



“Keep your face always toward the sunshine, and shadows will fall behind you.” - Walt Whitman

PUTNAM VILLAGER

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Friday, June 19, 2026

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Iconic Deary family makes Lead Sponsor donation to MuralFest Putnam

PUTNAM — Deary. Chances are, you know the name, have patronized one of their businesses, or have benefited from any of the charitable causes for which the family is widely known.

The 11 surviving children of Tom and Therese “Teddy” Deary of Putnam have announced a \$55,013 leadership donation to the epic MuralFest Putnam public art project coming to Putnam in June 2028, when more than 200 “Walldogs” — muralists and sign painters from across the country and around the world — will arrive to paint Putnam’s rich history in a series of privately funded, storytelling murals.

“As soon as I heard about the project, I knew that it was something that would interest our family, given our long history and passion for the town we have always called ‘home,’” said family spokesman Peter Deary. “So we all gathered, and after hearing an engaging presentation on the project by MuralFest Putnam Executive Committee members Laura Crosetti and Linda Colangelo, we agreed that we wanted to be a lead sponsor to help bring this project to life. We know it will have a positive impact on economic development, tourism, and community pride, and it will further beautify the town of Putnam.”

In a heart-warming gesture, the family decided on the unique amount of \$55,013, adding \$13 to symbolize the 13 children of Tom and Teddy Deary — Patty, Tommy (d. 1991), Dennis, Michael, Nancy Elizabeth, Ann, Peter, Mary, John, Allen, Robin, Gene-Michael, and Cathy (d.1990). Putnam became home to the Dearys in 1946. All 13 children were raised here, attended schools here, and some established businesses here.

The family is well-known for their decades-long philanthropy to the Day Kimball Healthcare (DKH) Northeast CT Cancer Fund, which they began as a memorial race and walk named for their youngest sibling, Cathy, who passed away from cancer at age 23. They have also supported the Deary Memorial Recognition Garden, the Thomas C. Deary, Jr. Memorial Scholarship, Camp Quinebaug, and The ARC Eastern CT, among many other charitable organizations.

The Deary children learned early on from their parents about the social morality that comes with living in a small town — a willingness to sacrifice short-term personal interests for the greater good. In addition to running the family business, their father served as chairman of Putnam’s Board of Finance for many years. He began the family’s long philanthropic history with DKH when he started making annual donations to cover the cost of newspaper subscriptions for hospital patients. “Grammie” Teddy Deary rivaled her husband’s long hours with the constant tough-but-tender care she provided for their 13 children, while supporting the growing family businesses. They embedded the gift of giving through their extraordinary example. Deary names are included on many local boards of directors, community events, and charitable causes.

Over the years, family businesses have included Deary Brothers Dairy Co., Deary Brothers Ice, Inc., Deary Brothers Restaurants, Sunnyside Farms

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Sirens sound to honor five decades of service



Courtesy

Pictured: Ron Tillen (at left) with members of the Thompson Fire Engine Company.

DAYVILLE — On an idyllic May afternoon, sirens echoed across the grounds of Country Living at Westview Commons. This was neither an emergency nor an exercise, but rather a herald of well-earned recognition for a dedicated firefighter living among the community’s residents. As a procession of rescue apparatus entered the driveway of Westview Commons, a gallery of neighbors, family members, friends, and fellow firefighters gathered beneath the porte-cochère at the communi-

ty’s main entrance. The plan had been established well in advance—unbeknownst to resident Ron Tillen. As far as he knew, he was simply enjoying a visit from his son.

With Thompson Fire Engine Company’s three trucks and assembled ranks waiting outside, Tillen’s patient curiosity found reward as he walked into the surprise salute. Led out by his wife Gwyneth, Ron’s shock was quickly surpassed by his joy. Smiles surrounded him as applause echoed beneath the

entryway. Reflecting both his sense of humor and his sense of duty, Ron playfully stepped into formation alongside the ten members of Thompson Fire Engine Company gathered before him.

This grand demonstration celebrated Ron’s selection as the recipient of the 2026 Thompson Unpaid Professional of the Year Award—a distinction presented through the Thompson VFW Memorial Post 10088 (Quinebaug). Ron is recognized as this year’s recipient for his enduring service to Thompson

Fire Engine Company.

Determined to properly recognize one of their longest-serving and most devoted members, firefighters brought the presentation directly to Ron at his Westview Commons residence. Multiple ranks and responsibilities were represented among the Thompson Fire Engine Company members in attendance. Each knew Ron through a different chapter of service, friendship, mentor-

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Particle Accelerator celebrates 20th anniversary

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

PUTNAM — Particle Accelerator, a day of music and hope, has now been a staple of the Quiet Corner for multiple decades celebrating its 20th iteration on June 13 at Rotary Park in Putnam.

The annual event brings together a lineup of musical acts and vendors donating their time to celebrate the life of The Legendary Jack Young, Jr., who sadly took his own life on his 27th birthday. Particle Accelerator started as a celebration of life where

Turn To 20TH page A1



Jason Bleau
The Wall of Angels at a past Particle Accelerator event.

Stand Down Day marks 10 years

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

DANIELSON — Connecticut State Community College Quinebaug Valley hosted the tenth annual Veterans Stand Down event, a yearly gathering of vendors and resource providers that serve as a one-stop-shop for their various needs.

The event started a decade ago to help provide veterans in the Quiet Corner a way to access all the various services all at once including healthcare, veterans affairs officials, benefit programs and more.

Veterans Service Coordinator of CT State Community College Quinebaug Valley Joel Niemann, himself a combat veteran, has helped lead the Veterans Stand Down Day since its inception and spoke about the importance of providing veterans young and old an opportunity to get all of their services in one area through a single day.

“We’re in the Quiet Corner. Having all these vendors in one



spot allows our veterans to get it all done here. They don’t have to spread their time to see this doctor at this time and be at this VA at this time. You get everything done on the veterans side of things right here and we also have resources for veteran families who have questions about educational or death benefits. All those folks are here to answer all those questions,” said Niemann.

The Veterans Stand Down Day was inspired from one simple concept: helping veterans adapt to civilian life after their

service. Niemann said he knows first-hand the struggles many combat veterans face when they need to find a new calling in the world, and providing opportunities like the Stand Down Day reminds them they are valued and that there are plenty of people on hand to help.

“For a lot of veterans, they go into that honeymoon phase the first month back as a civilian and when that goes away that’s when the depression kicks in, drinking might start, suicidal thoughts can come around because you don’t really have a sense of

purpose anymore. Myself and all the veterans involved in getting this organized, it gives us a sense of purpose to help other veterans conquer those feelings and not have to feel that way when they come back to the states,” Niemann said.

Veterans Stand Down continues to be an important annual event in the Quiet Corner, and for many veterans an essential one. While hundreds of veterans benefit from the day each year, some don’t have the ability or time to attend.

With that in mind, Niemann noted that their mission doesn’t stop with one single day. Providing access to services and resources is a year-round endeavor, with Veterans Stand Down Day serving as one of the most important single days in that mission.

Veterans who are seeking access to resources or guidance on where to start can contact Joel Niemann directly at joel.niemann@ctstate.edu.



Courtesy

Members of Cub Scout Pack 21 of Putnam spent the last week collecting animal bones around their homes. They examined them during their regular pack meeting on Wednesday, June 10 at their chartered organization, the Albert J. Breault VFW Post 1523. Upon examination, they turned out to be whitetail deer bones. Learning about nature and native wildlife is something Pack 21's Cub Scouts do, led by trained and experienced adults. Pack 21 welcomes boys and girls ages five through ten. To join, call John Ryan, at (860) 928-5873.

NCEF supports educational excellence in the Northeast CT



Courtesy

CT State Community College Quinebaug Valley students visited the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston on April 10 thanks to an annual grant from the NCEF.



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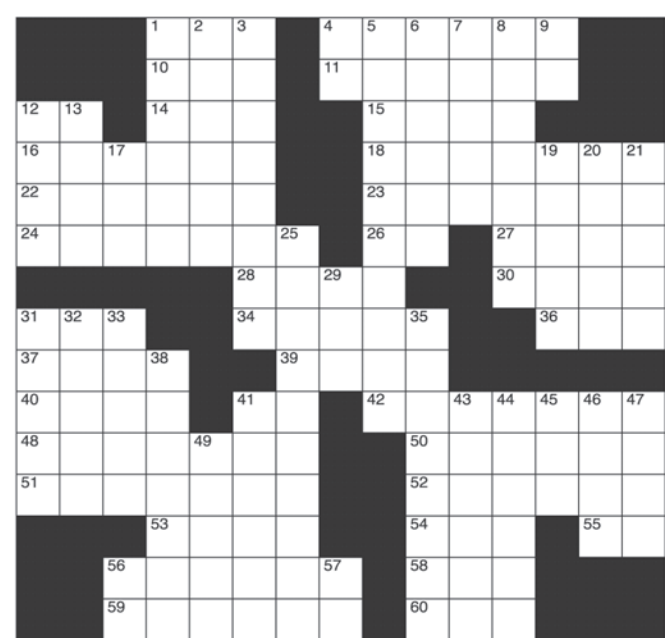
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Student poetry winners pose with National Youth Poet Laureate Stephanie Pacheco at the 19th Annual Julius Sokenu Poetry Awards were held at the CT State Quinebaug Valley Willimantic campus.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Similar
- 4. Have an ambitious plan or a lofty goal
- 10. No (Scottish)
- 11. ___ Aires, city
- 12. Morning
- 14. Senior's son (abbr.)
- 15. A notable achievement
- 16. European nation
- 18. Endings
- 22. Puts into place
- 23. Former
- 24. Grenadier
- 26. Sea patrol
- 27. Algerian port
- 28. Norwegian river
- 30. Precipitation
- 31. Sunscreen rating
- 34. New York is one
- 36. Patti Hearst's captors
- 37. Soft mineral with greasy feel
- 39. Retired Brazilian footballer
- 40. An Indian nursemaid
- 41. Atomic #24
- 42. Immobile
- 48. Insignia of royalty
- 50. Seeds from which chocolate is made
- 51. Begin again
- 52. Round root
- 53. Beginning to end (alt. sp.)
- 54. What newlyweds just said
- 55. Empire State
- 56. Give back
- 58. College hoops tournament
- 59. Unstable situations
- 60. Young women's association

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Administer a drug
- 2. Holy places
- 3. Contrary opinions
- 4. Bloody type
- 5. Gags
- 6. Micturating
- 7. Silly
- 8. A type of "cuff"
- 9. Spanish be
- 12. Austrian river
- 13. Messenger ribonucleic acid
- 17. Consume food
- 19. California supermarket
- 20. Electronic communication
- 21. Cassia tree
- 25. Written works
- 29. Cool!
- 31. Noteworthy 90s lawyer Kenneth
- 32. One who was compensated
- 33. National symbols
- 35. Raising
- 38. A type of talk
- 41. Cloud
- 43. Middle Eastern peoples
- 44. Pouches
- 45. 007's creator
- 46. A cut of meat
- 47. Sports entertainment award
- 49. Christine __, actress
- 56. Relief organization (abbr.)
- 57. Canadian province (abbr.)



UNICORR/Nutmeg Container made a \$6,500 donation to the NCEF on April 27 as part of their annual day of giving. Pictured: Charlie Pious, DJ Bledsoe, Monique Wolanin, and Tyson Winchell.

PUTNAM — Spring 2026 was a busy season for the Northeast Connecticut Education Foundation (NCEF). In addition to awarding more than \$201,000 in scholarship funds to college students in May, NCEF also proudly sponsored cultural enrichment activities for students attending CT State Community College Quinebaug Valley. Support like this is made possible thanks to donors who continue to invest in education for NE CT residents.

