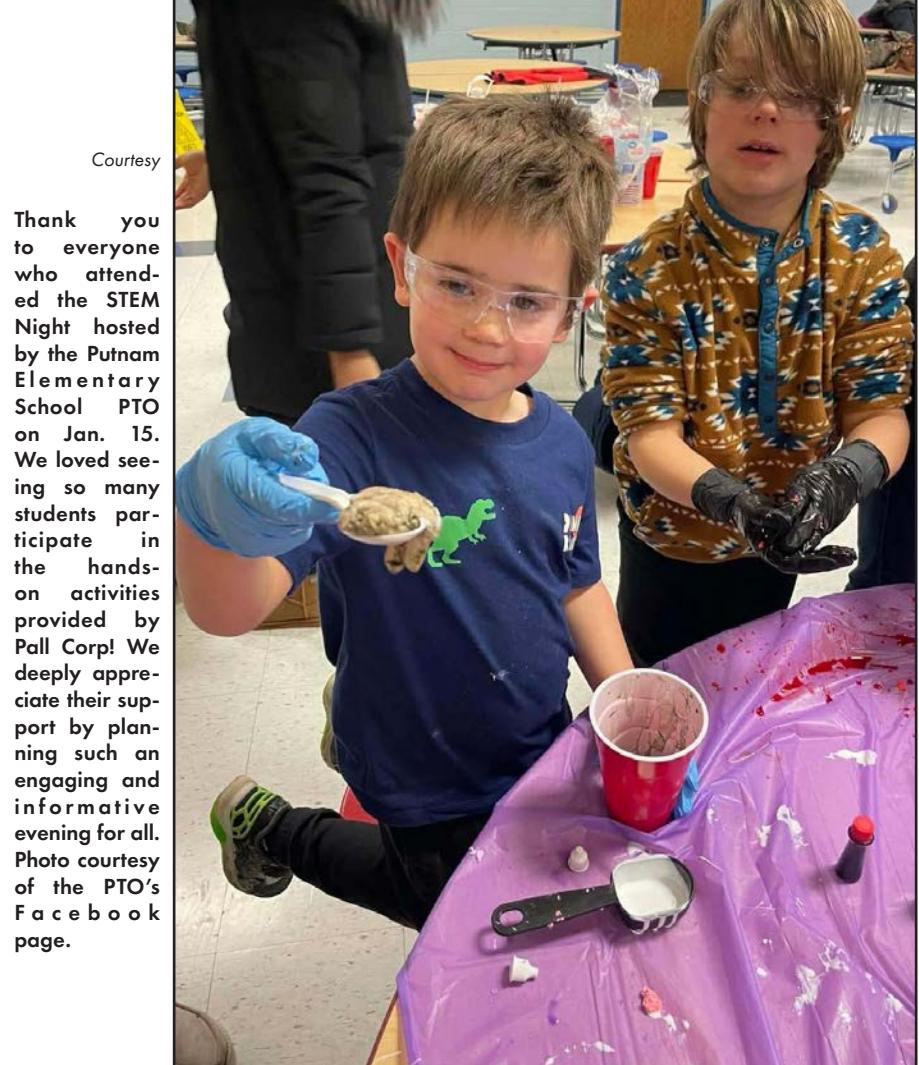
Courtesy

Great things are happening at Killingly Central School! On Friday, Jan. 16, KCS Kindergarten students welcomed Madison Daniels (KHS Vo-Ag Class of 2024) and Corinne Daniels (KHS Vo-Ag Sophomore), who brought Snoot the rooster and Sunny the hen to visit! The presentation tied perfectly into our Farms reading unit, helping students learn about male and female animals, basic needs, and livestock in a fun and hands-on way! Photo courtesy of the Killingly Public School District Facebook page.



Courtesy

Congratulations to Emma Moriarty, who placed first in the 2026 Thompson Public Schools Scripps Spelling Bee. She will advance to the State Bee to be held in March. The winning word spelled correctly by Moriarty was commotion. Lena Seney is the second runner up of the competition. Twenty students, four from each grade level 4-8 qualified for the district competition after completing two phases of the process including classroom tests and school based "bees." A special thanks to Principal Kim Granato for organizing and hosting the event. Also, a shout out to faculty & staff who contributed to making a traditional academic competition successful. Photo courtesy of the Thompson Public Schools Facebook page.



