



# WOODSTOCK VILLAGER

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## Bill seeks to name New National Guard facility after John Dempsey



Former Putnam Mayor and Connecticut Governor John Dempsey.

BY JASON BLEAU  
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

PUTNAM — A bipartisan bill in the Connecticut House of Representatives is seeking to name a new National Guard Readiness Center in Putnam

after former State Governor and Putnam Mayor John Dempsey.

The effort is spearheaded by Democratic State Rep. Pat Boyd of the 50th District and 52nd District Republican State Representative Kurt Vail.

Titled H.B. 5295, the bill would name a state military readiness center in Putnam after Dempsey, who served as Putnam Mayor as well as a State Representative and, finally, as the state's 81st Governor.

The Readiness Center is currently under construction on the site of another building that was named after Dempsey, the John N. Dempsey Regional Center which once served the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). The new \$23.5 million facility is expected to open within the next year.

Dempsey, an immigrant of Irish decent, moved to Putnam in 1925 where he worked in the textile industry and in the town hall before joining the Putnam City Council in 1936. He would later be elected mayor serving a total of six terms and was elected to the Connecticut House of Representative in 1949. During this tenure in politics he helped lead Putnam through the Great Flood of 1955. He eventually served as Lieutenant Governor under Abraham Ribicoff before taking the governor-

ship himself after Ribicoff's resignation. Dempsey served ten years as Connecticut's Governor during which time he served as Captain General of the Connecticut National Guard and remained a Quiet Corner staple until his passing in 1989.

In an announcement of the proposal, Rep. Pat Boyd thanked the Veterans & Military Affairs Committee for raising the bill, noting Dempsey's iconic and deserving status to be honored and remembered on the new building.

"Gov. Dempsey was the quintessential American success story—a working-class Irish immigrant who became a champion for the people of Connecticut. As the only modern Governor from Windham County and a former Mayor of Putnam, it is only fitting that this new center, which will protect and serve our region, bears the name of a man who dedicated his life to doing the same," Boyd said in a statement. He called the bill a "fitting tribute to a local hero."

The bill is now expected to move through the legislature with the hopes of having it approved before the facilities grand opening in 2027.

## 11th Annual open sing in the spirit of Pete Seeger coming to FCC Woodstock

WOODSTOCK — The eleventh annual tribute concert dedicated to the memory of folk icon, Pete Seeger is scheduled for Sunday, March 22 at 4 p.m. at the First Congregational Church. Route 169, Woodstock Hill. Tickets are available at the door for a donation of \$25.

The event, affectionately called "For Pete's Sake," is hosted by former State Troubadour Sally Rogers of Pomfret, and Leslie Sweetnam of Woodstock, joined by a host of area song leaders who will present the songs while lyrics are projected for all to join in, including Bill Harley, Sally Rogers, Howie Bursen, Jeff Perkins, Sandy Pliskin, Marilyn Ravina, Carol Rossetti, Carolyn Brodginisky, Maria Sangiolo, Hugh Blumenfeld, and Leslie Sweetnam.

Seeger was one of the folk singers responsible for popularizing the spiritual "We Shall Overcome" that became the acknowledged anthem of the American Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. Even more than a performer, Pete was a skilled song-leader, teaching generations of Americans to add their voices to make a room rock with that sound. Our song leaders will teach each song, many already familiar, so we can sing along, and all words are projected on a large screen.

Seeger is best remembered for touring with two groups, the Almanac Singers and the Weavers in the 1940s and 1950s, and is credited for leading folk music's revival and survival in the 1960s.

He had a string of hit records during the early 1950s as a member of the Weavers, most notably their recording of Lead Belly's "Goodnight, Irene," which topped the charts for 13 weeks in 1950.

Other hits written by Seeger, some recorded by other artists, include "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?"; "If I Had a Hammer"; and "Turn, Turn, Turn." He also popularized Woody Guthrie's "This Land is Your Land." Many of these will be performed (with audience participation!) at the March 22 concert.

Seeger was a prominent singer of protest music in support of international disarmament, civil rights, counterculture, and environmental causes. As a social activist, he supported progressive causes such as racial and religious inclusion which influenced his work.

A fact not well known about Seeger is that he was a U.S. Army veteran, having served in the Pacific during World War II. He was trained as an aircraft mechanic but later assigned to Special Services where he entertained his fellow troops with his banjo and songs.

After the war, he worked on the Civil Rights History Project at the Library of Congress, which no doubt influenced his songwriting and social activism.

Admission is a \$25 donation per person to benefit the Community Kitchens of NE Connecticut which have fed hundreds (if not thousands!) of hungry local people here in the Quiet Corner, especially active during the COVID Crisis. Hot delicious meals are prepared by volunteers and are still being served at their locations in Woodstock, Central Village, Danielson, Thompson. To volunteer or to find out about their serving times and locations, contact: communitykitchensnect@gmail.com or call them at 860-779-2465.

## Local author celebrating new book with open mic and food drive

POMFRET — Local author Christine Kalafus celebrates the publication of her book "Ovum" by hosting an open mic and food drive—in partnership with TEEG—at the Vanilla Bean Café, 450 Deerfield Rd., on Thursday April 2, 6 – 8 p.m.

All proceeds from the sale of Ovum will be donated to TEEG.

Donations of nonperishable items are requested for open mic participants.

"Ovum"—"egg" in Latin—is a personal reckoning with a messy past. Exploring intergenerational debt, the danger and durability of the female body, and the dead, this collection is timely and timeless.

Mark Doty, Winner of the National Book Award, calls "Ovum" "artfully understated."

Christine Kalafus is the author of "Ovum" from Finishing Line Press, and "Flood: A Memoir," published in 2025 by Woodhall Press.

Honors include the Sara Patton Stipend for Nonfiction and the Knightville Poetry Award. Her experimental essay "Sewing the Ghost" is currently under consideration for 2026 Best of the Net. Christine is an Edith Wharton Residency finalist and a Pushcart Prize nominee. She served Pomfret as poet laureate from 2021-2023.

TEEG's mission is to empower individuals, strengthen families, engage the community, and connect vital resources. Through dedicated services, they foster independence and resilience, encouraging everyone to become proactive in building a brighter future. Together, they work tirelessly to ensure that those in need receive the assistance they deserve, helping families to thrive in difficult times and create lasting, positive impacts within our communities.

## Quiet Corner Shouts! supports Daily Bread

PUTNAM — On Feb. 18, four members of Quiet Corner Shouts! presented Karen Osbrey, President of Interfaith Human Services of Putnam (IHSP) with \$558, funds raised for the Daily Bread food pantry. QCS! member and Daily Bread volunteer Kerstin Forrester spearheaded the fundraising effort.

"Daily Bread serves a tremendous need in our surrounding communities to help stave off food insecurity as food prices continue to increase. I am pleased that Quiet Corner Shouts! members chose to support this need," said Forrester.

Quiet Corner Shouts! is a grassroots community organization based in northeastern Connecticut that formed in 2017 to encourage civic engagement and share information that inspires critical thinking and informed decisions. QCS! members support democracy, equality, peace, social justice, a healthy environment and aim to assist their communities through progressive values and actions. They meet regularly in Putnam. The majority of the group's nearly 800 social media followers are from Putnam, Killingly, Pomfret, Eastford, Ashford, Woodstock, Hampton, Brooklyn, Thompson and the surrounding area. For more information on the group, find it on Facebook.





# Day Kimball Health names Dominique Kintzer January Employee of the Month

PUTNAM — Day Kimball Health (DKH) has named Dominique Kintzer, BSN, RN, ACS LION, oncology nurse navigator, as its January 2026 Employee of the Month.

Since joining DKH in February 2023, Kintzer has been a key member of the oncology team, guiding patients and their families through the challenges of cancer care. With 16 years of healthcare experience, including 14 as a registered nurse, she supports patients from diagnosis and treatment to survivorship or end-of-life care, providing resources, coordination, and advocacy every step of the way.

“Nurse Navigation is a quiet role,” Kintzer shared. “It consists of a lot of phone calls, coordination, documentation, advocating, addressing problems, and being recognized means someone saw the invisible work. It reassures me that the difference I’m trying to make for every patient I touch is authentic and acknowledged.”

Kintzer’s contributions extend beyond her direct patient care. She active-



Courtesy

Dominique Kintzer, BSN, RN, ACS LION, oncology nurse navigator, has been named Employee of the Month for January 2026.

ly supports initiatives to strengthen oncology services, collaborates across departments, and engages with the community to raise awareness and provide resources to those who need them. In 2025, she was honored with an Alma D. Paine

Award, presented by DKH nursing leadership to honor exceptional performance, innovation, and professional practice.

“Dominique represents the very best of Day Kimball Health,” said Kyle Kramer, CEO of Day Kimball Health. “Her

work ensures that patients facing cancer never feel alone as they move through the incredibly complex and emotional journey. She brings compassion, leadership, and a spirit of collaboration that strengthens not only our oncology services but the connections across our organization and

throughout the community. Dominique’s commitment to improving the experience for patients and families truly reflects our mission in action.”