Thanks to the Eris G. Langhammer Museum Trip Fund, endowed with the NCEF, 88 Quinebaug Valley students visited the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston on April 10. For some students, this was a first-time chance to visit an art museum in a major city and offered an important cultural experience. Jessica Porzuczek, CT State Quinebaug Valley Visual Arts Professor and Program Coordinator, noted how important this experience is for students, "Supporting student experiences like museum visits is essential to their development and growth. Art and culture cannot be fully understood secondhand; it must be encountered in its physical presence."

Later in April, the NCEF provided \$1,000 in prize money for the 19th Annual Julius Sokenu Poetry Awards, an event honoring the best student poetry in English and Spanish at CT State Quinebaug Valley. The 2026 Awards were hosted at the Quinebaug Valley Willimantic campus and featured 2025 National Youth Poet Laureate Stephanie Pacheco. Jon Andersen, CT State Quinebaug Valley English Department Chair, shared the impact these awards have on students, "Community college is like poetry itself, I think: a place where you can discover what you have to say, a place to say it, and a place to be heard. On the Sokenu Awards night we celebrate our many differences and all we share. The Foundation makes this possible, year after year."

As an important reminder of the ways businesses and individuals can make a lasting impact in students' lives, Charlie Pious, President of the Protective Packaging Division of UNICORR/Nutmeg Container, made a \$6,500 donation in support of the NCEF as part of UNICORR's annual day of giving. Pious is a former Foundation member and long-time supporter of Quinebaug Valley. His generosity has supported the Dr. Robert E. Miller Education Advancement Fund and the Advanced Manufacturing and Technology Center (AMTC). During the check presentation on April 27, Pious and CT State Quinebaug Valley Director of Institutional Advancement Monique Wolanin were joined by Tyson Winchell and DJ Bledsoe, two UNICORR employees who are graduates of the AMTC. As residents who successfully transitioned from the college into their roles at a leading area manufacturing facility, both Winchell and Bledsoe exemplify how supporting local students helps strengthen community.

The mission of the Northeast Connecticut Education Foundation is to provide scholarships and other financial support to residents of Northeast Connecticut who want to pursue higher education. To learn more about the NCEF, visit www.neceducation-foundation.org. For more information on how to support local students at CT State Quinebaug Valley, please contact Director of Institutional Advancement Monique C.K. Wolanin at (860) 932-4174 or monique.wolanin@ctstate.edu.

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Pomfret 250 Commission, Historical Society host concert featuring early American music



POMFRET — The Pomfret Historical Society and the Pomfret 250 Commission will host a concert of early American music on Sunday, June 28 at 3 p.m. The concert is the second in the summer music series Music of the Revolution and will take place at the Pomfret Old Town House, 11 Town House Dr., Pomfret Center.

The June 28 concert will feature “From the Colonies to Independence: Songs of America’s Transition”. Music historians Rick Spencer and Dawn Indermuehle will take the audience on a musical journey with popular songs and background information

about life in the 13 colonies, events that led up to the War for Independence, the Revolutionary war and the early years of the Republic through Songs from 1750 to 1825. Some describe aspects of life in the colonies, while others show the discontent that was felt by colonists who wished to free themselves from British rule. The songs celebrate the noble cause of independence, soldier life during the war, famous battles on land and sea and life during the uneasy years after the conflict.

The concert series was generously funded through donations from local civic orga-

nizations including: The Friends of Pomfret Library, Pomfret Proprietors, Pomfret Lions Club, and the Pomfret Town Democratic Committee. Three of the concerts will be held at the Old Town House, 11 Town House Drive, in Pomfret the third Sunday’s of May, June, and August. The fourth concert will be held at the Vanilla Bean Café on Oct. 2 at 7 p.m. as part of the welcome reception for the reenactors participating in the Revolutionary Pomfret Reenactment and Living History Event Oct. 3 & 4 at the Pomfret Recreation Park in Abington. On Dec. 4, there will be a Community Carol Sing featuring early American and English carols in the historic Old Town House built in 1841.

Rick Spencer and Dawn Indermuehle develop and present theme-based music and history programs, performing songs that give cultural insight into interesting times, places and events in American history. Rick and Dawn carefully craft their vocals and accompaniment to sound as true to a song’s era or style as possible. Their vast repertoire includes music from the Colonial era to the present day. Rick and Dawn use these songs to illustrate the evolution of our nation’s culture and history in an informative and entertaining way.

The concert is free and open to the public.

For more information, contact Donna Dufresne, windsong@snet.net.

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Day Kimball Medical Group earns NCQA Patient-Centered Medical Home recognition for fifth consecutive year

PUTNAM — Day Kimball Medical Group (DKMG), a division of Day Kimball Health (DKH), has once again earned Patient-Centered Medical Home™ (PCMH™) Recognition from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), marking its fifth consecutive year receiving this distinction.

The continued recognition reflects the high-quality, patient-centered care delivered across DKMG’s Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, and Pediatrics practices. The PCMH model emphasizes coordinated care, enhanced access, and a strong focus on building lasting patient-provider relationships across all primary care locations.

“Our fifth consecutive recognition from NCQA reflects the strength of our care teams and the systems we’ve built to support our patients,” said DKMG Vice President of Operations Andrew Gerardi. “This milestone highlights our continued focus on coordination, quality and creating a more seamless experience for every patient we serve. It also speaks to the intentional work happening across our practices to improve communication, streamline care delivery and ensure patients can access the right care at the right time.”

The PCMH model promotes accessible, coordinated healthcare by offering extended in-person hours, 24/7 telephone or electronic communication and resources that empower patients to take an active role in their care. These efforts help patients better understand their treatment options, manage chronic conditions, and avoid unnecessary emergency room visits or hospitalizations.

“Access to high-quality primary care is essential to the health of our community,” said Kyle Kramer, CEO, Day Kimball Health. “This recognition reinforces our commitment to making care more accessible, more connected and more responsive to the needs of those we serve. We’re very proud and excited to continue advancing a model that puts patients first at every touchpoint.”

The NCQA PCMH Recognition program requires rigorous annual reporting, including detailed measures related to care access, care management, performance tracking, and care coordination. DKMG successfully met these standards through its 2026 submission, continuing its track record of excellence in primary care delivery.

To learn more about Day Kimball’s commitment to patient-centered primary care, visit daykimball.org/primarycare.

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 website is daykimball.org.

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EDITOR

A lifetime of service deserves more than an award

In small towns, some of the most important people are often the least likely to seek attention.

They are the volunteers who quietly answer calls in the middle of the night. They serve on committees, help organize community events, preserve local history, and show up year after year without expecting recognition. Their names may not always appear in headlines, but their contributions become woven into the fabric of the community.

That is why the recent recognition of Ron Tillen as the 2026 Thompson Unpaid Professional of the Year carries meaning far beyond a single award.

The surprise ceremony held at Country Living at Westview Commons was a fitting tribute to a man whose relationship with Thompson spans more than five decades of volunteer service. What made the event particularly memorable was not the plaque or the title. It was the sight of fellow firefighters bringing the honor directly to one of their own.

The image is powerful. Fire apparatus rolling into the driveway. Firefighters standing at attention. Neighbors gathering to celebrate. A man who thought he was simply spending an afternoon with family suddenly finding himself surrounded by friends who wanted to say thank you.

Those moments remind us what volunteer service is really about.

For many residents, volunteer firefighters are the people who arrive when things go wrong. They respond to house fires, motor vehicle accidents, storms, medical emergencies, and countless situations that most of us hope never to face. Yet what often goes unseen are the decades of training, meetings, fundraising, maintenance, and community involvement that make those emergency responses possible.

Ron Tillen represents that tradition.

When he joined the Thompson Fire Engine Company in 1972, volunteer departments were already relying heavily on community members willing to dedicate their time and energy to helping others. More than 50 years later, that need remains as important as ever. Across Connecticut and throughout New England, volunteer fire departments continue to face challenges recruiting and retaining members. Demands on people's time have increased, work schedules have become more complicated, and fewer residents are able to make the long-term commitments that organizations once depended upon.

That reality makes stories like Tillen's especially valuable.

His contributions extend well beyond emergency response. As president, historian, mentor, and active member, he helped strengthen the organization while preserving its legacy. His work documenting nearly two centuries of Thompson Fire Engine Company history ensured that future generations will understand not only the department's accomplishments but also the individuals who built it.

History matters because it reminds communities who they are.

The Thompson Fire Engine Company is among Connecticut's oldest fire organizations. Without people willing to preserve records, stories, and traditions, much of that heritage could easily disappear. Ron understood that honoring the past is also a way of serving the future.

Perhaps the most touching aspect of the ceremony was the genuine affection displayed by those who gathered to celebrate him. Firefighters from different generations spoke not simply about a member of their department but about a friend, mentor, and role model. The surprise event revealed something that cannot be measured in years of service or titles held.

It revealed the relationships created through service.

Volunteer organizations thrive because people work together toward a common purpose. Over time, those shared experiences create bonds that last a lifetime. The applause beneath the Westview Commons entrance was not merely recognition of accomplishments. It was gratitude for decades of friendship, leadership, and commitment.

Communities often speak about honoring volunteers, but sometimes the best way to do so is simply to show up and say thank you.

Thompson Fire Engine Company did exactly that.

The sirens that echoed across Dayville that afternoon were not responding to an emergency. They were answering something equally important: the opportunity to honor a man whose lifetime of service helped make his community stronger.

That is a call worth answering every time.

OPINION

Opinion and commentary from the Quiet Corner

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Our educator's paradox?

To the Editor:

Socialism has made huge gains in America since 2016. The largest socialist organization in the country is the Democrat Socialists of America, whose membership increased by 17 times over from 2016 to 2025. Many believe much of this growth has largely been fueled by, and is the result of, successful Democrat Socialist politicians such as Bernie Sanders, AOC, The Squad and Mayor Mamdani. Also contributing to socialist growth is the belief that our teachers and professors are overwhelmingly liberal progressives who push elements of socialism in their classrooms. How would anyone attempt to back up such a hypothesis about educators?

While it is beyond my abilities to question a core sample of teachers and professors and project a conclusion about socialism in their classroom, I am able to follow their money. The majority of our educators are professionally affiliated with The National Education Association and/or The American Federation Of Teachers. Taking a look at the political contributions made by these large labor support organizations might be instructive if you believe that voluntary membership dues paid to an organization indicates that you likely align with its politics. These unions

typically give 95 to 99 percent of their political donations to the Democrat Party and other left wing, socialist leaning groups. So it is reasonable to say the majority of our educators are left-leaning, and many are likely supporters of politicians who are Democrat Socialists. In that many educators stand against capitalism and free market profits by corporations and that they trust and embrace retirement money management to companies like TIAA / Horace Mann / Equitable Financial and others...that they have their retirement investments in these kinds of corporations is a paradox in that most of the growth that these firms deliver comes from free market corporate profits, capital appreciation and corporate bonds. Their retirement funds would be quite meager if their fiduciaries did not participate in free market capitalism.

So from 30,000 feet, it appears that many educators speak ill of profit driven corporate capitalism while at the same time depending on the rewards from the very same for their retirement income. Could it be that their political views are actually aspirational, while their financial views are quite practical?

EDWARD CLEMENT
THOMPSON

Who benefits from the tax increases in Thompson?

To the Editor:

Thompson residents and voters, here we go again. Town Hall will claim there is no money to purchase Commercial Equipment that is badly needed. Town Hall will spend \$2,783,461 (\$53,528 a week) on salaries for 2027, up 23 percent in three years. Seniors, did you get a 23 percent increase?