When the river powered the region

HOW THE QUINEBAUG SHAPED NORTHEAST CONNECTICUT

REGION — Long before highways stitched together Northeast Connecticut, it was the river that defined daily life.

The Quinebaug River, winding from Massachusetts through Thompson, Putnam, Killingly and beyond, was once the economic backbone of the region. Its steady current powered sawmills, gristmills and, later, massive textile operations that turned small agricultural settlements into thriving industrial villages.

By the early 19th century, entrepreneurs recognized the river's potential. Dams were constructed at natural falls, mill races were dug, and waterwheels began turning machinery that could card wool, spin thread and weave cloth. What followed was a transformation that reshaped the Quiet Corner.

In Putnam, the river's power fueled one of the most concentrated mill districts in eastern Connecticut. Cotton and woolen mills rose along the banks, drawing workers from surrounding farms and, later, immigrants from Ireland, French Canada and southern Europe. Company housing, churches and storefronts followed, creating a dense village centered on the mill whistle's daily rhythm.

Farther downstream in Danielson, textile manufacturing became so dominant that the village earned national recognition as a mill center. At its peak in the late 1800s, Danielson's mills produced vast quantities of cotton goods shipped throughout the country. The river did not simply provide power; it dictated the pace of life, from shift changes to seasonal shutdowns during floods or droughts.

The mills brought prosperity, but also risk. Fires were common in wooden factory buildings packed with lint and oil-soaked machinery. Floods periodically swept away

dams and bridges. Labor was demanding, with long hours and dangerous equipment. Still, for generations, mill work offered steady wages in a rural region with few alternatives.

The river also shaped Killingly and Thompson, where smaller mill villages sprang up along tributaries feeding the Quinebaug. Names like Quinebaug, Ballouville and Grosvenordale became synonymous with water-powered industry. Even as steam engines and later electricity reduced dependence on river flow, factories remained clustered along the banks where they were first built.

By the mid-20th century, the system that once sustained the region began to unravel. Textile production moved south and overseas. Mills closed, consolidated or were abandoned altogether. Some buildings found new life as warehouses, apartments or municipal offices. Others fell into ruin, their stone foundations and brick walls slowly reclaimed by vines and trees.

Today, the Quinebaug River flows more quietly, valued less for power than for recreation and environmental restoration. Canoe launches, fishing access points and river walks now occupy spaces once dominated by smokestacks and turbine houses. Preservation groups and town planners increasingly see the old mill corridors as historic assets rather than industrial relics.

Yet the river's legacy remains visible everywhere. Road alignments, village centers and even town boundaries still reflect decisions made to harness moving water more than a century ago. Many families in Northeast Connecticut can trace their roots directly to mill work along the Quinebaug.

The river no longer drives looms or spindles, but it continues to shape the region in subtler ways, linking communities through a shared industrial past. In Northeast Connecticut, history quite literally flowed downhill, carried by the current that once powered a corner of the American Industrial Revolution.

Community invited to Career Pathway & Academic Showcase Night at KHS

KILLINGLY — Killingly High School is excited to invite students and families to our annual Career Pathway & Academic Showcase Night Tuesday, Feb. 24 from 5-7 p.m. (snow date Wednesday, Feb. 25).

This evening provides a great opportunity for students and families who are planning to attend—or are considering attending—KHS to tour the school and meet our teachers.

The night will begin with a brief presentation in the auditorium, followed by an open-house style exploration of the building where families can learn more about the academic programs and career pathways offered at KHS.

Mandatory spring athletics meeting planned for parents and players at Tourtellotte

NORTH GROSVENORDALE —There will be a mandatory Parent/Player/Coaches meeting for any student that would

like to participate in a spring sport. This meeting will be held on March 2 at 6 p.m. in the District Auditorium.

The meeting will consist of a general meeting followed by a parent/player/coach meeting. In the general session, the athletic department and the health department will review policies and procedures for the upcoming season. The large group will then break into team meetings where each of the coaches will address their athletes regarding tryouts, commitment, practice schedule, team rules, and player and team expectations.