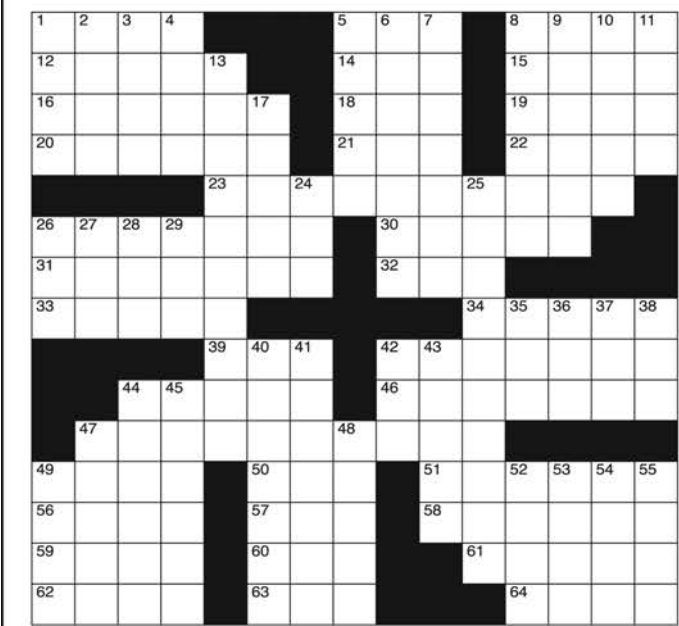
A lifelong learner, Kintzer earned an associate degree in nursing from Quinsigamond Community College and a

bachelor’s degree in nursing from Framingham State University, she is currently pursuing a master’s degree in nursing with a concentration in population and public health at Worcester State University. In 2024, she earned the American Cancer Society’s LION certification in leadership and oncology navigation.

Originally from Massachusetts, Kintzer now resides in Pomfret Center, Connecticut, with her husband and their two children.

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](http://daykimball.org).

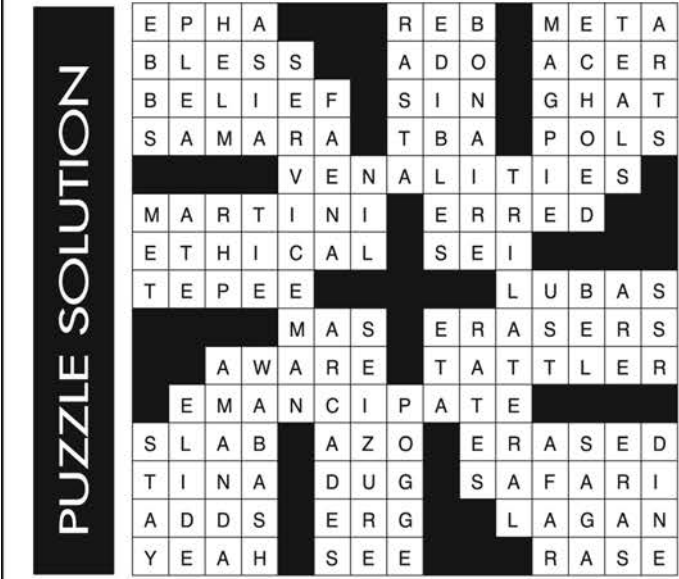


### CLUES ACROSS

1. Unit of dry measure  
5. One who defies authority  
8. Social media giant  
12. Render holy  
14. “Much \_\_\_ about nothing”  
15. Computer manufacturer  
16. Creed  
18. Immoral act  
19. Mountain pass  
20. Winged nut  
21. Don’t know when yet  
22. Elected officials  
23. Corrupt tendencies  
26. Popular adult beverage  
30. Made a mistake  
31. Morally correct  
32. Type of whale  
33. Portable conical tent  
34. Native people of the Congo
39. More (Spanish)  
42. Classroom implements  
44. Cognizant of  
46. One who tells  
47. Free from bondage  
49. Thick piece of something  
50. Containing two adjacent nitrogen atoms  
51. Removed from the record  
56. Legendary singer Turner  
57. Broke up the earth  
58. Hunting expedition  
59. Contributes  
60. Unit of work or energy  
61. Wreckage on the sea bed  
62. Affirmative! (slang)  
63. Witness  
64. Scrape (Archaic)

### CLUES DOWN

1. “\_\_\_ and flows”  
2. Humble request for help  
3. A position of leadership  
4. Continent  
5. Adherent of a particular religion  
6. Things that can be eaten  
7. Self-governing Netherlands territory  
8. Long-tailed crow  
9. Repeated  
10. Bluish greens  
11. Humanities  
13. Someone who serves in the armed forces  
17. Labor (Spanish)  
24. Zero  
25. Shared by involving three parties  
26. Queens ballplayer  
27. Consumed  
28. Rest here please
29. Men’s fashion accessory  
35. American time  
36. Sound unit  
37. They \_\_\_  
38. Soviet Socialist Republic  
40. Places to play video games  
41. A sudden attack of illness  
42. When you hope to arrive  
43. Charges  
44. Actress Seyfried  
45. A tributary of the Ohio River  
47. Omit when speaking  
48. Armored fish  
49. Remain  
52. From a distance  
53. Adventure story  
54. Geological times  
55. Eat dinner



## Local author to speak about son’s death by suicide

DAYVILLE — Marie Lisette Rimer, author of “Back From Suicide,” will speak on Wednesday, March 25 at United Services, 1007 North Main St., Dayville, from 6-8 p.m.

Rimer is an educator and mother whose son Patrick succumbed to suicide. After his death, Lisette sought to understand why her son, a brilliant and successful young man, nevertheless struggled with the depression that would lead to his death. Her book, “Back From Suicide,” was published in 2024.

Rimer received a BA in Sociology and an MA in Secondary Education at the University of Connecticut. She was a publicist for the Connecticut legislature and an award-winning English teacher at Rectory School in Pomfret, Connecticut. The joy of three children and country living was shattered by the suicide of her youngest son, Patrick Wood.

Patrick was his class valedictorian and AP Scholar, and graduated from Stanford University. Lisette explores the seeming contradiction between the promises of his young life and the grip of depression that overtook him.

“ ‘Back from Suicide’ is brilliant and beautifully written. Lisette made me feel as if I were walking with her through Berlin with Patrick’s friends. She proves that children who have it all are vulnerable to mental illness,” writes Dr. Lee Hausner, author of “Children of Paradise: Successful Parenting for Prosperous Families” and former senior psychologist, Beverly Hills Unified School District.

This free presentation, open to the public, is sponsored by NAMI Windham County, and affiliate of the National

alliance on Mental Illness. NAMI Windham County provides support, education and advocacy throughout Windham County on behalf of individuals and families affected by mental illness.

A short meeting of NAMI Windham County members will precede the presentation at 5:45 p.m. Light refreshments will be provided. Pre-registration is requested by email at [info@namiwindhamct.org](mailto:info@namiwindhamct.org).

## Cunniff of Woodstock helps empower young women in Afghanistan through Rawan Project

WESTON, Mass. — Shannon Cunniff, of Woodstock, is part of a group of Regis College students helping to build bridges across cultures and continents through a virtual exchange program connecting young women in Afghanistan with college students in the United States.

Led at Regis by Professor Emerita Sara Weintraub, the initiative is supported by the nonprofit Rawan Organization, which was founded to help young Afghan women learn English, share their stories, and pursue educational and professional opportunities.

“This program reflects what Regis stands for, global learning, compassion, and the belief that education is a bridge to understanding,” said Weintraub. “Our students are not just connecting across borders, they’re changing lives, including their own.”

Through email and video conversations, Regis students and their Afghan partners meet weekly to discuss language, culture, education, and life experiences. The Rawan Project fosters mutual understanding, mentorship, and friendship while advancing the nonprofit’s mission to help the Afghan women to learn English, and to promote literacy and empowerment through education. Regis students describe the experience as transformative, both personally and academically.

Cunniff is studying Education & Interdis. Studies: Humanities at Regis.

For more information, please visit [rawan-school.org](http://rawan-school.org).

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# Narcan training course rescheduled due to snowstorm

DAYVILLE — In response to the ongoing opioid crisis, The Northeast Insurance Professionals and Woodstock Volunteer Fire Association have collaborated to provide a Narcan Training Course open to all community members. The training course will take place on March 25 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. (rescheduled from Feb. 25), at the Woodstock Volunteer Fire Association, 399 Route 169 in Woodstock.

This educational session is designed to equip participants with the knowledge and confidence to recognize and respond to an opioid overdose. Attendees will learn how to identify the warning signs and symptoms, how Narcan works and how to properly administer Narcan during an overdose. Trainer devices will be available for participants to practice the action of administering Narcan when responding to an emergency.

“Naloxone saves lives. When more people are trained and prepared, our entire community benefits,” said NEIP President, Lysa Molnar. “This training empowers individuals in our community to act quickly and confidently during an emergency.”

Narcan is a safe, FDA-approved medication that can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose within minutes. The training is appropriate for parents, educators, business owners, healthcare professionals and any concerned community member.