Town Hall will claim there is no money to repair a leaky roof. Thompson town official pay went from \$50,263 in 2024 to \$93,730 in 2027. Up 86 percent in three Years. Seniors, did you get an 86 percent increase ?

Town Hall will claim no money for road repairs.

Town Hall will spend \$1,695,987 (\$32,615 a week) on benefits for town employees. Up 34

percent in three years. Seniors, did you get 34 percent increase?

Thompson could cut the 2026 budget by 10 percent and pay for necessary improvements. The problem: in three years, benefits are up \$438,000 and salaries are up \$528,928. Just a few people are benefitting from all the tax increases.

For the people that vote yes, why not make a substantial donation to the town? Thompson has a large percentage of Seniors, your asking people on fixed incomes who worked their whole life to pay for this. Learn the facts.

Please, everyone, vote no on June w4. Good health to all.

LEE LANDRY
THOMPSON

Earth — No science, no future

To the Editor:

Capturing electricity from a lightning storm made Ben Franklin a legend and, in his day, arguably the most famous person in the world. Donning his coonskin cap, Franklin's image appeared in newspapers across Europe and even on dinner plates in French palaces. America's first great scientist was among our nation's most brilliant thinkers, and later innovators such as Edison, Einstein, Goddard, Salk, and Jobs all followed in his footsteps.

The scientific curiosity, careful observation, experimentation, failures, and breakthroughs of these people helped transform America into the most powerful nation in history. Without them, we would almost certainly be a second-rate power today.

Historically, scientific discovery and exploration were among humanity's most admired pursuits. Think about that.... Long before tech billionaires and empty celebrity culture dominated public attention, there were Franklin, Edison, Shackleton, Sir Edmund Hillary, and Neil Armstrong—brilliant and courageous people who made genuine contributions to humanity. The discovery of the North Pole, the search for the source of the Nile, the revelation of atoms, molecules, and microscopic life, and even leaving our world behind and walking on the moon captivated the world. Once upon a time, scientists and explorers were celebrated as heroes because they expanded the boundaries of human knowledge and reshaped our understanding of existence.

How have we so quickly turned away from that tradition in America?

The very forces that guided humanity out of the Dark Ages, doubled the human life span, created unprecedented abundance, and made the United States the leader of the free world are now routinely disparaged. Where will the next great horizon of human achievement be opened if not by scientists, engineers, and innovators?

In the short time since President Trump returned to office, agencies whose missions are rooted in science—including NASA, NOAA, EPA, NIH, CDC, the National Weather Service, FEMA, DOE, FDA, the National Science Foundation, and even the U.S. Forest Service—have been chopped and whittled down, closing essential research facilities across the U.S. Nearly 100,000 scientists have been terminated or forced out of government service, including 10,000 Ph.D.-level scientists, many of whom are world leaders in their fields with 30 or 40 years of expertise. As these experts are forced to seek opportunities elsewhere, foreign governments and corporations that compete with America are more than happy to take them and their knowledge and expertise.

Imagine the absurdity of forcing Franklin, Edison, Einstein, or Jobs to leave America and contribute their talents to rival nations. Yet that is effectively what happens whenever we undervalue scientific talent and drive it away. What are

we supposed to replace generations of expertise with—artificial intelligence? That seems to be President Trump's only plan. Of course, AI is a powerful tool, but we know it cannot replace the creativity, judgment, curiosity, and experience of human scientists.

If you truly believe that science, after giving humanity the modern world, has somehow become a liability, then consistency would require you to make some dramatic lifestyle changes. Stand up for your beliefs and do the following: cut the power lines to your house and read by candlelight. Throw away your medications and cancel your doctor and dentist appointments. Replace your smartphone and computer with a quill pen and inkwell. Trade your car for a horse. Cancel any air travel plans and book an ocean liner. Learn to weave your own clothing from wool or hemp. Get the weather forecast by holding your finger up to the wind, and heat your home and cook by chopping firewood.

Have fun with all that.

As for me, I'll keep my solar panels, efficient heat pumps, induction stove, Wi-Fi, satellite-guided GPS, and modern medical care. After a serious accident, advanced surgical technology rebuilt my knee and restored my mobility. For that—and countless other advances—I remain deeply grateful to scientists and engineers.

Many people assume that humanity will solve today's challenges, including climate change, with another technological breakthrough arriving just in time. History certainly offers examples. At the beginning of the twentieth century, rapid industrialization and population growth threatened to outpace food production. The development of the Haber-Bosch process allowed nitrogen to be extracted from the atmosphere and converted into affordable fertilizer. Thanks largely to the work of Fritz Haber and Carl Bosch, billions of people today have enough food to eat.

The lesson is not that science is unnecessary. The lesson is exactly the opposite. Humanity's greatest challenges have repeatedly been solved through scientific discovery, technological innovation, and sustained investment in research.

We are now a quarter of the way through the twenty-first century. This is the future previous generations imagined, and succeeding in it will require humanity's best scientific thinking. The challenges we face—from climate change and energy production to public health and resource management—are increasingly complex. Our leaders should encourage scientific inquiry and support research, not fear it when it reveals uncomfortable truths or necessary corrections.

There is no path to long-term prosperity without science. It remains humanity's most powerful tool for understanding the world, solving problems, and building a better future. Without it, there is no future—only a return to the caves!

KEN WOLSLEGEL
WOODSTOCK

The Class of '26

Celebrate America 250/ Putnam. Wednesday, June 24, 6-7 p.m. Putnam Public Library. "Jordan Freeman: The Fight to Set a People Free." Historian Kevin Johnson's portrayal of Jordan Freema is told from an emotional and exciting first person narrative that vividly illustrates the struggle of an African-American during the Revolutionary War. It is based on extensive research in the collections of the Connecticut State Library and the Museum of Connecticut History. Co-sponsored by the Aspinock Historical Society and the CT State Library.

Celebrate America 250/ Killingly at the Red, White and Blue Celebration

Friday, June 26 at Owen Bell Park. Food court, music. Event begins at 5 p.m. Fireworks at approximately 9:15 p.m. (weather permitting).



KILLINGLY

AT

300

MARGARET
WEAVER

DAR Book Club (16 and older). Killingly Public Library. Friday, July 17, 1-2 p.m. Join DAR members for a special historical fiction book read/discussion on A Girl Called Samson by Amy Harmon. You do not have to be a member to participate. Pick up a copy of the book at the circulation desk beginning June 15. Amazon had this to say, "Deborah (Samson), impassioned by the cause, disguises herself as a soldier and enlists in the Continental army. Her impressive height and lanky build make her transformation a convincing one, and it isn't long before she finds herself confronting the horrors of war head-on."

Celebrate America 250 at 11 a.m. on the 4th of July at Rotary Park in Putnam. Join in honoring Putnam's part in America's Semiquincentennial with the dedication of a commemorative plaque, speeches, and more.

Today, June 19, is Juneteenth, a national holiday which is of particular significance to those of African-American heritage. The National Museum of African American History and Culture has this to say about the holiday, "Freedom's Eve" on Jan. 1, 1863, marked the first Watch Night services where African Americans gathered in anticipation of the Emancipation Proclamation. The Emancipation Proclamation declared all enslaved people in Confederate States legally free at midnight. Implementation of the Emancipation Proclamation was limited in areas still under Confederate control, delaying freedom for many, particularly in Texas. Freedom for enslaved people in Texas was officially announced on June 19, 1865, by Union troops in Galveston Bay, leading to the celebration of 'Juneteenth.' Juneteenth is recognized as the nation's second independence day, celebrated primarily within the African American community but largely unknown to many Americans." (<https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/historical-legacy-juneteenth>).

This is also the time of year for many high school graduations. I looked up some graduation information for the Class of 1926 from Killingly High School, which I'll share with you. The Windham County Transcript for June 17, 1926 listed a number of events the class would be participating in. "The first event on the week's program is the Senior picnic, which is to be held at Mount Tom, near Holyoke Mass., Saturday. The members of the class and their guests will leave Danielson about

Turn To KILLINGLY page A6

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Proposed solar project on Murdock Property has our support

To the Editor:
The Pomfret Economic Planning and Development Commission strongly supports the proposed solar array on the town owned Murdock Property.

The Murdock Property consists of approximately 188 acres, with the proposed solar installation occupying about 25 acres, or approximately 13 percent of the property. The proposed site is located near existing transmission lines that have been part of the landscape for decades. Importantly, the project is not visible from the road, and only minimal site clearing, if any, is anticipated, helping to preserve the rural character that residents value.

As the Commission has evaluated potential long-term uses for this property over the years, solar energy has emerged as one of the most beneficial opportunities for the Town. Under the proposal the land would be leased to a solar developer, generating a significant and reliable source of annual lease and property tax revenue, currently estimated at \$479,000 per year. These revenues would provide a substantial financial benefit to Pomfret, helping to strengthen the Town's fiscal position and reduce pressure on future property tax increases.

The project is structured to protect taxpayers. At the conclusion of the lease, the

developer will be responsible for removing the solar equipment or replacing it, should the Town choose to continue the use, at no cost to Pomfret. In addition, financial assurances will be in place to ensure the Town is not burdened with future decommissioning costs. The land can be returned to its original condition or continue to generate revenue from solar panels.

This proposal from Greenskies represents a responsible use of Town-owned land that balances economic development, environmental stewardship, and fiscal responsibility. It creates a new revenue source while maintaining Town ownership of the property and minimizing impacts on neighboring properties, scenic views, and municipal services.

The proposed solar array is consistent with the mission of the Pomfret Economic Planning and Development Commission to encourage sustainable economic opportunities that benefit the community today and for future generations. We believe this project represents a sound investment in Pomfret's financial stability, environmental sustainability, and long-term future.

CHARLES TRACY
CHAIRMAN
POMFRET ECONOMIC PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Murdock property lease offers a solution to rising taxes in Pomfret

To the Editor:
During my 20 years on the Pomfret Board of Finance, it was frustrating to watch our portion of state revenue decrease every year as we tried to craft a reasonable budget. As a small town with limited industry and a large number of tax-free institutions, the tax burden falls mainly on the property owners who call Pomfret home.

While the budget had manageable increases for many years that kept mill rate increases to a minimum, the cost of education started to show significant increases. Even as enrollment declined, the cost of high school tuition, transportation, and special education kept going up. From the 2022-23 fiscal year to the 2025-26 fiscal year, the education budget increased over \$1.5 million dollars. Without additional revenue, property taxes will continue to climb every year. The recently passed 2026-27 budget was an increase of over \$677,000. How can we afford higher taxes every year? The town needs more revenue!

Pomfret now has a wonderful opportunity to increase our yearly revenue by \$478,000 by leasing a portion of the Murdock Property to a private developer to construct and operate a ground-mounted solar array. This is not a new idea that just arose this year. In fact, the Town has been exploring solar development on the Murdock property for over a decade, and the Economic Development and Planning

Commission identified solar as the highest and best use of the 188-acre property.

This project will generate approximately \$9.5 million over a 20-year lease and will be one of the largest taxpayers in Pomfret. This represents a significant and predictable long-term revenue source that will provide tax relief for property owners. This is what the Board of Finance has been waiting for, and I urge every resident of Pomfret to support this project.

These opportunities do not come along every day, and we need to act fast!

The solar project depends on limited electrical grid capacity and time-sensitive federal and state tax incentives that may expire in early July. If Pomfret does not act in time, another project could take that capacity, and the Town could lose this opportunity to significantly increase our revenue stream.

I'm not sure why some people think this is a bad idea. Would you prefer an Amazon distribution center set up shop in Pomfret? There are not many businesses that can generate this much revenue for the Town and not be seen or heard. This is a no-brainer! If you are worried about your property taxes rising to levels you cannot afford, then you need to support this solar project and vote to approve the land lease agreement at the Town Meeting on June 25.