A reminder to all athletes, you will need a physical to participate in the 2025-2026 Athletic Program. The physical must have been completed within the last twelve months. Physicals must be brought into the school nurses' office before tryouts begin. No student will be allowed to tryout without a physical and all the necessary documentation must be completed online before the tryout date. No student will be allowed to tryout if they, and their parent/guardian, do not show up for the mandatory meeting. If you have any questions, please contact the athletic director at 923-2350.

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LEGALS

UMass Memorial Medical Center has information regarding Victoria M. Weaver, date of birth 5/29/1962, 1897 Upper Maple Street, Dayville, CT 06241, and is seeking to locate family members of this person. If you are a family member of Victoria Weaver, please contact Kelli Randall, RN, at 774-441-6563 before February 20, 2026.

February 6, 2026

Town of Woodstock PZC
On January 22, 2026, the Town of Wood-

stock Planning & Zoning Decision made the following decision:

Approved Application Application #672-01-26, 33 Meehan Road (MLB #5781/49/08), Three lot subdivision (two new lots).

Applicant: Steven & Wendy Turner

Details of this approval may be obtained by contacting the Woodstock Land Use Department at landuse@woodstockct.gov

February 6, 2026

OBITUARIES

Daniel James Lafontaine November 14, 1966 – January 17, 2026



Dan went home to heaven on Saturday morning.

Dan leaves behind his two beautiful children, Tamara and Seth, whom he loved deeply, of Vero Beach, Florida; his cherished granddaughter Adeline, and her soon-to-arrive little sister. He is also survived by his mother, Mary (Marge) Grenier Lafontaine; his brothers Mark and Jim Lafontaine; his sister-in-law Cecilia; and his partner, Brenda.

Dan was predeceased by his beloved wife, Karen (Savoie) Lafontaine; his father, Mike Lafontaine; his older brother, Michael; and his younger brothers, Tom and Marty.

A 1984 graduate of Tourtellotte High School, Dan proudly served the State of Connecticut for 30 years as a Corrections Officer. At the time of his passing, he was employed as a Security Officer at the New England Laborers Training Academy in Pomfret.

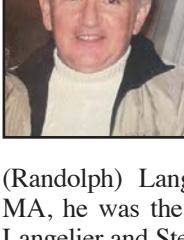
Dan had many, many friends and shared

a particularly close bond with Uncle Steve, who had been an important part of his life since his teenage years. He loved taking long walks with Chewy, his loyal canine companion of 15 years. A devoted Philadelphia Eagles fan, Dan was also a voracious reader whose interests ranged from comic books to the novels of Stephen King.

Known for his mischievous sense of humor and infectious laugh, Dan sometimes had a short fuse—but he was most often found laughing unapologetically, unafraid to be himself, joking, and enjoying the company of those he loved. He will be remembered for his big heart, his loyalty, and the deep love he held for his family and friends.

Relatives and friends were invited to visit with Dan's family from 9:30am – 11:00am on Tuesday, January 27, at the Valade Funeral Home, 23 Main Street, North Grosvenordale, CT 06255. A Funeral Mass of Christian Burial followed at 11:00am at St. Joseph Church, 18 Main Street, North Grosvenordale, CT 06255. For memorial guestbook, please visit www.GilmanAndValade.com.

Gerald “Gerry” L. Langelier 1946 – 2026



North Grosvenordale – Gerald “Gerry” L. Langelier, 79, of Linehouse Road, died Saturday, January 31, 2026, at Hartford Hospital after an illness. He was the loving husband of Lisa M. (Randolph) Langelier. Born in Webster MA, he was the son of the late Leonard Langelier and Stella (Stecz) Langelier.

On July 29, 2002, he was united in marriage to the former Lisa Randolph at Pointe Breeze in Webster, Massachusetts.

Mr. Langelier was a graduate of the Tourtellotte Memorial High School graduating with the class of 1963. After high school he went to work for his uncle Joe at the Langelier Garage in N. Grosvenordale. In 1965, he went to work at Rogers Corporation where he stayed for 49 years, retiring from full-time work in 2009.