The event is limited to 30 attendees, and light refreshments will be provided. A \$10 donation is requested that will fund the Fire Association’s ongoing training for public safety.

To register or to learn more, contact Lysa Molnar, NEIP President by emailing neip18@yahoo.com or call 860-377-0755.

By increasing access to overdose prevention education and lifesaving tools, the Northeast Insurance Professionals and Woodstock Volunteer Fire Association aims to reduce stigma, prevent overdose fatalities, and strengthen community response efforts.

# Woodstock Dems’ Souper Supper fundraiser set for March 21

WOODSTOCK — “Soup by the people, for the people” is, once-again, the tried and true “recipe” for the popular Souper Supper community celebration hosted each March by the Woodstock Democratic Town Committee. This year’s event is set for Saturday, March 21, at the East Woodstock Congregational Church, corner of Woodstock Road and Dr. Pike Road in East Woodstock.

In response to last year’s demand (140 customers!), the hours have been extended to 4:30 - 7:30 p.m. Ticket prices are the same as last year: \$10 for adults and \$25 for families. Tickets are available at the door or by calling event coordinator Peg Wilson at 860-928-0773.

Soup lovers can rejoice! Many popular, crowd-pleasing soups featured in past years are expected to headline the menu again this year. Along with a multitude of soups including vegetarian, the menu also includes appetizers, bread and butter, dessert and non-alcoholic beverages.

The Souper Supper has been an annual Woodstock tradition since 2001. 2026 marks its 24th year!

“Come and enjoy!” Peg Wilson encourages. “The WDTC welcomes Democrats, Independents, unaffiliated voters, even Republicans!, plus citizens from all towns,” Wilson said. “Join us and dine; it’s a sit-down event in a friendly atmosphere as we celebrate the democratic electoral process.”

To ensure public health and safety, all food is prepared in a kitchen inspected and certified by the Northeast District Department of Health (NDDH).

# Kelsie Boulet-Briere named to Goodwin University President’s List

EAST HARTFORD — Kelsie Boulet-Briere has earned a spot on Goodwin University President’s List for the fall 2025 session.

Kelsie, a student from Putnam is one of 333 students to make the President’s List, reserved for those who demonstrate exemplary academic performance. Inclusion on the President’s List requires a student to earn a 4.0 GPA during a given academic session.

Goodwin University congratulates Kelsie on making the President’s List and demonstrating such a high standard of excellence in the classroom and beyond!

Goodwin University in East Hartford, is an innovative learning community that empowers hard-working students to become sought-after employees. We tailor our programs to address the needs of employers, and we shape them to fit the lives of students. Classes are conveniently offered year-round - days, evenings, weekends, and online. Degrees may be flexibly layered across certificate, associate, bachelor’s, and master’s programs in a variety of in-demand fields. Better still, we surround our students with the personal support and the professional guidance they need - not just to earn degrees, but to change lives for themselves, their families, and their communities. For more information, please visit [www.goodwin.edu](http://www.goodwin.edu).

To earn a spot on the Dean’s List, Emmanuel students must achieve a grade point average of 3.5 or higher for a 16-credit semester.

With more than 80 majors and areas of study, Emmanuel College combines outstanding classroom instruction and real-world experience to prepare students for lives of professional achievement, lifelong learning, and purpose. Voted the #1 college location in America in 2025 by Niche.com, Emmanuel offers ready access to world class medical, cultural, and business organizations in the Heart of Boston, all with a tight-knit 17-acre campus and 13:1 student-to-faculty ratio. Learn more at [Emmanuel.edu](http://Emmanuel.edu).

# Local students named to Goodwin University’s Dean’s List

EAST HARTFORD — Goodwin University announces that 499 students achieved Dean’s List status for the fall 2025 session.

Kristen Ash of Woodstock  
Haley Bruley of Danielson

# Spaghetti dinner to send Putnam Cub Scouts to summer camp

PUTNAM – Cub Scout Pack 21 of Putnam will host its Spring Spaghetti and Meatball Dinner, including salad, garlic bread, coffee, tea, lemonade and bottled water on Saturday, April 18, from 4 until 7 p. m., at the Albert J. Breault VFW Post 1523, 207 Providence St., Putnam.

Tickets are just \$10 for adults, while children 12 and under eat for free. Take-out or eat-in. There will be free live music, candy bars for sale and raffles by the VFW. Advance tickets are available at the VFW Post and at Joseph’s Jewelers, 153 School St., Putnam, and by calling (860) 928-5873 (voice only). Please leave a message when you call. Proceeds will benefit the Putnam Cub Scout Pack 21 2026 Summer Camp Fund, to help our Cub Scouts go to summer camp in July. Parking is available behind the building and in the municipal parking lot at 175 Providence St.

Bridgette Derosier of Thompson  
Becky Pluta of North Grosvenordale  
Jasmyne Quinn of Rogers

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Qualified self-starter wanted for Town of Pomfret Highway Department. Must hold Class B CDL license/valid medical card and have a background in operating heavy equipment. Position includes, but is not limited to, assignments on all municipal road work including road grading, snowplowing, landscaping, building maintenance, and any other duties as needed and assigned. Five years of driving/equipment operation experience is preferred. Must be available to work nights and weekends as needed, able to lift up to 100 pounds, possess mechanical aptitude in heavy equipment repair, pass a DOT physical and drug screen, and consent to random drug/alcohol testing as required by the DOT. Salary dependent upon qualifications and experience. Attractive benefit package. Interested persons should forward resume/application and three references to the Selectman’s Office, 5 Haven Road, Pomfret Center, CT 06259 on or before March 10, 2026. Application form available at [www.pomfretct.gov/first-selectmans-office](http://www.pomfretct.gov/first-selectmans-office). EEO/AA

# Local Emmanuel College students named to Dean’s List

BOSTON, Mass. — In recognition of their outstanding academic achievement, Emmanuel College has named more than 950 students to the Dean’s List for the Fall 2025 semester. The following local students were named to the Dean’s List:

Kayla Morrison, of Putnam. Morrison is majoring in Nursing.

Gianna Brinson, of N. Grosvenordale. Brinson is majoring in Communication and Media Studies.

Evan Antonson, of N. Grosvenordale. Antonson is majoring in Double Major; Economics; Marketing.

Sofia Thurber, of Thompson. Thurber is majoring in Double Major; Liberal Studies; Elementary Education.

Elizabeth Walker, of Thompson. Walker is majoring in Nursing.

G a b r i e l DiPierdomenico, of Woodstock. DiPierdomenico is majoring in Biology - Health Sciences.

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# Guarding the character of Northeast Connecticut

There is a quiet strength to Northeast Connecticut that longtime residents feel instinctively and newcomers quickly recognize.

It is there in the open fields of Pomfret and Woodstock, in the mill buildings that still stand in Putnam and Danielson, in the winding roads of Thompson and Brooklyn. It is there in the fact that many families can trace their roots here back generations, and in the equally steady arrival of new neighbors who choose this region for its pace, its civility, and its sense of place.

That character did not happen by accident.

It has been shaped over decades by local decisions. Planning and zoning commissions that weigh growth carefully. Inland wetlands boards that protect streams and ponds. Volunteers who preserve historic buildings. Residents who speak up when something feels out of scale.

Growth is not the enemy. Every community needs it. New businesses bring jobs and energy. Housing options help young families stay close to where they grew up. Investment in infrastructure keeps towns viable and competitive.

But growth without intention can erode the very qualities that make Northeast Connecticut attractive in the first place.

Across the state and the country, small towns are grappling with pressure for higher-density development, large-scale commercial projects, and shifting state mandates. Those conversations are not abstract here. They show up in public hearings, on town meeting floors, and in the budgets residents approve each spring.

The question is not whether change will come. It always does.

The question is whether we guide it thoughtfully.

That means insisting on transparency when proposals are presented. It means encouraging residents to read the plans, attend the hearings, and ask informed questions. It means expecting local officials to balance tax base growth with traffic impact, environmental considerations, and neighborhood compatibility.

It also means remembering that preservation is not resistance to progress. Protecting a historic green, maintaining dark night skies, or limiting sprawl along rural roads is not about nostalgia. It is about stewardship.

Many of our towns still have working farms. We have rivers and trails, small downtown storefronts, and residential neighborhoods where children ride bicycles in the afternoon. Those are assets. They are economic drivers as much as cultural ones.

Visitors come to Putnam for its arts and restaurants because the downtown has retained its charm. Families choose Woodstock or Thompson because open space still defines much of the landscape. Brooklyn and Killingly continue to balance commercial corridors with residential areas in ways that shape everyday life.

These qualities require vigilance, not alarmism. They require measured discussion, not shouting matches.

Local government is often slow and sometimes frustrating. But it remains one of the most accessible forms of civic participation. Residents here can still speak directly to decision-makers in a town hall setting. That access is something to value.

As proposals arise in the months ahead, let us approach them with both openness and discernment. Let us welcome opportunity while protecting identity. Let us debate firmly but respectfully.

The future of Northeast Connecticut will not be determined in Hartford or Washington alone. It will be determined in our own meeting rooms and community centers, by neighbors who care enough to show up.