MARGIE HUOPPI
POMFRET

Congress has had 45 years to fix Social Security!

To the Editor:

Speaker Mike Johnson calls Social Security an "entitlement," and says he has a plan for it to be "adjusted and fixed." That is code for cutting benefits that retired workers paid into and worked for their entire life.

Social Security isn't an entitlement; it's a benefit you earned, paycheck by paycheck. But in 2032, without Congressional action, automatic cuts kick in. In Connecticut, retirees currently average \$2,196/month. Those cuts will mean Connecticut retirees losing roughly \$556 every month (according to Congressman Joe Courtney). That's money needed for groceries, rent and medication.

This crisis is entirely preventable, and its entirely Congress's fault. And now the Trump administration has moved the deadline a year closer. The 2026 Social Security Trustees Report confirms that the trust fund is projected to be depleted in 2032, one year earlier than last year's estimate largely due changes enacted in the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," which included multiple provisions that lowered tax liability for Social Security beneficiaries, reducing trust fund revenue going forward. Current and future beneficiaries alike will see their benefits cut by 22 percent (Bipartisan Policy Center (Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget).

The Social Security Administration has been warning lawmakers about the shortfall for 45 years. Every year since, trustees have handed Congress a full menu of solutions. For four decades, Congress has done nothing.

According to experts, here's the fix hiding in plain sight: eliminate the payroll tax income cap.

Right now, the Social Security payroll tax applies only to the first \$184,500 in wages. A billionaire earning \$2 million hits that cap in less than five workdays and pays nothing into Social Security for the remaining weeks of the year. Meanwhile, teachers, nurses, and warehouse workers contribute on every single paycheck, all year long.

Billionaires also pay zero Social Security tax on investment income, stocks, capital gains, dividends, no matter how much they earn.

Economic experts agree: Lifting the cap

and expanding the tax base to include billionaire investment income would inject the revenue needed to protect benefits through 2032 and beyond, no cuts required.

As economist Kathryn Ann Edwards puts it: "Who benefits from convincing you that you don't deserve a program that is 90 years old and has never missed a benefit? It is on Congress."

Call your legislators today. Your phone calls matter. Six years sounds like a long time, but it isn't. Congress has already wasted 45. There is no more time to waste. Tell them to eliminate the Social Security payroll tax cap. Billionaires should pay the same share as everyone else. Congress needs to do its job and stop kicking this can down the road.

LISA ARENDS
BROOKLYN

There are none so blind as those who will not see

To the Editor:

Donald J. Trump — our country's only convicted-felon President. A lifelong corrupt businessman and con artist. A pathological liar with no moral compass and a history of sleazy deals to get what he wants. Leveraging presidential power over corporate mergers (to silence his critics) is just business as usual for him.

But wait a minute — no corporate executives would ever mislead the public or investors for monetary gain. If you're gull-

ible enough to believe that, you probably also believed Trump would end the Russia / Ukraine war in one day, or that Mexico would pay for a border wall, and all the rest of Trump's [nonsense]. Maybe you got suckered-in by "Trump Steaks" or "Trump University," or another one of his scams. "There are none so blind as those who will not see."

TODD PATRIE
POMFRET CENTER

Additional Letters to the Editor, See page A-10

PRIMARY CARE, RIGHT WHERE LIFE HAPPENS.

Our trusted providers are here for every age and every stage of life. From checkups and preventive screenings to managing ongoing and urgent health needs, you can count on our team for expertise, compassion, and care that fits your life.

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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.

DMMA members attend Tang Soo Do Federation tournament



DANIELSON — On June 7, members of the Danielson Martial Arts Academy attended The Federation Challenge Tournament hosted by The Cheezic Tang Soo Do Federation. DMMA took home numerous medals in each division.

9-10 Year Olds:
Boys:
Dexter Gagner:
4th Sparring

Junior Blackbelt 9-10 Year Olds:
Girls:
Autumn St. Jean
2nd Forms
1st Weapons

Junior Blackbelt 13-14 Year Olds
Boys:
Colby Densmore
1st Breaking
4th Forms
1st Sparring
4th Weapons

Junior Blackbelt 15-17 Year Olds:

Girls:
Kyra Dionne
2nd Forms
1st Sparring
Boys:
Hunter St. Jean:
2nd Breaking
4th Forms
3rd Sparring
2nd Weapons

Blackbelt Adult:
Women:
Dawn Dionne:
1st Forms
1st Sparring
Cathleen Anderson:
2nd Breaking

Melinda Densmore
3rd Breaking
2nd Forms
2nd Sparring
1st Weapons

Men:
Brian Densmore:
3rd Breaking
3rd Forms
4th Sparring
1st Weapons

For more information regarding classes at Danielson Martial Arts, please call 860-779-0699 or visit their Web site at danielsonmartialarts.com.

KILLINGLY

continued from page A1

5:30 in the morning by motor. Arriving at their destination, the picnickers will have lunch and probably ascend the mountain, returning home late in the evening. The Baccalaureate service is to be held on Sunday evening at 7:00 o'clock in the Westfield church. The program will be in charge of Rev. Harding W. Gaylord and ministers of other churches in the vicinity will be in attendance and will occupy places upon the platform... On Wednesday afternoon the high school baseball team will meet the Alumni nine in their annual contest. Alumni who desire to play on their team are requested to get in touch with Norman A. Reeves at once. Thursday afternoon at three o'clock the Class Day exercises of the graduating class are to be held in the Town Hall and at eight o'clock the Commencement exercises will be held at the same place. Friday evening June 25, the annual reception and dance will be given by the alumni at Wildwood Park..." (p.1).

The class motto was Pret d' accomplir (Ready to Accomplish). The colors were garnet and gold; the class flower was the Jack Rose. Officers were President-Denton Gallup, Vice President-Mildred Tillinghast; Secretary-Helen Keech, and Treasurer-John Crosby. The class photo included the following individuals: J. D. Potter, Fay Logee, Josh Crosby, Mildred Tillinghast, Denton Gallup, Helen Keech, Leslie Conklin, Gladys Cooke, Henry Stoddard, Walter LaPierre, Elizabeth McGorty, Beatrice Foster, Zylpha Codding, Robert Fulton, Thelma Cogan, Ralph Bowen, Elsie Laine, Sadie Gorman, Helen Caffrey, Rose Milone, Gunner Gunderson, Helen Brown, Ruth Litch, Flora Keech, Edith Gallup, Mary Young, Rosa Nielsen, Scott Page, James McMerriman, Reuben Shekleton, Paul Young, Douglass Logee, Wanda Neijadlik, Doris Potter, Ella Sheffield, Elmer Major, and Harold Warner.

I found photos for only two sports in the 1926 Killonian. The Girls' Basketball Team had Miss Bryant for a coach. Players were Henneault, Beckett, Lambert, Hammett, Keech (Mgr.), Clark, McGorty, Stevens, and Foster. The Boys' Basketball Team pictured Brennan, Fulton, Potter, Conklin (Captain), Allen, Gallup, Crosby, Logee (Mgr.), Barrett, Brundage (Coach), Spencer, and Stoddard. Perhaps you recognized the name of a relative in the graduating class or in one of the sports lists. The Killingly Historical Center is home to the Killingly High School Alumni files. They are a good place to search for relatives as teens and reveal much about a person's interests.

While I was in the Transcript, I checked to see what was happening in local sports in 1926. This was an era when the local mills sported teams. "Assawaga wins by Early Lead. Dayville Nine Defeats Team from Harrisville 8-5. All Subs Get in Game. Playing before the largest crowd of the season...piling up a large score the local team gave all the men a change to get into the game. Lavelle, playing center field, caught a fly, and made a perfect throw to the plate, getting the runner out." Players for Assawaga were Weaver, 2nd; Bebeau, ss; Teatreault, 1b, p; O'Neill, rf; A. Fortier, rf; Lehrer, rf; R. Fortier, 3b; Gregoire, cf; Russell, lf; Gasiorek, c; Lavelle, p, cf; Brennan, lf; Rivers, Mathieu. (The Assawaga mill was in Dayville, later the site of Pym's factory on the Five Mile River). (WCT, p. 3).

Have you heard of a restaurant called The Laurel? (There was no location given in the ad. I wondered if it was located in Killingly or perhaps Brooklyn). "Special dinners from 11.30 until 2 o'clock week days. Sunday, chicken dinners 12.30 to 2. Special suppers 5 to 7 on week days. Sundays, a la carte. Try our strawberry shortcake. Saturdays, baked beans and brown bread. Tuesday, doughnuts." I haven't had brown bread in ages. It wasn't something that I grew up with in Pennsylvania. (p.4). There was also an ad for The Pariss Rose Garden, A. H. Stebenne, Prop., Miss Lillian Parr Assistant manager, Main Street Danielson. "We have it-The Tasty Delicacy Ice Cream Chocolate Coated Made in the Sanitary Place Special for Saturday and Sunday-Rainbow Dish. Bring your friends, we will welcome you. Soda and Light lunches." If you were a young man in 1926, you might sport a snazzy straw hat. Shumway Clothing was advertising "Lamson-Hubbard Straws. Young men's flat-foot Sennit. Always a leader." NOTE: The Windham County Transcripts can now be accessed directly at <https://killingly.historyarchives.online/>

Margaret M. Weaver Killingly Municipal Historian, June 2026. Special thanks to Suzanne Gosselin for assistance with the new direct access to the Transcripts. 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.

Organic is a SNAP at Assawaga Farm

BY CRIS CADIZ

PUTNAM — A good landmark to find Assawaga Farm's winding dirt driveway if you're zooming along on Route 44 from Putnam is the small park next to Five Mile River. Just past it on the left is the farm entrance. The word "assawaga" is the original Native American name for Five Mile River. It means "place between" or "half-way place" in Nipmuc. Tucked between two waterways, Five Mile River to the west and the Mary Brown Brook to the east, Assawaga Farm is literally the "place between."

Farm founders Alex Carpenter and Yoko Takemura discovered the property ten years ago, as they searched further and further from New York City, where they had met and lived before deciding to start their own farm. Like many, they struggled to find affordable property.

"Eventually, we found the Quiet Corner, which we didn't know existed," says Takemura.

They were pleased with Putnam's accessibility to Boston, Providence and Worcester and with the quality of the land.

"The property is completely bound by the river," says Carpenter. "This was really good, prime agricultural soil—the best we could find in our budget."

Embraced by two streams, the land featured fertile ground and excellent biodiversity. The property had historically been used for cattle, later for hay, then lay fallow for 15 years. It had never been sprayed with chemicals. The perfect place to start an organic farm.

"When we saw the land for the first time, a bald eagle flew over," recalls Takemura. "And a coyote ran across the field. We were like, if that's not a sign, then what is?"

Fast forward ten years. What was once an empty field surrounded by towering white pines and mature deciduous trees is now a farm with one acre of perfectly neat rows of vegetable and flower beds edged by a hedgerow just under the forest canopy.

"We've got 26 different varieties of native or regional pollinator perennials plus a lot of woody things like elderberries,



Courtesy

Alex Carpenter and Yoko Takemura of Assawaga Farm.

hazelnuts, bush cherries, June berries," says Carpenter.

There are 16 permanent 100-foot beds. Crops include garlic, onions, asparagus, brassicas, greens, rhubarb, peppers, herbs, plus tomatoes grown in the high tunnel. Assawaga Farm specializes in some Japanese varieties of herbs, greens, peppers, and eggplants, but being certified organic really sets them apart. They also sell berries, cut flowers and open the season in spring with a popular plant sale of veggie, flower and herb seedlings and dahlia tubers.