Gerry was an avid New York Yankees

fan, he enjoyed watching sports, NASCAR, listening to music, attending concerts, feeding all kinds of animals in his backyard and vacationing in Florida.

In addition to his wife Gerry is survived by his cousins, Carmen Charbonneau, Ronald Desrochers, Gloria Mello, Charlene Foreman, and Linda Demers.

Gerry's family would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to the staff of the ICU unit at Hartford Hospital for the care that they showed to Gerald during his time there.

Relatives and friends are invited to visit with Gerry's family from 9:00am to 11:00am on Saturday, February 7, 2026, in the Valade Funeral Home and Crematory, 23 Main St., N. Grosvenordale, CT 06255, followed by a funeral service in the funeral home at 11:00am. Burial will be private in the Spring. Memorial donations may be made to an animal shelter of one's choice. For memorial guestbook visit www.GilmanAndValade.com.

Peggy Jane Nielsen Tracy



Peggy Jane Nielsen Tracy passed away on 1/23/2026 at UMass Hospital in Worcester. Peg was born on 1/26/1946 in Far Rockaway, NY, daughter of Inger and Iver Nielsen. Peg grew up in northeast CT living in Thompson, Pomfret, and Ashford. Peg graduated from Putnam High School in June 1963. Peg was predeceased by her older sister Joan Woods, her older brother Iver Nielsen, and her parents. Peg worked at banks in Putnam and at UConn college, and QVCC. She set up and ran Taylor's Corner B&B in Woodstock from 1995 to 2005 and had

her own typing business. She has a sister Judy Nielsen Messier and a brother Peter Nielsen. Peg leaves her husband of 60 years, Douglas H Tracy, Sr. of Pomfret Center, CT, a son, Douglas H Tracy, Jr. and wife Jaime of Lowell, ME, a son Thomas A Tracy and wife Liela of Mystic, CT, and a son Timothy J Tracy and wife Sylvie of Putnam, CT. A granddaughter Heather Benson of Dayville, granddaughter Tayler Damaso of Harrisville, RI, grandson Levi Tracy of Cranston, RI, grandson Isaac Tracy of Cranston, RI, great grandson A Douglas Tracy of Dayville, CT, great granddaughter Averi Benson of Dayville, CT and great grandson Oliver Douglas of Harrisville, RI. Share a memory at Smithandwalkerfh.com

Send all obituary notices to Stonebridge Press, PO Box 90, Southbridge, MA 01550, or by e-mail to obits@stonebridgepress.news

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February 6, 2026

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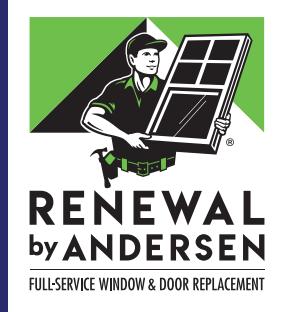
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

ESTATE OF

David F Kanter (25-00455)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated January 23, 2026, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Elyssa A. Foley, Clerk
The fiduciary is:
Pamela C Bessette
c/o CHRISTIAN GEORGE SARANTOPOULOS,
SARANTOPOULOS &,
SARANTOPOULOS, LLC,
143 SCHOOL STREET,
DANIELSON, CT 06239
February 6, 2026



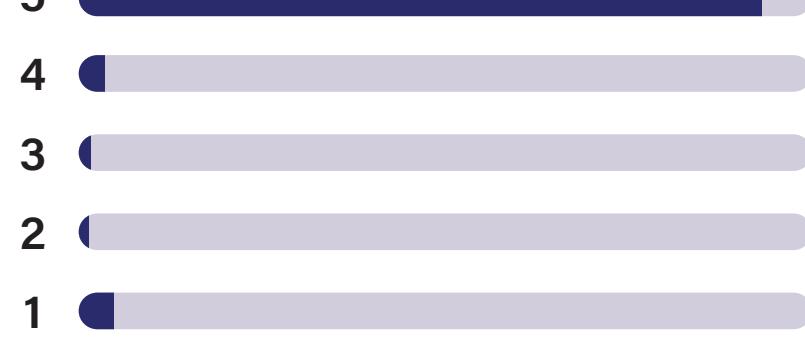
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