Character, once lost, is difficult to rebuild. But character, when protected and strengthened, becomes the foundation for generations.

# OPINION

Opinion and commentary from the Quiet Corner

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Thompson Public Schools salutes unsung winter heroes

To the Editor:

Winter 2026 has forced Thompson Public Schools to close for five school days (so far), requiring teachers to modify lessons and adjust for the learning gaps that occur when students are not consistently in class. Thompson administrators and teachers have established a culture of doing whatever it takes to get the job done and adapt to change. I am so fortunate to work with such a dedicated team of educators who returned to the classroom last week ready to make the necessary curriculum adjustments.

School, however, could never open without the often-unnoticed efforts of the unsung heroes in our school community.

I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Joe Tkacik, Director of Public Works, and his team for the extraordinary work they have done clearing roads so our families and bus drivers can transport students safely to school. Mr. Tkacik has provided regular communication updates regarding each storm, along with detailed snow cleanup reports that have helped inform decisions about school cancellations or delays. He answers my early-morning calls and is often already out surveying road conditions himself to ensure I have the most accurate information available. Thank you, Mr. Tkacik, and your entire team.

Many may not realize that our DATTCO bus drivers—many of whom are Thompson residents—play a significant role in preparing for a return to school after a storm. Under the supervision of Kat Bachand, Bus Coordinator for DATTCO, drivers dig out an entire fleet of buses to prepare them for the road following

heavy snowfall. Snow removal—often during nighttime hours and in frigid temperatures—is just one of the many winter challenges they face with each storm. Thank you to our bus drivers for braving the elements to ensure our children return safely to school.

While clear roads and ready buses are essential, reopening our school campus requires the coordinated efforts of our entire custodial, maintenance, and grounds crew—working around the clock. Under the supervision of Bill Birch, Facilities Director, the team was onsite clearing parking lots, shoveling stairs and walkways, and removing snow from sidewalks at the bottom of the hill. The recent blizzard dropped a blanket of heavy, wet snow that also created issues on the roof, clogging drains and vents that could have led to leaks and other damage. The team worked high above the ground to remove snow from the roof of our sprawling campus. Thank you to the outstanding Thompson custodial, maintenance, and grounds team for your remarkable work in reopening Thompson Public Schools.

On behalf of the members of the Thompson Board of Education, I extend sincere appreciation to the Department of Public Works, DATTCO Bus Company, and all Thompson employees for your continued commitment and support in ensuring that our students, faculty, and staff have access to a warm and safe learning environment. Let's hope warmer weather arrives soon!

MELINDA A. SMITH  
SUPERINTENDENT  
THOMPSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### Correcting the record on tax increases in Pomfret

To the Editor:

I feel compelled to respond to the back and forth between Ms. Emilio and Ray Wishart regarding year-over-year tax increases in the town of Pomfret.

First of all, kudos to Ms. Emilio for owning up to her error and correcting it. That doesn't happen very often these days. It was quite refreshing!

Based on the tax increase table that Mr. Wishart provided, and I which I will accept at face value, I did a quick comparison with the annual national inflation rates over the past 5 years. Interestingly, with the exception of 2025/2026, the national inflation rate has generally exceeded our tax increases. Bear in mind however that 2026 has just started. Based on this review, while nobody, including myself likes to pay more taxes, most of us understand that we do have to pay for the services we utilize. Some of these costs may be well within the town's control but others, like heating oil, propane, electricity, bus services, etc., are not entirely within our control. On a personal level, I

know that our home heating oil bill has increased significantly year over year. I assume the same is for the town.

I know that this has been said ad nauseam but let's tone the rhetoric down and take the time to really understand any given situation. Stirring the pot randomly is non-productive and only serves to create hard feelings.

National Inflation rates (Source <https://www.usinflationcalculator.com/inflation/current-inflation-rates/>)

| Year | Avg       |
|------|-----------|
| 2026 | 2.4 (YTD) |
| 2025 | 2.6       |
| 2024 | 2.9       |
| 2023 | 4.1       |
| 2022 | 8.0       |
| 2021 | 4.7       |
| 2020 | 1.2       |

BRUCE P. SHAY  
POMFRET CENTER

### No AI should decide our freedoms or our fate

To the Editor:

Do Americans want mass domestic surveillance powered by artificial intelligence (AI)? Do we want AI autonomous weapons selecting targets without human approval?

A serious dispute has emerged between Trump, Hegseth, and the American AI company Anthropic over the use of Anthropic's AI model, Claude, for mass domestic surveillance and fully autonomous weapons.

According to an Anthropic spokesperson, Department of Defense negotiations described as a "compromise" included legal language that would allow safeguards to be disregarded at will. Anthropic has made its position clear. The company states that today's frontier AI systems are not reliable enough to be used in fully autonomous weapons and that deploying them in this way could endanger both warfighters and civilians. It also states that mass domestic surveillance of Americans violates fundamental rights.

The Department of Defense defines an autonomous weapons system as one that, once activated, can select and engage targets without further human intervention. That should give all of us pause. Removing safeguards and human judgment from life-and-death decisions is not a small step. It is a line we cross at great risk.

Following this impasse, the administration designated Anthropic as a "supply chain risk," an action historically reserved for U.S. adversaries and never before publicly applied to an American company. This sets a troubling precedent for any company negotiating government contracts.

An open letter to the Pentagon and Congress,

signed by prominent AI leaders including employees from OpenAI, warned against retaliating against a private company for declining safeguard contract changes. They argued that punishing a company for maintaining safeguards undermines free enterprise, the rule of law, and ultimately national security.

Former Trump AI policy adviser Dean Ball also criticized the move, calling it "attempted corporate murder" and warning it could discourage investment in American AI innovation.

In a letter to Defense Secretary Hegseth, Senators Ed Markey and Chris Van Hollen described the Pentagon's reported actions as a chilling abuse of government power.

Regardless of where one stands politically, this issue and the ongoing abuse of government power goes beyond party lines. AI must be safe, reliable, and ethical before it is deployed in ways that affect our privacy, our civil liberties, and human life itself.

Humans should remain firmly in control of AI systems, especially when it comes to surveillance, safety and weapons. If you share these concerns, contact your members of Congress and urge them to establish clear safeguards that protect our privacy, restrict mass surveillance, and ensure meaningful human oversight in the use of lethal weapons.

Will AI take over the world some day? Time will tell. In the meantime, once we surrender guardrails, it may be very hard to get them back.

LISA ARENDS  
BROOKLYN

## The front porch test

I've always believed you can measure a town by how its front porches are used.

Not how big they are. Not whether they've got rocking chairs or fancy railings. But whether people actually sit on them.

Drive through parts of Thompson or Woodstock Valley on a mild evening and you'll see what I mean. A couple sitting side by side, not talking much, just watching the light change. A neighbor leaning on the railing while someone across the road waves. A dog stretched out at its owner's feet like it's guarding the whole street.

That's a good sign.

When I was a boy, the front porch was where news traveled faster than any television broadcast. You didn't need a group text. You just needed open windows and somebody willing to holler, "You hear about so-and-so?"

It wasn't gossip, exactly. It was awareness. It was the understanding that you belonged to one another.

These days, we've got more ways to communicate than ever, and somehow, we talk less face to face. I'm as guilty as anyone. It's easy to scroll. It's easy to send a quick message. It's harder to sit still long enough to notice who's walking by.

But here in Northeast Connecticut, the porch hasn't entirely surrendered.

In Putnam, you'll see it in the downtown restaurants when people choose the sidewalk tables instead of staying inside. In Danielson, you'll catch neighbors lingering in folding chairs at the edge of a driveway while kids ride bikes in slow circles. In Brooklyn and Eastford, you'll see folks wave at every passing car, even if they're not entirely sure who's inside.

There's something reassuring about that small ritual.

A porch says, "I'm here." It says, "This is my home." And without saying a word, it also says, "You're welcome to pass by."

I've been thinking about that lately because we live in a time when everyone seems to be retreating into corners. Opinions get sharper. Conversations get shorter. People pick sides before they pick up the phone.

And yet, in our little corner of the state, I still see reminders that the middle ground exists.

I see it when a lifelong resident gives directions to someone who just moved to town. I see it when a young family shows up at a local event and an older couple makes room at the table. I see it when a disagreement at a town meeting ends not with applause or outrage, but with people filing out calmly and heading home to supper.

That's porch behavior.

You don't scream across a porch. You don't slam doors every time you disagree. You sit. You listen. Maybe you shake your head a little. Maybe you laugh. But you stay.

I suspect that's part of what has allowed families here to put down roots for generations. This region has seen mills rise and fall, farms expand and shrink, highways come and go. Through all of it, the houses stayed. The porches stayed.

So did the habit of watching out for one another.

I'm not naïve. I know not every street is lined with rocking chairs. I know not every conversation is polite. But I also know that in Killingly, Pomfret, Thompson, Woodstock, and the villages in between, there are still places where people pause at the edge of their property and acknowledge the world beyond it.

That matters more than we realize.

Because the front porch is not just a piece of architecture. It's a posture.

It's the decision not to turn entirely inward.