Two large high tunnels, a greenhouse and a post-and-beam barn complete the infrastructure. Carpenter and Takemura are nearly finished building their own house a short walk from the barn. All of this—plus digging a well and installing the long driveway and parking area—they built from the ground up.

"It's a slightly less orthodox way of going at it," Takemura admits. "Most farmers are looking for a farm. We don't know many people that buy raw land and build the house they live in."

Assawaga Farm is a hand-powered, no-till farm and one of the few certified organic farms in the region. Basically, this means they use natural processes and materials to grow crops while promoting ecological balance and preserving biodiversity. They follow additional guidelines: minimizing use of fossil fuels and plastic, avoiding all pesticides including organic ones, and installing perennial wildlife and pollinator habitats. They encourage resource recycling, such as making their own

compost and sourcing compost materials (like leaves) from the community.

"We are stewards of the land and as such we strive to keep the land productive for many future generations to come," Carpenter and Takemura proudly state.

Carpenter says they have steadily evolved the past ten years, noting "A lot of farmers want to get bigger and bigger. If anything, we want to get more and more compact and focus on the quality and the efficiency of our farm."

Six years ago, they thought it would be just the two of them; they didn't want employees. But they started hiring farmhands and don't regret it.

"We realized it's nice to have help and we can be more efficient that way," says Carpenter, who appreciates being able to quit at 4 or 5 p.m. and take Sundays off.

They also enjoy mentoring. "What we're doing is different from a lot of farms, so being able to pass that on and inspire people is important," he says. "Now we have an amazing crew and our work-life balance in the last couple of years has been fantastic."

Assawaga Farm's on-site market happens in the barn every Saturday morning from late May through November. Every Thursday, they pack up a van and head to Brookline to sell produce and flowers to Boston dwellers from June to November. While they've always taken SNAP at the Brookline Market, this year Assawaga Farm is taking advantage of a new UConn Extension initiative, Grown ConNECTed

for All, which encourages Northeast CT SNAP recipients to buy healthy food at local farms.

SNAP (the federally funded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) can be used to pay for food grown or produced by small farms who are SNAP certified retailers. This includes vegetables and fruit, meat and dairy, preserved goods, honey, maple syrup, even seedlings so that customers can grow their own. Accepting SNAP as payment entails a farm to use a smart device that connects to a card reader. This allows customers to meet the farmer where they are, whether it's at a farmer's market, at the farmstand or farm store, or even out in the field. Assawaga Farm wasn't sure they'd get any SNAP recipients at their on-site market, so they wondered if the cost of participation would be a wise investment. However, the program waives fees for farms for two years, helps them with the application process, and provides the SNAP/EBT card reader, all at no cost.

Petros Papadopoulos is a farmhand at Assawaga Farm and proud to help provide beautiful and flavorful produce for their loyal customer base — "people who value food that has never been sprayed with harmful chemicals and that lasts in the fridge."

"Being a smaller farm a bit off the beaten path adds real barriers to accessing our food, but we work to keep our prices accessible," says Petros. "Grown ConNECTed has given us a cost-free way to accept SNAP, which means more potential customers can choose our produce without payment type standing in the way. Everyone deserves access to food grown with care; accepting SNAP is a concrete way we can make that real."

Assawaga Farm's on-site market in East Putnam is open to all every Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon. They accept SNAP and FMNP (WIC and Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program). See their website for a weekly veggie list and to sign up for e-mail updates.

The Barns at Black Dog debuts as new banquet and event venue in Putnam



Courtesy

Mayor Seney, Deputy Mayor Pempek, Selectman Bogdanski and Selectwoman Marion congratulate Craig Gates, at the Ribbon Cutting of Putnam's Newest Event Venue, the Barns at Black Dog!

PUTNAM — The Barns at Black Dog is a brand-new banquet and event venue in Putnam, designed to bring people together in a beautiful, welcoming setting. The venue is positioned as a rustic wedding and celebration space near Black Dog Bar and Grille, with a focus on memorable gatherings and flexible event use.

The Barns at Black Dog adds a fresh option for weddings, banquets, private parties, and special events in northeastern Connecticut. Located in Putnam, the venue is part of the Black Dog hospitality presence in town.

As interest grows, The Barns at Black Dog is preparing to welcome guests seeking a distinctive event setting with rustic character and a community feel. More information is available through the Black Dog Bar and Grille website and the venue's social profiles.

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Courtesy
 Pack 21 Cub Scout Jordan Mentor performed a special assignment on Flag Day morning, June 14, at Veterans' Park in his hometown of Putnam: The Bear Cub Scout assisted the Putnam Lodge of Elks 574 in conducting their annual Flag Day ceremonies, by helping to post examples of American flags flown from the Revolutionary War up to the present day. Chartered to the Albert J. Breault VFW Post 1523, being good citizens is something Pack 21's Cub Scouts learn to do, led by trained and experienced adults. Pack 21 welcomes boys and girls ages five through ten. To join, call John Ryan at (860) 928-5873.



Three powerful mid-year financial moves for executives

For high-income earners and executives, financial planning often comes into sharper focus toward the end of the year. Total compensation figures are more solid, bonuses are being discussed, and tax implications start to feel more immediate. But by then, many of the most effective strategies are no longer available. That's why mid-year tax planning is so important.

Right now is the point at which you're gaining some reliable visibility into how the year is shaping up, but enough time still remains to make meaningful adjustments. For executives with complex compensation structures that include a mix of salary, bonuses, equity, and deferred compensation, this mid-year financial check-in can make a significant difference in your ability to both minimize taxes and maximize opportunities for wealth building.

Here's a look at the major pieces of the financial planning puzzle we help our executive clients to evaluate at this critical mid-year point.

1. Evaluate compensation structure

One of the first areas to

evaluate is your total compensation structure. For many executives, income isn't limited to a paycheck. It may include performance bonuses, restricted stock units, stock options, or deferred compensation arrangements. Each of these components is taxed differently, and the timing of when they are received or recognized can materially impact your overall tax picture.

Without planning, it's easy for these elements to stack on top of each other, pushing income into higher tax brackets or creating unexpected liabilities. With planning, there may be opportunities to smooth that impact.

For example, coordinating the timing of bonus payments, exercising stock options strategically, or adjusting deferral elections can help manage taxable income across multiple years rather than concentrating it all into one.

2. Consider Roth conversion opportunities

That same principle applies to Roth conversion strategies. Roth conversions

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are often discussed closer to year-end, but the decision is rarely one that should be made in isolation. It depends heavily on your current income, projected income, and where you expect tax rates to be in the future. Mid-year is when those projections become more reliable.

If income is trending lower than expected, there may be an opportunity to convert a portion of pre-tax retirement assets into a Roth at a more favorable rate. If income is higher, the strategy may shift toward deferring or managing other income sources instead. The key is having enough time to evaluate the trade-offs.

3. Look for short term tax liability and long-term planning opportunities

Another important area that often gets overlooked is how equity compensation fits into the broader financial plan. For many executives, a significant portion of their wealth is tied to company stock, whether through stock options, RSUs, or long-term incentive plans. That concentration can create both opportunity and risk.

From a tax perspective, the timing of vesting or exercising shares can create large income events. From an investment perspective, holding too much company stock can introduce unnecessary exposure to a single asset.

Mid-year planning allows you to step back and evaluate both sides of that equation. Not just what the tax impact will be, but how those decisions affect overall portfolio balance and long-term strategy.

Contributions to retirement accounts, charitable giving plans, and tax-loss harvesting opportunities all become more actionable when you have a clearer picture of the full year. And for high-income individuals, even small adjustments in these areas can have a big impact.

The mid-year magic ingredient: Flexibility

Executive compensation planning doesn't exist in a vacuum. It intersects with tax strategy, investment management, and long-term financial goals. When those pieces are considered separately, opportunities can be missed. When they're aligned, the outcome is

often more efficient and more predictable.

That's ultimately what mid-year planning is about; not reacting to what has already happened but positioning yourself for what's ahead.

By the time year-end arrives, the focus often shifts from planning to reporting. Decisions have already been made. Income has already been realized. Options have already been exercised.

Mid-year is different because of one thing: flexibility.

For executives and high-income earners, that flexibility can translate into better outcomes, not just in terms of taxes but in how compensation supports long-term financial independence.

At WHZ Strategic Wealth Advisors, we work with clients to bring these elements together on an ongoing basis, aligning compensation decisions with tax strategy and long-term planning. The goal isn't just to reduce taxes in a single year, but to create a more efficient, better coordinated, and more successful wealth building over time.

Schedule a compli-

mentary discovery session at whzwealth.com or call us at (860) 928-2341 to start building a plan that supports your future, and learn how we'll work to help you live with Absolute Confidence. Unwavering Partnership. For Life.

Authored by WHZ Associate Vice President, Wealth Advisor Logan Lum. AI 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 Street, Pomfret Center, CT 06259 and 392-A Merrow Road, Tolland, CT 06084, 860.928.2341. <http://www.whzwealth.com>.

Tourtellotte students excel at Senior Showcases

N O R T H GROSVENORDALE — Prior to graduation, all Tourtellotte Memorial High School seniors are required to present their "Senior Showcase" by utilizing evidence of their growth and proficiency related to Thompson's Portrait of the Graduate (POG) skills and attributes.

Thompson's Portrait of a Graduate (POG) is a set of skills and attributes that serve as the community's and school district's aspirations for each student. By outlining the specific attributes and skills, the Portrait of the Graduate identifies desired outcomes for students who graduate from Thompson Public Schools.

Thompson's POG was developed in 2020 by a col-

laborative team made up of administration, staff, and community members and asserts that students will graduate from Tourtellotte Memorial High School being knowledgeable, independent, and community connected. Under the "Independent" pillar (category), students must demonstrate that they have developed the following skills and attributes: driven towards physical and emotional wellness, effective with communication, proficient with interpersonal interactions, organized, successful with time management, equipped with a strong work ethic, and confident. Under the "Knowledgeable" pillar, students must demonstrate evidence of the following

skills and attributes: academically accomplished, skilled at critical thinking, adept at problem solving, financially literate, appreciative of the arts, aware of other languages and cultures. Finally, under the "Community Connected" pillar, students must demonstrate that they have developed the following skills and attributes: anchored in the values of kindness, honesty, respect and empathy; ready to lead authentically; service oriented; appreciative of local history; and civic-minded.

One important step in helping students develop these skills and attributes was the revision of the school's curriculum as well as the graduation performance requirement

from a digital portfolio to the Capstone Experience. The Capstone Experience includes the requirement that all students complete at least ten hours of community service each year in their POG Gallery. Students must also complete a job shadow and collect artifacts that align with POG attributes in order to prepare for their "Senior Showcase."

The Senior Showcase is a personalized presentation of each student's alignment and growth related to the POG. During the 30-to-45-minute presentation, students are required to prove to a panel of staff and local community members that they are knowledgeable, independent, and community connected using their POG Gallery

artifacts. On May 21, all Tourtellotte Memorial high school seniors successfully completed their showcases, with the majority earning a "strong pass" from panel judges. After the showcase, participating community judges were surveyed anonymously with 100 percent reporting that the Capstone Showcase is a valuable way for students to demonstrate POG skills and attributes as well as self-awareness.

When community judges were asked in the survey if they wanted to share anything else, one respondent wrote, "I really enjoyed the presentations. I think this program gives the students a great reflection of their high school years and prepares them for life after high school and their future

endeavors." Another community panelist wrote, "I have now done this for two years. I can honestly say that both times were among some of my most rewarding educational experiences! The kids were just amazing—and very brave in sharing their artifacts/history, both challenges and successes! I was extremely impressed by their honesty and insight into their own behavior...clearly our staff knows our students and has forged supportive connections with students—which results in student success!" District leadership and staff are similarly pleased with the excellent showcases presented by the Class of 2026.