And as long as there are a few porches in Northeastern Connecticut with someone sitting on them at dusk, nodding to whoever walks by, I'd say the heart of this region is in pretty good shape.

### 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.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Working to increase state funding for public education

To the Editor:

I am honored to represent the people of the 35th State Senate District: Ashford, Chapin, Coventry, Eastford, Ellington, Hampton, Stafford, Thompson, Tolland, Union, Vernon, Willington, and Woodstock.

Growing up, I benefited from public education in Worcester, Mass. I strongly support public education. Before I was elected as a State Senator, I volunteered my time to support public education programs through the work I did as a Board member and then President of the Woodstock Education Foundation, as well as supporting Woodstock’s PTO and the Judy Nilan Foundation. As a State Senator, I have had the opportunity to broaden that support in other towns. Funding for K-12 public education is an important item I have continued to work on during my time in the State Senate.

Education is a foundational opportunity for kids to learn the knowledge and skills they need as they grow, enter the workforce, raise families, and are members of their communities. I sincerely appreciate the teachers, administrators, staff, parents, and town leaders who continue to do what they can to support public education.

One of the reasons I ran for state office after serving 15 years as Chairman of Woodstock’s Planning & Zoning Commission is to further help public education. I have stated publicly for many years, including during my time as a State Senator, that Connecticut does not meet its obligations to fund K-12 public education. Some people may argue the facts or the details, but I think that reality shows this overall to be true. This is not something that the state government should be proud of.

That belief has guided my work in the State Senate. Part of that effort has been pushing back against state budget proposals that would further reduce public education funding. Overall, I was able to help prevent ~\$7 million in cuts in the 35th District. That is a lot of money that otherwise would have been added to already increasing town property taxes. That is an important win.

Another part of the work I have accomplished has been to stop unnecessary changes to Alliance Districts, which would have compromised funding for the towns of Thompson and Vernon. That is an important win.

Last year, I worked collaboratively to increase funding for special education costs. This is important because our communities continue to feel these burdens as costs have skyrocketed. There is a public obligation to provide special education, but if towns cannot afford the costs, then boards of education budgets, by necessity, shift money from non-special education funding or seek higher property tax rates to cover the costs. I continue to advocate for special education funding by voting to increase state education funding both last fiscal year and in the current two-year state budget. That is an important win.

The work does not stop there, and more must be done. Connecticut is too unaffordable for too many hard-working people, their families, seniors, and job-creating small businesses. Residents cannot afford to pay more taxes while costs continue to increase. Through all this, public education remains a core government responsibility.

State government can and should do more. This year, I submitted ambitious bills to do just that, like:

Senate Bill 34: An Act Concerning An Increase Of The Foundation Amount For The Purposes Of The Education Cost Sharing Grant.

Senate Bill 35: An Act Concerning Full Reimbursement Of A School District’s Excess Cost For Special Education.

The Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant starts with a base amount per pupil, and is currently set at \$11,525. But this amount has not been updated since 2013. The real costs in 2026, just based upon inflationary changes, are \$16,650. This \$5,125 difference per student adds up and is a lot of money for each school district and town. We should fix this, and that is what my bill seeks to do.

I am pleased that the School + State Finance Project, CT Conference of Municipalities, Council of Small Towns, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Connecticut Association of School Superintendents, town leaders, and others agree. I am also pleased that the Legislature’s Education Committee agrees and that my bill is part of a bigger effort to increase state public education funding. The current Education Committee bill would phase in \$1,000 per student increases in the ECS base amount, ending with \$15,000 in Fiscal Year 2029, followed thereafter by inflation increases. Although this does not get to the real inflationary costs experienced by towns and has a slow phase in

during expected times of continued inflation increases in costs, it is a starting point for further work and decision-making in the legislature.

At the same time, the Legislature needs to work on a process to change the overall ECS formula that favors cities over towns. A more equitable and fair calculation should be done. I cannot say that this herculean work can be done in one fell swoop during the Legislature’s “short session”; nevertheless, there is now enough need to start the work and carry it into next year’s “long session” and new two-year state budget creation.

My bill proposal would provide more state funding for special education costs. Currently, towns are responsible for covering special education costs. State government steps in with an Excess Cost Grant to pay for special care additional costs that exceed 4-1/2 times the school district’s average student expenditure. This still leaves towns to cover a huge expense. More state funding is needed. My bill would provide more funding. I am pleased that this has bipartisan support. To what degree more funding will be provided is still to be determined, but there is a continued momentum to move things forward.

The more that state government can do to increase K-12 public education funding and to cover the costs of special education, the more it lessens the reliance of towns on property taxes to pay for public education. This is the right thing to do and a way to help make our state more affordable (keep property taxes under control) for more people. I acknowledge that not all that I propose will be done, but I am optimistic that this year, something meaningful can be done and propel us forward. All these things can be done within the state’s statutorily required spending cap without an increase in state taxes or fees to pay for it. It is about how state government repurposes, realigns, and refocuses the taxpayer money it has when prioritizing spending decisions. To me, this is common sense.

SEN. JEFF GORDON  
WOODSTOCK

This war did not need to happen

To the Editor:

For the fourth time in as many decades, America has gone to war to bring down a Middle East nation.

It began with the first Iraq war, which did not change the status quo leading to a second Gulf War because of the (false) threat of weapons of mass destruction. The did end Sadaam Hussein’s government but this led to a power vacuum which in turn led to the spread of ISIS. The third, and longest war in US history, was the Afghanistan invasion in order to rid the country of the Islamic Taliban. This also failed as the Taliban were back in control within in a few days once we withdrew per a treaty negotiated by President Trump in his first term and poorly executed by President Biden. Now we are attacking Iran on the grounds that their ability to build and launch a nuclear weapon that could hit our allies and the American Homeland is imminent. This despite the fact that we have been negotiating and there is no evidence to support the claim. This also despite the fact that the President, after America sent a few bombers in last July, declared that Iran’s nuclear capabilities were “completely and totally obliterated” in a “spectacular military success.” Apparently he was either fed poor intel or more likely stated what he and he supporters wanted to hear despite the real truth.

Trump also engaged in an operation without consulting or giving our allies, sans Israel, any heads up knowing that they would be unwilling victims of the collateral damage. He also did this without the approval of Congress, required under the Constitution, making it an illegal operation.

When Trump ran for office, he promised to avoid any new foreign wars involving the country. This was some of the basis

for his America First movement. He has already (falsely) declared himself President of Venezuela after attacking and abducting its leader, Nicolas Maduro. He forgot that eliminating a leader does not change a country’s bureaucratic structure. And taking out Iran’s leadership will not alter the structure of a nation with 93 million people.

Nor will asking the people to “rise up” and take back their government work. The logistics alone make it impossible, especially in a region with so many competing interests. What’s more, the current Iranian government are the ones with the guns, and they have proven that they have no qualms using them on their own citizens to stay in power.

This is a war that did not need to happen. There was no imminent threat to America. There was plenty of time to continue negotiations with the help of the other regional Arab countries and with the support of our European allies. Trump has not only violated his MAGA promise, he will cost taxpayers billions of dollars, he will cost the military lives, he will contribute further (along with his tariffs) to the recent rise in inflation due to a spike in oil, and he will further alienate our allies who will see their status quo upended as Iran lashes out.

One can only hope that MAGA begins to smell the coffee. If they argue that regime change in Iran makes the world safer, I would argue that a nuclear Russia invading Europe and a nuclear North Korea testing missiles that can reach America represent far more existential threats to the US. We do not need another Afghanistan just as we do not need another Vietnam.

LEE WESLER  
WOODSTOCK

Additional Letters To The Editor,  
See Page A-8  
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# Four promoted at WHZ Strategic Wealth Advisors as firm continues focus on client-centered success



Tanner Sargent

POMFRET CENTER/TOLLAND — WHZ Strategic Wealth Advisors is pleased to announce the promotions of four team members whose expanded roles reflect the firm’s continued growth and long-term commitment to delivering an exceptional client experience.

Tanner Sargent and Ashley Robbins have each been promoted to



Ashley Robbins

Senior Associate, Client Relationships. Seamus Briody has an expanded role as Associate, Client Experience & Events, and Brandon Koehler, CFP has been promoted to Manager, Financial Planning Services.

Brandon Koehler’s promotion to Manager, Financial Planning Services reflects his leadership within WHZ’s client strategic planning function and his



Brandon Koehler

role in supporting advisors with detailed financial analysis, plan development, and internal collaboration.

“Brandon’s promotion is a testament to his technical expertise, leadership, and the confidence our advisors place in his work for our clients,” said Jim Zahansky, Senior Managing Partner and Chief Strategist at WHZ. “As clients expect value delivery, our goal is



Seamus Briody

to deliver quality-focused growth where strong financial planning leadership is essential. Brandon’s expanded role strengthens our ability to deliver thoughtful, coordinated advice to clients while supporting the next phase of our firm’s evolution.”

“All of these promotions underscore our focus on developing talent from within and building durable

teams designed to support clients through every stage of life,” Leisl Langevin, CFP, CDFA, Managing Partner, Advisory remarked.

As Client Relationship Senior Associates, Tanner Sargent and Ashley Robbins continue to serve as trusted points of contact for clients, helping coordinate service, communication, and ongoing support within WHZ’s client-centered team structure.

In his expanded role, Seamus Briody supports firm-wide client experience initiatives and events that reinforce WHZ’s culture of connection, personalized service and building deeper relationships with our client and broader communities.

“The career progressions for Tanner, Ashley, Brandon, and Seamus recognize individuals who consistently demonstrate professionalism, accountability, and a deep commitment to our clients,” said Kate Pitts, Managing Partner, Client Experience and Relationships at WHZ. “They each play a vital role in ensuring our clients feel supported, understood, and confident at every interaction. Their growth reflects both their individual contributions and the importance we place on the client experience across the firm.”

For more information about WHZ Strategic Wealth Advisors and its team, visit [www.whzwealth.com](http://www.whzwealth.com).

# Regional leaders address childcare crisis through workforce development at Northeast CT Winter Forum

WILLIMANTIC — Educators, business leaders, workforce development professionals, and early childhood advocates gathered Monday, February 9th at CT State Community College - Quinebaug Valley for the Northeast CT Childcare Needs Project Winter Forum, focused on building sustainable solutions to the region’s childcare crisis through innovative workforce pathways.

The summit explored three critical strategies: creating accessible credentialing pathways through the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, expanding dual-credit early childhood education programs in high schools, and implementing employer-based childcare as a recruitment and retention tool.

Elevating early childhood as economic infrastructure

Keynote speaker Steve Rioux, Superintendent of Putnam Public Schools and President of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS), reframed early childhood education as essential economic infrastructure.

“We understand that early childhood is not a side issue. It’s core infrastructure for the future of our region,” Rioux said. “When we talk about early childhood and workforce development, we’re not just talking about kids. We’re talking about

families, economic stability, workforce participation, and whether Connecticut can compete and thrive.”

Rioux emphasized that families across northeastern Connecticut consistently identify childcare accessibility and affordability as among their greatest challenges. When programs struggle with staffing shortages, they offer fewer sections, create longer waitlists, and reduce hours, creating instability that affects families’ ability to work.

Building the pipeline: CDA credentials and high school pathways

The first panel explored how the Child Development Associate credential serves as an accessible entry point into early childhood education. Panelists from EASTCONN, Norwich Free Academy, Killingly Public Schools, and the University of St. Joseph discussed partnerships that allow students to begin accumulating required training and hands-on experience while still in high school.

“The CDA is a really nice, low-financial-risk entry point for students and career changers,” said Kristen Hoy, Coordinator of Student Teaching and Certification at the University of St. Joseph. “They’re leaving with skills and a credential.”

“At EASTCONN, we are designing CDA pathways that meet learners where they are,” offered Kristin Hempel, Director of Adult

& Community Programs. “Through our adult education program, individuals can strengthen their English language skills or earn their GED while working toward their CDA credential. We offer an apprenticeship pathway that places participants in local early childhood programs with mentoring, professional learning communities, and stipends to support completion. Together, these options create accessible, supportive entry points into the early childhood workforce.”

Kimberly Mansfield, Director of EASTCONN Head Start Programs, added, “Many of our staff begin as parents in our program. Supporting them through the CDA apprenticeship has been transformative for individuals and for the strength of our early childhood workforce.”

Dual credit: Connecting high school to college and career

The second panel addressed dual-credit programs that allow high school students to earn college credits in early childhood education courses. Panelists from Woodstock Academy, CT State Community College, and the Connecticut State Department of Education discussed both opportunities and barriers.

Moderator Jacquie Wetherell, Director of Workforce Development & Continuing Education, CT State Community College

- Quinebaug Valley, highlighted the newly launched Early Childhood Education Pathway at Tourtellotte Memorial High School in Thompson. In partnership with CT State and the Eastern Workforce Investment Board, students can now complete two college-level early childhood courses while working toward a nationally recognized Child Development Associate (CDA) credential – earning both high school and college credits while gaining hands-on clinical experience. The program positions students for immediate employment or continued study in early childhood education, representing a powerful investment in both students and the regional workforce.

“Early exposure is huge,” said Jordan Long, Director of Dual Enrollment for CT State. “Giving high school students access to these classrooms early allows them to get a jumpstart and lay out a clear pathway for their future.”

Michelle Gray, Family and Consumer Science teacher at Woodstock Academy, described exposing students to diverse career paths through job shadows at daycares, elementary schools, and Montessori programs.

“Many of the staff at the sites we visit are my former students. They’re paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, and classroom teachers

now,” Gray said.

However, panelists acknowledged significant barriers, particularly around teacher certification.

“Certification is a barrier, and if we really want qualified teachers in these programs, we have to address that,” said Kyllie Freeman, Connecticut State Programs Director. Freeman highlighted new pathways including the 098 K-12 Education endorsement and the Alternative Route to Certification program as potential solutions.

Employer-based childcare: A recruitment and retention strategy

The final panel showcased two successful models of school districts providing on-site childcare for staff. Colchester Public Schools partnered with Little People’s Play Place to open a childcare center within Colchester Elementary School, mirroring the school calendar and offering staff discounts. In year two, enrollment has grown from 34 to 49 students, with nearly half being children of district staff.

Glastonbury Public Schools operates an Early Learning Center in a former elementary school, serving primarily district employees at no cost to taxpayers.

Director of Career & Technical Education Elizabeth Cole emphasized the program’s impact on retention: “We are very clear that our Early Learning

Center staff are early childhood educators. Our turnover in staff is incredibly low, and I think that is another retention point.”

Eric Protulis, Executive Director of EASTCONN, stressed the importance of collaboration: “We really want to make sure that we’re talking about elevating the profession - getting people into a living wage career with opportunities for advancement and career development.”

Looking ahead

As Rioux concluded, “If we want to solve the childcare crisis, we have to stop treating early childhood education as invisible labor. We need to elevate the profession, expand career pathways, remove certification barriers, and invest in this workforce as essential economic infrastructure. When we do that, we don’t just support children - we support families, employers, and the future of eastern Connecticut.”

The Northeast CT Childcare Needs Project will continue the conversation at its Spring Forum on Thursday, May 7 from 10 a.m. to noon at the EASTCONN Conference Center, 376 Hartford Turnpike, Hampton, CT 06247. Registration is available at <https://forms.gle/8cWHE1WF46g-Nu7saA>.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What more do we need to see happen?

To the Editor:  
We are now on the cusp of World War III.  
The perceived political enemies of the current President are being hauled before congressional committees chaired by MAGA congresspeople to answer for non-existent collusion with crimes committed by convicted child sex trafficker/rapist Jeffrey Epstein.

That same President has his name redacted and “reputation” protected by the very justice department Congress has legally required (by Dec. 19, 2025) to release all government files concerning Epstein, those who communicated and participated with him—both socially, financially and in business dealings—with the sole redaction in that law for the victims and survivors of Epstein’s heinous acts. Instead, the reverse has happened.

The EPA has rescinded the 2009 Greenhouse Gas Endangerment Finding for Motor Vehicles, defying the 2007 Supreme Court 5-4 ruling in Massachusetts vs EPA that the EPA “...could not refuse to regulate greenhouse gas emissions without a scientific basis grounded in statute.”

“Immigration enforcement” has resulted in the capture and detainment of thousands of families in over 100 new facilities—including tent camps—where a daily count of over 170 children are held in spaces with little privacy, reports of worms in the food served, inadequate medical attention, and complete removal from their lives of familiar schools, friends or rational explanation. How can children, some who are infants, be “law-breakers, rapists and murderers?” With no due process and often including those with U.S. citizenship.

Such “enforcement” raids on neighborhoods have resulted in at least two deaths of those who this administration claim to be protecting: Renee Good and Alex Pretti, both white suburban residents concerned about their neighbors. I have seen no report of any arrests of suspects for these apparent murders, which are “under investigation” by the same system who turned them loose in the first place.

The hold-up (literally?) of over \$410 billion in congressionally approved federal funding,decimating the sectors most important to ordinary people: education, health-care, infrastructure, and disaster recovery. Included in funding “freezes”: projects for roads, bridges and transit; FEMA funds and disaster preparedness initiatives; National Institute of Health research, mental health services and homelessness programs; K-12

and early childhood education. This is tax money that we paid. These attempts to cut and/or delay funding have been concentrated on non-MAGA states like Maine, California, Minnesota, and New York. How do you think Connecticut will fare if/when we are targeted?

This is a longer list than I intended to describe, but I now realize that it could be even longer: illegal –per the U.S. Supreme Court–tariff (a.k.a. taxes) assessments that seem to change on a whim daily and high food prices, for example. By the way, Health & Human Services Secretary Robert Kennedy, Jr. advises to just “buy liver or cheaper cuts of steak that are very, very affordable.” As if he has ever had to worry about “affordable” food...

These are all arguably impeachable offenses,according to the U.S. Constitution, but MAGA congressional leadership refuses to uphold the oath of office they swore, and those who are attempting to hold this president and his administration accountable are routinely vilified and labeled “unpatriotic,” as if the oath were sworn to Donald Trump instead of to the constitution.