Pomfret voters to consider solar project lease, school budget at Special Town Meeting June 25

POMFRET — Residents will have the opportunity to vote on two important items at a Special Town Meeting scheduled for Thursday, June 25, at 6:30 p.m. at Pomfret Community School.

The meeting agenda includes consideration of a proposed land lease agreement with Greenskies Clean Energy for the development of a 5-megawatt solar energy project on approximately 25 acres of the Town-owned Murdock Property at 434 Killingly Road, as well as a special appropriation for the Pomfret Community School Board of Education to cover budget over-expenditures during the 2025–2026 fiscal year.

The meeting will provide residents with an opportunity to learn more about the proposed solar project before casting their vote. The project would occupy approximately 25 acres, or 13 percent, of the town's 188-acre Murdock Property. A representative from the Town's consultant, Titan Energy, will present details of the proposal and answer questions from residents.

Following a competitive Request for Proposals process, Greenskies Clean Energy submitted the proposal under consideration. Under the proposed agreement, the Town would receive annual lease payments and tax revenue asso-

ciated with the project. The solar facility is projected to generate approximately \$479,000 in annual revenue, providing an estimated \$9.5 million in total revenue over the life of the lease. Town officials note that the revenue would help offset future municipal expenses and reduce pressure on local property taxpayers.

Town officials also note that the proposed solar array would not be visible from public roads, does not include battery storage, and would be subject to a decommissioning agreement and financial bond to ensure removal of the equipment and restoration of the site at the end of the lease term.

Greenskies Clean Energy is a Connecticut-based renewable energy company that develops, finances, constructs, owns, and operates solar energy projects throughout the United States. Over the past 15 years, the company has developed more than 395 megawatts of renewable energy facilities at over 700 sites in 19 states and is recognized as one of the leading commercial solar developers in the Northeast.

The Murdock Property was acquired by the Town in 1978 and has supported a variety of municipal and utility-related uses over the years, including gravel extraction for road projects, operation of a transfer sta-

tion, and staging and storage activities associated with Eversource's maintenance of the high-voltage transmission lines that cross the property.

The proposed solar project has received endorsements from both the Pomfret Economic Planning and Development Commission and the Pomfret Green Team.

The proposed Board of Education appropriation is not to exceed \$185,000. School officials report that the over-expenditures are primarily related to unanticipated special education costs. Federal and state laws require school districts to provide appropriate educational services

to eligible students, and the costs associated with specialized out-of-district placements, transportation, and contracted support services can fluctuate significantly during the school year based on student needs. These expenditures are largely mandated and must be funded regardless of whether they were anticipated during the annual budget process.

Town officials encourage residents to attend the meeting, ask questions, review the information presented, and participate in the decision-making process on both matters before the town.

Elms College salutes Spring 2026 graduates

CHICOPEE, Mass. — Elms College congratulates 279 students who graduated in Spring 2026.

Julianna Morrissette of Danielson
Adrianna Randolph of Danielson

Elms College is a co-educational Catholic college offering a liberal arts curriculum that prepares students holistically for a purposeful life in a diverse and interconnected world. Founded in 1928 by the Sisters of St. Joseph, Elms College has a tradition of educating reflective, principled and creative learners, who are rooted in faith, educated in mind, compassionate in heart, responsive to civic and social obligations, and capable of adjusting to change without compromising principle.

Area residents named to Lasell University Dean's List

NEWTON, Mass. — Hailey Johnson, a Lasell University student from Thompson, and Addison Tyimok, from Pomfret Center, was named to the Dean's List for their academic performance in the Spring 2026 semester.

To be named to the Dean's List, Lasell students must complete at least 12 credits as a full-time student and achieve a semester GPA of 3.5 or higher.

Local students named to WestConn Dean's List

DANBURY — The following full- and part-time students have been named to the Dean's List for the spring 2026 semester at Western Connecticut State University:

Danielson: Victoria Griffin, Digital and Interactive Marketing

Thompson: Kaylee Tackson, Nursing

Tolland: Serah Oyelola, Nursing; Anthony Uriano, Music

Dunn Marketing VP of Client Services Marci Seney earns dual marketing certifications



Marci Seney

KILLINGLY — Dunn Marketing is pleased to announce that Marci Seney, Vice President of Client Services, has earned two industry-recognized credentials: the Certified Digital Marketing Professional (CDMP) designation from

the Digital Marketing Institute (DMI) and the Professional Certified Marketer (PCM®) in Digital Marketing from the American Marketing Association (AMA).

The two certifications come through a single program offered jointly by DMI and AMA, which together hold the program to a global industry standard. DMI is the global standard in digital marketing certification, and the AMA is the leading global professional marketing association.

The certification covers AI-powered digital marketing, content marketing,

social media, SEO, paid search, email marketing and automation, web optimization, analytics, and digital strategy. To earn the credentials, candidates must pass a rigorous and comprehensive certification exam.

“Staying on top of the latest marketing trends and skills is one of the reasons our clients trust us,” said Laura Dunn, Founder, CEO and Chief Brand Strategist of Dunn Marketing. “Earning these certifications took real time and dedication from Marci, on top of an already full plate. What it means for the business and organizations we serve is simple: Marci and our entire team are passionate and committed to ensuring the strategies and skills we bring to the table reflect the most current, credible thinking in our field.”

“I’m really proud to have earned these designations, because they reinforce a value that sits at the core of how Dunn Marketing works,” Seney said. “Marketing changes quickly and staying current is a responsibility the agency takes seriously on behalf of the businesses and organizations we serve.”

In addition to acting as VP of Client Services and as an account executive at Dunn Marketing, Seney has been a frequent voice in the agency’s content and community programming, including its 2025 marketing workshop series with the Northeastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce. She has also been a key contributor behind a number of the agency’s awards, including a Gold Award for Nonprofit Film & Video and an Award of Distinction

for Out of Home Campaign in the 2025 Communicator Awards, held annually by the Academy of Interactive and Visual Arts.

Dunn Marketing exists to fuel the success of good people doing great work through Empathy-Driven Brand Building™ that connects, inspires, and converts. The agency developed a six-step pro-

cess for person-centered brand development, which it uses as the foundation for award-winning omnichannel marketing campaigns for clients across a variety of life services industries including healthcare, education, finance, law, and the nonprofit sector. To learn more about Dunn Marketing, visit dunnmarketing.com or call (860) 481-3796.

Martial Arts instructors take top honors at New England Tang Soo Do Championships



Courtesy

Pictured, left to right: Erica Seraphin, Master Kristin Duethorn, and Master Greg Martinez-Torres.

THOMPSON — Quest Martial Arts is proud to announce that two of its senior instructors earned top honors at this year’s New England Tang Soo Do Championships, held in Westbrook, Connecticut.

Ms. Erica Seraphin was named All-Around Cup Winner, earning the most combined points across sparring, weapons, and forms among all black belt divisions — a distinction recognizing the most complete competitor at the event.

Master Greg Martinez-Torres was named Grand Champion in all three divisions: Forms, Weapons, and Sparring, sweeping the top placement in each category.

“I am incredibly proud of these results. Erica and Greg are gifted coaches, but they inspire most by leading from the front — still training, still competing, and never asking of their students anything they aren’t willing to do themselves,” said Master Kristin Duethorn, owner of Quest Martial Arts.

The achievements reflect the discipline, dedication, and traditional values at the heart of Tang Soo Do, a Korean martial art emphasizing technical skill, character, and respect.

Springfield College recognizes Dean’s List students for Spring Semester

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. — Springfield College recognized its Dean’s List students for the 2026 Spring Semester. The following local students were recognized for academic excellence:

Aurissa Boardman from Brooklyn. Boardman has a primary major of Education.

Carah Bruce from Woodstock Valley. Bruce has a primary major of Social Work.

The criteria for selection to the Dean’s List are as follows: The student must have completed a minimum of 12 credit hours of graded coursework for the term, exclusive of “P” grades. The student must not have any incompletes or missing grades in the designated term. The student must have a minimum semester grade average of 3.500 for the term. Student must not have been barred from Dean’s List due to disciplinary action.

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Area residents named to President’s List at State University of New York

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

Ritzau, whose major is Music Education, was among 682 students who were honored for academic excellence in the Spring 2026 semester. SUNY Potsdam President Dr. Suzanne Smith recognized the students for earning top marks.

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

About SUNY Potsdam

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

Samuel Evans named to College of Charleston Dean’s List

CHARLESTON, S.C. — Samuel Evans, of Pomfret, was named to the College of Charleston Spring 2026 Dean’s List. Evans is majoring in Business Administration.

To qualify for the Dean’s List (Distinguished), students must earn a GPA of 3.500 or higher and complete a minimum of 12 semester hours.

Founded in 1770, the College of Charleston’s mission is to provide students with a world-class education in the arts and sciences, business and technology, engineering and health sciences. The College provides a creative and intellectually stimulating environment where students are challenged and guided by a committed and caring faculty of distinguished teacher-scholars.

The city of Charleston serves as a living and learning laboratory for student experiences and opportunities for career development. The university bridges the old with the new in a setting that is truly extraordinary - where historic character and forward-looking innovation come together to shape a distinctive and inspiring environment for learning. A College of Charleston education focuses on discovery and personal growth, as well as preparation for life, work, and service to our society.

Area residents named to Dean’s List at University of New England

BIDDEFORD/PORTLAND, Maine — Fiona Rigney of Woodstock has been named to the University of New England’s Dean’s List for the spring semester 2026. Dean’s List students have attained a grade point average of 3.3 or better out of a possible 4.0 at the end of the semester.

The University of New England is Maine’s largest independent university, with two beautiful coastal campuses in Maine, a one-of-a-kind study-abroad campus in Tangier, Morocco, and an array of flexible online offerings. In an uncommonly welcoming and supportive community, we offer hands-on learning, empowering students to make a positive impact in a world full of challenges. We are the state’s top provider of health professionals and home to Maine’s only medical and dental colleges, physician assistant program, and pharmacy school, in addition to a variety of other interprofessionally aligned health care programs and nationally recognized programs in the marine sciences, the natural and social sciences, business, the humanities, and the arts. Visit www.une.edu.

Join Together We Can Make It

POMFRET — The Together We Can Make It AI-Anon Family Group is celebrating one year since its inception and welcomes new members any time.

The group meets at Christ Church in Pomfret (Route 169) on Tuesdays at noon in a room on the lower level of the church administrative building, accessible through the door by the flagpole in the pollinator garden. 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.

AI-Anon is a worldwide program for people just like you, who are worried about someone with a drinking problem. This Pomfret group also welcomes 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 AI-Anon, visit www.ai-anon.org. For information about the meeting in Pomfret, call 203-561-7954.

Samuel Hagan graduates from College of Charleston

CHARLESTON, S.C. — Samuel Hagan, of Woodstock, graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from the College of Charleston. The 2026 spring commencement ceremonies were held May 7-9.

Founded in 1770, the College of Charleston’s mission is to provide students with a world-class education in the arts and sciences, business and technology, engineering and health sciences. The College provides a creative and intellectually stimulating environment where students are challenged and guided by a committed and caring faculty of distinguished teacher-scholars.

The city of Charleston serves as a living and learning laboratory for student experiences and opportunities for career development. The university bridges the old with the new in a setting that is truly extraordinary - where historic character and forward-looking innovation come together to shape a distinctive and inspiring environment for learning. A College of Charleston education focuses on discovery and personal growth, as well as preparation for life, work, and service to our society.

University of Hartford students named to Dean’s and President’s Lists

WEST HARTFORD — The University of Hartford is pleased to announce that 2,332 students have been named to the Dean’s List and President’s List for the spring 2026 semester.