Finally, I have deliberately used MAGA as the descriptor for the congressmen, congresswomen and senators who are not only allowing these actions—perhaps out of cowardice or expectation of reward—but who are also actually cheering on these travesties. I would not foul the names of those public servants with integrity and honest commitment I have known and respected over the years by describing this junta and its supporters as “Republicans.” Unrecognizable.

So when you may see local residents—who are not “paid protestors”—legally and non-violently protesting on the streets of Putnam, Killingly or Pomfret these are some of the outrages that they want to bring to your attention so that you can think for yourself and not just swallow someone else’s selfish agenda as though it is your own.

The Constitution State does not welcome those who betray the U.S. Constitution, and the Constitution is not a suggestion. I encourage all ordinary local residents to come together in whatever way is legal and non-violent to bring an end to this traitorous federal regime. Time is not on our side.

Respectfully,  
CLAUDIA ALLEN THOMPSON

Earth — What happened to our future?

To the Editor:  
We are now 25 years into the 21st century. Is this how you imagined it — the future? From “The Jetsons,” to “Star Trek,” to Popular Science Magazine (establish in 1882 and still going in digital form), I grew up with high expectations for the 21st century. What happened? Today, instead of zipping around in our own little hi-tech flying cars, our president insists we keep chugging gasoline in internal combustion engines that were invented in the mid 1800’s. Trump also insists we power our world by returning to digging up and burning 300 million year old rocks (coal). What’s next, a return to telegraph?

At the same time Trump forcibly turns the US back to the past, the rest of the world races ahead into the future, harvesting the infinite supply of electrons from the sun and wind to power their worlds that include clean, quiet, efficient electric vehicles (EVs). With a paltry 12 to 20 percent efficiency, gasoline engines cannot compete with EV’s. Most of the energy generated in an internal combustion engine does not produce the desired effect we seek from a car, which is motion. Rather, in gasoline powered automobiles 80 to 88 percent of the energy generated comes in the form of unwanted heat, which is goes to waste. EV’s by contrast, turn upwards of 90 percent of the energy output of the battery into actually moving the car. One thing I certainly expected in the 21st Century was energy efficiency.

There’s a saying in discussions about technology: “The stone age didn’t end because the world ran out of stones”. In other words, we found something better (and left the stones behind). This quote, credited to Royal Dutch/Shell economist Don Huberts in 1999, went on to say: “and the oil age will not end because we run out of oil”. Huberts further expressed that clean energy will soon replace power stations and cars that mostly burn coal, oil or natural gas. Just as we did when we left whaling behind and shifted to petroleum, its time to shift again...

Humanity’s 21st century automobile and energy future is the proud creation of US invention. The electric car, including the

batteries that power them and also the utility scale batteries now being deployed around the world to power homes and cities — were US inventions. Solar panels were invented by American scientists at Bell Laboratories in Murray Hill, N.J. in 1954. Since then, the efficiency (output) of solar panels has increased 400 percent while manufacturing costs have dropped 90 percent, making them the cheapest means of generating electricity on the planets. Prototype solar panels soon to be in production further increase the output to 660 percent, all while and manufacturing costs continue to drop roughly 10 percent per year. Conversely, the construction costs for coal power plants rose 28 percent between 2021 and 2024. Today, a kilowatt of electricity generated by solar cost on average 4 cents. While a kilowatt generated by coal costs an average of 11 cents, to say nothing of the ecological damages, harm to human health, and climate change costs that come with coal.

The world’s fist large scale, electricity producing wind turbine was also invented here in the US, in 1887. In 1947, wind turbines in Castleton, Vt. were the first to supply power to the local utility network. Following the 1970s energy crisis, large-scale wind turbines were erected in California and operate to this day.

These technologies, invented here in the US, are a critical step to that future we all once imagined. But China has firm control of them now, producing 80 percent of the world’s solar infrastructure and their new EV’s are hailed as the best vehicles on earth, charging in only five minutes. The green energy industry, rejected by President Trump, added \$2.1 trillion to China’s GPD in 2025. Green tech is now the fastest growing sector of the Chinese economy, accounting for 40 percent of China’s GDP growth in 2023, and a whopping 75 percent in 2024. If only the US didn’t turn its back on our own innovation, it could have been us repeating these rich rewards. All we can hope for now, is to catch up. But we’ll have to wait three years to find out if we’ll even try.

KEN WOLSLEGEL  
WOODSTOCK

Trump has made the U.S. less secure than ever

To the Editor:  
The State of the Union Address; the perfect venue for a narcissistic windbag who loves the sound of his own voice. Trump’s marathon speech was like a broken record repeating his favorite lies and exaggerations, punctuated by partisan insults and name calling. It was also a heyday for fact-checkers. His Kool-Aid drinking groupies and Congressional minions loved it, but most Americans have grown weary of it all and aren’t buying his BS anymore.  
Now the life-long liar and con artist has started a foreign war for regime change — two things he claimed to be against. The

What “job” is ICE supposed to be doing?

To the Editor:  
I have to first comment on Iran. Unjustified, stupid, illegal, immoral, unconstitutional, impeachable, murderous, idiotic, deaf to consequences. ‘Nuff said.

Those who scream “Let ICE do its job” miss a not-so-subtle and abysmally stupid element in their support of ICE. The problem is with the definition of “job.” Prior to Donnie Despot’s commandeering and building ICE into the14th largest army in the world that’s even larger than our own Marine Corps, ICE was, for the most part, following the rule of law. Their “job” then was not to be used as an invading army committing murders and kidnappings and violating the Constitution without blame as it is now.

Looking to the wholesale thievery

School funding must be grounded in today’s realities, not yesterday’s assumptions

To the Editor:  
Connecticut’s education funding structure is failing small and rural communities in Eastern Connecticut, with the resulting burden falling directly on local taxpayers. Having served as an administrator in multiple states, I bring a broader, comparative perspective on educational finance; one grounded in firsthand experience with diverse funding models and a clear understanding of how their design directly shapes student opportunity and community sustainability.

Two primary mechanisms drive this problem: the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula and the Excess Cost Grant for special education. As such, I believe it is my foremost responsibility to educate and inform our community about these issues, because absent direct experience in public education, most residents would have no reason to understand the structural funding challenges that so profoundly impact our schools and local taxpayers.

The ECS foundation, the base amount the State recognizes as necessary to educate a. child, has not kept pace with economic reality. In practical terms, districts are being asked to operate in 2026 with a paycheck from 2013. (The base amount is \$11,525 and adjusted for inflation would be closer to \$16,500 - \$17,000 per pupil.) Meanwhile, costs for healthcare, transportation, utilities, special education, technology, and student mental health supports continue to rise. When the State formula does not reflect today’s costs, the difference does not disappear. It shifts directly to local property taxpayers.

The Excess Cost Grant presents a similar challenge. This grant is intended to reimburse districts for extraordinarily high special education expenses once they exceed a statutory threshold. These services are not optional; they are legally mandated. Yet reimbursement often falls short of what is promised and may not arrive within the fiscal year in which the costs are incurred.

The reality is this: the Excess Cost Grant frequently feels like an IOU. The bill must be paid in full and on time, but the reimbursement may come late, reduced, or not at the expected level. For small districts, even one or two high-cost placements can significantly impact the operating budget. As educators, we have a moral and ethical

draft dodger who “weaseled out” of serving in the military doesn’t hesitate to send our troops into harm’s way. He also doesn’t feel the need to consult with Congress before making decisions that impact every American. This dangerous clown is using the presidency for his own self gratification and ego-boosting. Diverting public attention away from other issues like the economy and the Epstein Files is just an added bonus for him. Our great nation is less safe and secure than it’s ever been

TODD PATRIE  
POMFRET CENTER

called tariffs, according to Donnie Despot, Americans are to receive refund checks from collected tariffs. This is clearly a shell game. Donnie collects the tariffs from us, not the offshore suppliers, with one hand and then “promises” to use some of this as a “refund” to us with the other hand. Just a slick shuffle right out in the open. Why would we need a “refund” if he hadn’t stolen it in the first place? He is surely just trying to buy us off.

On a brighter side – did anyone notice the impeccable choice Turner Classic Movies made of playing “Gaslight” during Donnie Despot’s stream of unconsciousness called the State of the Union? Both the movie’s title and content made a perfect statement.

STEPHEN ETZEL  
PUTNAM

obligation to provide the services required by our students. Accordingly, the state has an obligation to fund such services.

The Connecticut General Assembly is currently in session. Alongside fellow superintendents and Boards of Education across Eastern Connecticut, I have proudly advocated for full funding of ECS, a meaningful increase in the foundation amount to reflect today’s costs, and structural reform of the Excess Cost Grant so that reimbursement is predictable and sufficient.

I also urge legislators to stop creating mandates without the corresponding funding necessary to actualize them. When new requirements are enacted without financial support, the cost burden does not vanish; it shifts to municipalities and local taxpayers.