The Dean’s List recognizes students achieving superior academic standing. The requirement, with some exceptions, is a grade point average of at least 3.0 and no grade below C.

The President’s List recognizes a select group of students reaching the highest level of academic standing. To be placed on the President’s List, students must maintain a GPA of at least a 3.75 and receive grades of C or better.

Please join us in congratulating:

Addy Beausoleil - Eastford - Dean’s List
Nicholas Halloran - Woodstock - Dean’s List and President’s List

Ella Lach - Pomfret Center - Dean’s List

Bailey Nordman - Woodstock - Dean’s List and President’s List

Brooke Fetting - Thompson - Dean’s List and President’s List

Alayla Gebo - Brooklyn - Dean’s List

Annika Leboeuf - Dayville - Dean’s List and President’s List

Jack Wiggin - Brooklyn - Dean’s List

Jill Wiggin - Brooklyn - Dean’s List

Congratulations to all our students on their hard work and academic achievements

The University of Hartford blends raw passion with emerging talent, offering intentional preparation across six career-focused schools and colleges so every student can thrive. Located on a 350-acre campus neighboring Connecticut’s largest city-and-positioned midway between New York City and Boston-the University is home to approximately 4,300 undergraduate and 1,700 graduate students from 42 states and 53 countries. Here, students are guided to discover their place, their people, and their purpose.

SIRENS

continued from page A1

ship, or shared experience. As Ron stepped up to greet Thompson Fire Engine Company Chief Matt Grauer and Assistant Chief Randy Fifield, he remained characteristically humble, taking time to congratulate each officer on their own advancement within the department and warmly recalling when they first joined.

The sounds of sirens have long carried special meanings for Ron. Growing up in England during World War II, sirens warned families of approaching bombing raids and signaled the need to seek shelter. Following his family's move to the United States, Ron discovered that American sirens often meant something different: firefighters, emergency

responders, and volunteers rushing toward danger to help others. To Ron, the sound of a siren always signals a call to action.

When Ron and Gwyneth moved to Thompson in 1971, he inquired about joining the local volunteer fire department with enthusiasm. Encouraged by neighbors, Ron officially joined Thompson Fire Engine Company in January 1972 and was welcomed into the organization. More than five decades later, he remains among the department's most dedicated members and currently serves as its eldest member still on the books.

Like many volunteer firefighters across America, Ron's years with the department involved far more than fighting structure fires. Members respond to motor vehicle accidents,

flooded basements, medical emergencies, and countless calls for assistance throughout the community. Later in his service, Ron became a member of the department's Fire Police, helping safely direct traffic and maintain order around emergency scenes until law enforcement personnel assume command.

Yet the firefighters gathered at Westview Commons came not only to celebrate Ron's years of service, but also his efforts to preserve the history of the organization itself. Organized in 1832 and established in 1837, Thompson Fire Engine Company is the 10th oldest fire company in Connecticut and the oldest in Windham County. Through years of careful research, Ron examined handwritten meeting minutes and historical records dating back

nearly two centuries. His efforts culminated in the publication of "A History of The Thompson Fire Engine Company: The First 170 Years." This beautifully composed volume reflects Ron's determination to ensure that every firefighter found within the historical record is remembered through time. Copies of the work are shared with historical organizations and repositories throughout Connecticut; preserving the story of the company for future generations.

The gathered crowd listened attentively as Chief Grauer reflected on Ron's contributions. "Ron has been president of the company, company historian, and devoted member going on 55 years. The book he created for our Fire Company is a great piece of history—not just for the Fire Company, but

for the Town of Thompson and the whole state of Connecticut. Through all of Ron's years of service to Thompson Fire Engine Company he has been instrumental in our community engagement; always insisting on helping the Company get better. It is with great privilege that I present Ron with the 2026 Thompson Unpaid Professional Award."

Assistant Chief Randy Fifield explained why the department chose to bring the presentation directly to Westview Commons. "We really wanted this recognition to symbolize the continued connection we have with Ron and all of our members. This was one of the more important calls of the year for us, and definitely one of the easiest!"

The surprise succeeded in overcoming Ron's near-

ly-impenetrable humility. Following the presentation, gathered guests branched into smaller conversations as friends and colleagues reconnected under a glowing sunset. Ron made a point of shaking the hand of every firefighter in attendance, recalling shared experiences and memories with each greeting.

The award recognized a lifetime of service, but the surprise visit revealed something even more enduring: the friendships forged through that service. As the apparatus of Thompson Fire Engine Company departed Westview Commons, they left behind more than an award presentation. They imparted a powerful reminder that true service is never forgotten.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Development of the Murdock property is our best option

To the Editor:

I am writing in support of the potential solar project which would be located at Murdock

Property in Pomfret. There are three reasons for my support.

1. This will provide tax revenue to the town of about \$480,000.00 per year based on the projections provided by Greenskies, the developer. This projection is tied in with certain tax advantages which will expire in 2029. Will this lower our tax rate? Probably not, but will it help stabilize it for years to come? Yes, I believe it will.

2. This property was purchased for its gravel and has been used as the bulky waste transfer station site for many years. Over the years, there have been many proposals from a Tufts facility, golf course, over 55 housing, water bottling plant, and a data center. The property is zoned as commercial and could be used for all of those purposes except maybe housing. For many years we were led to believe that there was an aquifer under the Murdock property. A

study done by the Economic Planning and Development Commission proved that to be incorrect. It is still vacant and produces no revenue.

3. The solar "farm" will not be visible from State Route 101 and will take up approximately 25 to 30 acres of about 180 acres available on the Murdock property. The balance can be used for other purposes such as commercial development or open space.

Development of the Murdock property as an energy-producing enterprise, in my opinion,

is the best option we have seen, and should be considered. Please attend whatever

meetings you can for the explanation of this proposal. Check the Town website for the

lease agreement when it has been finalized so you can make an informed decision. Sincerely,

PETER B. MANN
POMFRET

In support of Kate Cerrone

To the Editor:

The position of Probate Judge is important and the individual serving in that position needs to possess qualities that Kate Cerrone possesses.

Kate has years of experience in practicing law including estate and probate matters. She has been able to deal with clients professionally and sensitively often when clients were undergoing grief or emotional difficulties due to a dissolution of marriage.

Additionally, Kate has been a devoted

mother and wife while managing her career. She has the temperament that a probate judge requires; she is patient, empathetic and devoted to seeing that the clients she serves can trust that she will do her job faithfully. I have trusted Kate to provide legal support in the past and feel she would be an asset to our area in providing probate services. Respectfully,

MARLENE HEALD
POMFRET CENTER

Read what Pomfret's ERT said about Murdock Farm

To the Editor:

I am writing as a Pomfret resident to make sure the community is aware of a proposed large-scale solar development at Murdock Farm.

The reason I am reaching out is that the Town of Pomfret's Environmental Review Team (ERT) report identifies a remarkable concentration of resources on this property, including agricultural soils, wetlands, wildlife habitat, riverfront resources associated with the Quinebaug watershed, and archaeological and cultural resource considerations.

What struck me most is that this is not simply a discussion about renewable energy. It is also a discussion about the long-term future of a large tract of land and natural resources that, once altered, cannot be replaced.

Renewable energy development is important, but so is thoughtful siting. The

ERT report outlines resources that many people may not realize are present on this property and may be useful to anyone evaluating the proposal.

Information about the property, including links to the ERT, can be found here: https://savectfarmland.org/murdock_farm.

For those who prefer to review the original documents directly through the Connecticut Environmental Review Team, visit <https://cert.org>.

ERT Report: https://cert.org/pdfs/Pomfret_MurdockFarm_515.pdf

Thank you for sharing these URLs with others who may have an interest in land and soil conservation, wildlife habitat, watershed protection, archaeological resources, or open-space preservation.

Sincerely,

MELISSA COYLE
POMFRET

Unfortunately, Republicans cultivate Jadons

To the Editor:

Looks like the Republicans have their Jadon challenger lined up for the primary. Unfortunately, despite being put off by some of his views and posts as not representative of party values, the things Republicans push for are just going to lead to more Jadons.

Parental rights and unfettered homeschooling come to mind. They sound like great ideas, but as any libertarian or some conservatives might tell you, when the government passes laws we always have to think of unintended consequences. What we're seeing right now that has caused this uproar is blatantly an example of this.

These woods make it easy for abusive helicopter parents to shelter their kids and raise them in a bubble of their rules, politics, religion, etc., and then when they get

out on their own they face a massive rude awakening playing catch up with what they missed. Getting the government out of parents' way unfortunately means there will be households that run like little North Koreas, and when the kids get out on their own, it'll be like refugees escaping the regime that find it hard to function anywhere else.

Sheltering people never helps them. It just makes them less able to handle the situations when they can no longer be sheltered. On a much larger scale, the UK is about to figure this out with their latest round of internet regulations and their social media ban for young people.

No government can ever legislate away the need for people to be able to handle difficult situations involving others.

JAY GERHART
PUTNAM

Pomfret's solar scramble

To the Editor:

The rush to force through a large solar project with many questions unanswered, and without all the facts, is unfair to residents.

When the town's own environmental review documented the unique qualities of the 178 acre Murdoch Farm property, people are wondering why the promoters are saying something else. We should know the facts.

When we hear a TV commercial or an online pitch telling us we must "act now or lose out", most of us are naturally suspicious and often hesitant to act. Why? Because our instincts and experience have proven that rushing to make quick decisions without all the details usually does not end well.

When the for-profit-promoters of the proposed industrial size solar facility tell Pomfret voters that they need to rush to make a decision, your antennae should be up.

Just consider what has been said that is false or we still don't know:

False! The project is being promoted as being developed on land described as gravel pit, bulky waste land and other descriptions masking the truth. The Murdoch Farm Property is roughly 178 acres of agricultural land, former timbered woodlands, water ways, ponds and streams, and a town-made gravel area used over the last few years for a few Bulky waste transfer events. Less than 6 percent is the gravel area, leaving 94 percent non-gravel area. The water shed area is about 30 percent. See the pictures, go see for yourself or read Pomfret's own Environmental Review Team report and see the maps.

False! The project is promoted as being on 25 acres for solar panels. The reality is that this does not include the surrounding infrastructure, which is estimated to be an additional 25 acres, as well as the impact to the surrounding habitat which is additional acreage. The main part of the Murdoch Farm Property will be destroyed and replaced, all surrounded by a seven-foot chain link fence. And surrounding the water shed area. It also cuts off Pomfret's access to beautiful river front property.

Really? How did the Town end up with

one bidder making an offer that Selectmen Nicholson and McCarthy called, "unbelievable, but if they are offering, why not" or words to that effect. So, where is all this money coming from exactly? Guess what, from your State taxes and electrical bill (Public benefits charge), and then funneled back into deals like this. In this case even more state money that will be channeled to several "distressed" municipalities (designated by the state) and of course, a profit for the project operator. So, imagine handing money over to someone because you have to, and then told your town will get money to offset your annual budget, all using your money. Your money on a round-trip with some politically designed distribution built in while you still pay one of the highest costs for electricity in the nation. Solar is just the mule. Oh, and as for the claimed revenue, about \$200 per household, at the rate of past Town spending, that will be gone in one year!

No one knows! Batteries in our future? The Pomfret Selectmen promoting the development claim no, but previous presentations and statements allude to a Phase 2. And, since no one has seen the engineering drawings and specifications, no one knows, except the developer whether the infrastructure for this project includes support for a later battery installation (e.g. things like larger or extra conduit, foundation area set aside and the size of the requested electrical interchange connection, etc.). If it is in their plans and costs, batteries are likely coming next.

The plain fact is that basic respect for voters, including those in your own political party, includes telling the truth. Omission, selective or curated release of information, delays and censoring of opposing opinions is wrong.

Pomfret voters, don't be rushed into destroying yet another open area of significant natural and recreational value.

Demand the truth. Consider joining those who support alternative energy sources like solar, but on brownfield areas now being widely encouraged (and likely soon required by the state).

CHRIS COYLE
POMFRET

Creative summer experiences await at Mountain Laurel Floral Designs this July

DANIELSON — Mountain Laurel Floral Designs is welcoming summer with a lineup of creative, hands-on workshops and community events throughout July. From floral design and painting to drawing and plant propagation, the workshops offer opportunities for participants of all skill levels to learn something new while connecting with fellow community members.

To register for upcoming workshops, visit mountainlaurelfloralct.com. Customers are also encouraged to sign up for Mountain Laurel's email list to receive special monthly workshop offers and updates.

July Workshops:

Fourth of July Flower Arranging

July 11 | 5 - 7 p.m.

\$70 - Create two mason jar centerpieces using fresh, locally grown blooms. Perfect for a simple, seasonal Fourth of July celebration.

Bob Ross-Inspired Seascape Painting

July 11 | Noon - 3 p.m.

\$70 - Paint a seascape oil painting, led by certified Ross Instructor Caryn Pierce of Dollhouse Art Studio. Perfect for beginners and experienced painters alike! All supplies provided, wear painting clothes.

Stippling 101: Intro to Dot Drawing

July 18 | 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

\$55 - Local artist Kayla Degnan will teach the art of stippling, a drawing technique using tiny dots to create shading, depth and texture. Includes materials and

pens.

Houseplant Propagation 101

July 24 | 1 - 3 p.m.

\$30 - Want more plants without spending a fortune? Learn the basics of houseplant propagation and practice simple techniques. Take home three cuttings to grow your plant collection.

In addition to its workshops, Mountain Laurel Floral Designs will be participating in the Killingly Business Association's Main Street Sidewalk Sale, sponsored by bankHometown, on July 25 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The free community event will feature local businesses, food, music, and shopping throughout downtown Danielson. Mountain Laurel will offer select items at discounts of up to 50 percent off!

About Mountain Laurel Floral Designs

Mountain Laurel Floral Designs is more than a flower shop—it's a space where community, sustainability, and artistry flourish. Owned by local flower farmers Gabby and Pam, the shop is located at 98 Main Street in Danielson, Connecticut, and specializes in fresh, seasonal blooms grown in southeastern New England.

The business began with a shared love of the land and a commitment to sustainable flower farming. Today, Gabby and Pam create floral arrangements that honor the rhythms of the seasons and host a variety of hands-on workshops that celebrate creativity and connection.

OBITUARIES

Lester L. Hull



Lester L. Hull left this world on January 29, 2026, after a short stay at Backus Hospital at the age of 96. Lester was born on March 5, 1929, and grew up in Southport, CT in a large family of mostly brothers and two sisters. He was the second youngest of thirteen surviving siblings. Lester served in the U.S. Army in Korea both in the infantry and with the military police. He instilled love of country in his family along with the love of outdoor sports. He worked for Southern New England Telephone Phone Company for many years and was a Special Police Officer in the Town of Stratford. He was a proud Mason and member of Mariah Lodge #15 in Brooklyn. He was also a member of the local American Legion, Post 21 and the local VFW chapter. Lester spent many years competing in Trap and Skeet shooting at the famous Lordship Gun Club in Stratford where he resided for over 25 years with his young family. He also spent many years hunting, fishing, camping, listening to country music and seeing this country with his wife, Peggy Dugas Hull, in their RV. Lester also volunteered with the local Boy Scouts, cooking chicken at the Brooklyn Fair each year until he could no longer do it. Lester's favorite past times

were gun collecting, telling tall tales, taking care of his dogs, and driving his grandchildren around. He spent 70 years building a rifle collection, searching all over New England, stopping at little shops along the side of the road. His opening line, "Got any Winchesters?" That collection was his "Long Term Care Policy" which funded his 24/7 care for quite a while after it was auctioned.

Lester is survived by his children, Patti Clark (Greg Tomsen), Mary Beth Hull, Linda Danis and Larry Hull, his daughter-in-law, Patty Hull, his grandchildren, Brittany Rainiero (Michael), Natalia Guba, Alexandra Guba, Jason Stanislawski, Luke Stanislawski (Elana), and Thomas Hull (Alana) and his great-granddaughter, Mila Bell Guba. He is also survived by many nieces and nephews including his buddy Chipper Hull. His caregiver, Kingsley Opuku is credited for giving Lester the greatest of care over the last several years, giving him the ability to enjoy time outside and assisting him in visiting his favorite restaurants.

A graveside service will be held at Sacred Heart Cemetery in Wauregan, CT on Saturday June 27, 2026 at 11AM. till-inghastfh.com



Peter Thomas Spellmon



Peter Thomas Spellmon of Brooklyn, CT passed away on May 30, 2026 at Rhode Island Hospital with his family at his bedside. He was born January 17, 1941 in Haledon, NJ to George and Alberta (Rayot) Spellmon. He attended Haledon schools and graduated from Central High School in Paterson, NJ.

In 1948 a new family moved into Haledon. His future wife, Josie Kussela and best friend, Bill Kuusela would be a part of his life to the end. Peter and Josie were married November 22, 1959 in Pomfret, CT. Josie passed away July 28, 2016.

Peter worked for the State of Connecticut

for 33 years. His last position was as Director of the Film Library at the University of Connecticut. He retired in 1995.

Peter leaves behind three sons; Michael of Waterford, CT, Gregory of Brooklyn, CT and Mark of Brooklyn, CT. He leaves behind his daughter, Sherri (Mark) Tetreault of Hamburg, MN. He leaves two grandchildren; Eric Tetreault and Melissa Tetreault of Victoria, MN. He leaves his sister, Cathy Person of Anderson, SC. He also leaves one great-grandson, Axel Tetreault of Victoria, MN. His best friend and brother-in-law, William Kuusela, of Lisbon, CT, was at his bedside to say goodbye.

Per Peter's wishes, there will be no services.

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



DONATION

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Convenience Stores, Deary's Gymnastics, and Deary's Gymnastic Supply.

Most people associate the family name with Deary Brothers Mike's Stand at 12 Intervale Street in Putnam, long considered the official "Stand of Summer" that has

been serving up ice cream and summer favorites since 1937. Every Deary child has worked at the stand, which was taken over by Michael Deary in the late 1960s and became a favored destination for Putnam residents and visitors alike. A fourth generation of ownership began recently when Mike welcomed nephews Gene

and Evan to the business.

"When it comes to Putnam history, the stand has been a favorite gathering spot for families for nearly 90 years," said MuralFest Putnam Marketing and Communication Chair Linda Colangelo. "From the establishment of their milk processing plant and door-to-door milk delivery ser-

vice that began in 1913, to the opening of the Putnam stand in 1937, the company has provided thousands of jobs, and the Deary's contributions of time, talent, and funding have benefited thousands of people. We are delighted to include their story and family contribution among the tremendous support we are seeing for

MuralFest Putnam."

Total donations now stand at \$295,834, 18% over the original minimum goal of \$250,000, and a full two years ahead of the project. Laura Crosetti, MuralFest Putnam Sponsorship Chair, explained that the next round of fundraising will focus on in-kind donations to provide for the necessary materials and supplies, and will then launch into the community phase, welcoming contributions from anyone who wishes to support the project.

"We are honored to accept this remarkable leadership gift from the Deary family, and thank them, along with 24 other visionary sponsors who have allowed us to surpass our original fundraising goal," commented Crosetti. "We were hoping to get most of the costs offset by our business community, and they have come through in a stunning manner, proving again the difference of living in a small, rural community, where we

treat each other like family. How fitting that the Deary family extends their arms once again to embrace a beautiful public art project that will benefit generations

to come."

Peter Deary reflected on the family's history of support.

"My siblings and their families have independently supported a variety of causes in northeast Connecticut, sometimes publicly and many privately," said Deary. "This is the first one that we are making as a family to honor the history of our hometown and realize how our own family history is woven into the fabric of it. We have come together in a way that would make our parents and siblings, Tommy and Cathy, very proud. Like them, these murals will be timeless."

To learn more, contact MuralFest Putnam Community Coordinator Elaine Turner eturner245@gmail.com.

To donate, contact Sponsorship Chair Laura Crosetti at lcrosetti@gmail.com

Learn more about The Walldogs at <https://thewalldogs.org/>, and on Facebook at

<https://www.facebook.com/TheOriginalWalldogs/>.

20TH

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musicians came together to honor one of their own, but those involved quickly saw the potential for the event to serve a larger purpose. For the last 20 years, the program has helped raise money for United Services in Dayville and raise awareness of depression, mental health, and suicide prevention, Eric Gould, who has been a part of Particle Accelerator since the beginning, said everyone saw the concert as a way to honor Young's memory with the first show taking place at the Thompson Rod & Gun. Over the years, however, it has grown into something much larger, serving as a way for people to heal and to help everyone understand

the complexities of mental health while promoting music as an outlet to deal with those struggles.

"We want to spread awareness of people needing access to mental health care and things like that but also being aware of yourself and your need to enjoy life. Music and art can be a vehicle for that. Most times mental health isn't a choice. Some folks have substance abuse issues and some folks you wake up one day and you have a mental illness," said Gould. "For some of us, it's the awareness that's a thing and that some people need that help and it isn't always affordable or accessible or isn't always sought out. Folks like you and me need to educate ourselves as to when someone needs that help."

The day includes the Wall

of Angels, an annual memorial remembering those who lost their struggle with suicide. Vendors on hand provide access to resources so that those in attendance know they have someone to go to, or resources to bring to those they meet who need help.

Of course, the day is also filled with positivity and joy in the form of music, and each year every artist involved donates their time, playing free of charge. Gould said the support from the musicians is always overwhelming to the point where they have waiting lists of artists waiting to get the call to take the stage.

"If you've ever asked a group of people to do a thing they do for money for free, you'll know that's usually a no and even a tough ask. For Particle it's not. For what-

ever reason, the artists are so enthused by what we're doing we've never had that issue. They are banging at the door and waiting in line to be a part of this. It's become something folks really want to be a part of," said Gould.

With 20 years now in the books, Gould acknowledges it's getting harder for him to keep up with more modern musical tastes and someday people like him will move on and pass the event on to new coordinators. As he looks to the future of Particle Accelerator, he has some great volunteers working to keep it going specifically mentioning Danny Fleet who is now doing most of the booking, Chris Tsanjoures who has handled sound coordination, and credited Taylor Shea for her help with this year's event.

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LEGALS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF Christine K Abikoff (26-00129)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated April 28, 2026, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Brenda Duquette, Chief Clerk
The fiduciary is:
Cheryl A Baker,
190 Amidon Road,
Ashford, CT 06278
June 19, 2026

NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF Francis J Bessette (26-00133)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated April 7, 2026, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Brenda Duquette, Chief Clerk
The fiduciary is:
Evelyn Bessette, PO Box 137, 13
Windham Rd., Brooklyn, CT 06234
June 19, 2026

NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF Mary H Mandeville (26-00238)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated June 5, 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:
Steven L Mandeville
c/o THERESA IMPERATO
MADONNA,
LAW OFFICE OF THERESA I.
MADONNA, LLC,
110 MAIN STREET,
JEWETT CITY, CT 06351
June 19, 2026

NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF Patsy Converse (26-00246)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated June 9, 2026, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Brenda Duquette, Chief Clerk
The fiduciary is:
Glenn H Converse,
c/o MARK R BROUILLARD,
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