This is not about politics. It is about fairness and sustainability. If the state mandates the service, the state must share meaningfully in the cost. That has not happened. Our students have a constitutional right to a high-quality education. That right demands a funding system grounded in today’s realities, not yesterday’s assumptions. Connecticut must do better.

Respectfully,  
CHRISTOPHER ROCHE  
SUPERINTENDENT  
WOODSTOCK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Concerns and learning from other states  
Why Most States Avoid the Connecticut Funding Model Specific to Special Education

- 1. Special education is a core instructional service, not an anomaly.
  - 2. High-cost placements are unpredictable and destabilize small districts.
  - 3. Weighted systems spread cost more equitably across districts.
  - 4. Catastrophic systems often end up chronically underfunded.
- Policy Trend

Nationally, states are either moving towards or are already implementing:

- Multi-tier weighted systems including placement-based and service intensity-based
- Inclusion of special education inside base formulas
- Reduced reliance on reimbursement, providing greater predictability for districts





SPORTS

Clippers’ tournament run comes to an end against Ledyard



Nick Devlin closes out on defense against Plainfield.

PLAINFIELD — The Plainfield Panthers escaped with a thrilling 66-65 victory over the Putnam Clippers Wednesday night, capturing the 2026 ECC Division 4 title in dramatic fashion. Plainfield came out firing, jumping to a quick 9-0 lead to set the tone early. But Putnam refused to back down. The Clippers chipped away at the deficit and eventually surged ahead in the second half, turning the game into a back-and-forth battle down the stretch. With just 40 seconds remaining, Putnam held a slim 65-64 advantage and appeared poised to

complete the comeback. However, Plainfield delivered in the clutch, knocking down two crucial free throws with 15 seconds left to reclaim the lead. The Panthers’ defense held firm in the final moments to secure the one-point victory and the division crown. Senior Nick Devlin led the way for the Clippers with a dominant performance, pouring in 25 points while grabbing 11 rebounds. Freshman stand-out TJ Espinosa added 23 points, along with nine assists and seven rebounds in an impressive all-around effort.



TJ Espinosa shoots a three pointer over the defender in action during the quarterfinals.

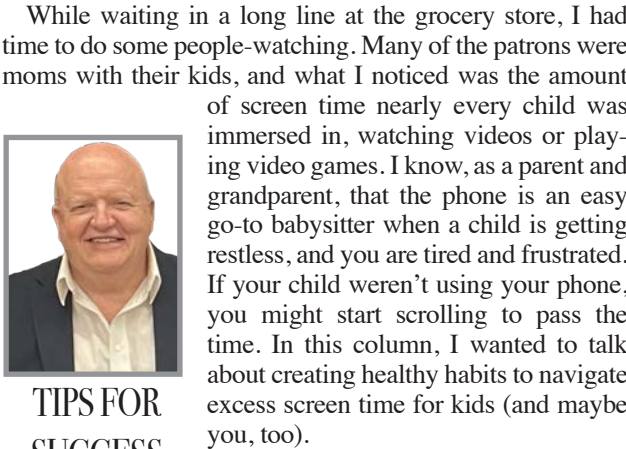
Putnam closes the regular season with an 11-8 record. The Clippers saw their ECC Tournament run come to an end Friday night, falling to Ledyard 63-47 on the road in the quarterfinals. Ledyard controlled the tempo from the outset, shooting the ball efficiently and dominating the boards to keep Putnam from generating second-chance opportunities. Despite the loss, the Clippers found success from beyond the arc, knocking down 10 three-pointers to stay within striking distance for much of the contest.

Freshman TJ Espinosa

turned in a strong all-around performance to lead Putnam with 16 points, seven rebounds, and six assists. Senior Nick Devlin added 11 points and six rebounds, while sophomore Theo Buzanoski contributed 9 points along with two assists and two steals.

With the loss, Putnam’s record moves to 11-9 on the season. The Clippers will now turn their attention to the CIAC State Tournament, which begins March 7, as they look to extend their season on the state stage.

Navigating screen time: Healthy habits for kids



TIPS FOR SUCCESS  
MIKE BOGDANSKI

While waiting in a long line at the grocery store, I had time to do some people-watching. Many of the patrons were moms with their kids, and what I noticed was the amount of screen time nearly every child was immersed in, watching videos or playing video games. I know, as a parent and grandparent, that the phone is an easy go-to babysitter when a child is getting restless, and you are tired and frustrated. If your child weren’t using your phone, you might start scrolling to pass the time. In this column, I wanted to talk about creating healthy habits to navigate excess screen time for kids (and maybe you, too). Screens are inevitable. With this powerful device, we can call, email, text, check the weather, track gas points, take photos, check social media, manage our appointments, place our Amazon order, pay our bills, and get the answer to any question in the universe. How did we ever manage before smartphones? And the downside- Scrolling at night ruins your sleep, helps you become sedentary, and adds to your depression. Can you imagine what it is doing to our kids during their developmental years? It’s all about balance. I think you would agree, the phone is addictive! The American Academy of Pediatrics emphasizes limiting screen time based on age, prioritizing high-quality, interactive content, and avoiding screens for children under 18-24 months, except for video chatting. Key recommendations include: Younger than 18 months: Avoid digital media, except video chat. 18–24 months: Limit to high-quality, educational programming. Two to five years: Max one hour per day of high-quality, educational, co-viewed content. Older than six years: Set consistent limits to ensure adequate sleep, exercise, and schoolwork. Different developmental stages have different needs: • Toddlers/preschoolers: minimal screens, co-viewing essential • Elementary age: structured educational content • Tweens/teens: social connection becomes important, and boundaries are absolutely needed Is it essential to be technologically literate? Yes! Technology helps us learn more, learn faster, and more efficiently. Our learning curve has been exponential because of it, and now with AI, watch out. The problem becomes the time and balance with moving your body and the emotional connections we need through relationships. I just read that Gen Z is turning to AI for counseling and companionship. Dating is down, new relationships are down, and anxiety is up. It’s time to step back and take a strong look at what we are doing. Active versus passive consumption. My wife and I are big readers, and we love getting our fix in the library. We chat with the great library staff, enjoy various programs they put on, and leave with an armful of books. If you or your kids scroll endlessly with no end in sight, you are wasting time and letting screen time become addictive. Create healthy screen habits Having clear and reasonable rules for viewing is necessary. Let’s establish clear boundaries for your kids: • Screen-free zones (dinner table, bedrooms- a must) • Screen-free times (first hour after waking, last hour before bed) • Tech-free family time • Prioritize content quality • Educational and creative apps over mindless scrolling • Co-viewing and co-playing when possible • Age-appropriate content • Video calls with family vs. passive viewing • Interactive learning vs. auto-play videos (I personally have been using Duolingo to brush up my Polish. Model healthy behavior: • Parents be role models for balanced use • Emphasize active vs. passive consumption • Teach critical thinking about online content Physical activities are essential for a child’s development, motor skills, emotional intelligence, and creativity are built thru through nature and hands-on play. Rather than a total digital ban, aim to integrate technology as a tool. To maintain balance, establish a “limited screen time as a reward” system, co-create a family media plan, and designate daily “blackout” hours. Embracing unstructured “boredom/free thinking” is vital to developing your child’s independence and creative spirit. I want to warn you that the ever-present threat of cyber-bullying and online predators must always be a concern. Tablet use is an open invitation to anyone in the world to hack into your child’s life if you don’t keep a close eye on it. Monitoring electronics is not an invasion of your child’s privacy; it’s your responsibility to keep them safe. Parental control apps are available to help filter content, control screen time, and generate activity reports. You can even flag mood and behavioral changes, and get bullying alerts. Never, I repeat never, let your kids take tech to bed. Can your kids escape the screen? The answer is yes and no. To use the philosophy of moderation is the perfect answer. Having firm criteria will help you balance everything. Just like Goldilocks, there can be too much, too little, and just right. Assessing this proportional use by your child’s age will be a never-ending question. If you are asking, “Is it too much?” The answer is probably yes. Be your child’s guide to a healthy but guarded relationship with tech. Mike Bogdanski is a martial arts Grandmaster and anti-bully activist.

The Week in Sports at Woodstock Academy

Boys Hockey

Eastern CT Eagles 3  
Woodstock Academy 1  
The two teams battled through two scoreless periods at the Rose Garden Ice Arena before the host Eagles (15-4) were able to put a couple of goals on the board. Wyatt Loughlean scored just 20 seconds into the final 15 minutes and Nick Rembish added a second goal nine minutes later. The Centaurs (2-17) made it a one-goal game again when Josh May scored with 4:08 left in regulation but Loughlean added his second goal of the game into

an empty net to account for the final. Brady Hebert made 57 saves in net for Woodstock Academy.

Girls Basketball

Eastern Connecticut Conference Tournament Quarterfinal  
(2) Woodstock Academy 48  
(10) NFA 36  
The Wildcats trailed by only six with just 37 seconds left in the first half but a Vivian Bibeau 3-pointer followed by a turnover and a Kaylee Saucier layup gave the Centaurs an 11-point halftime lead and

Woodstock Academy never led by less than eight the remainder of the way. Saucier led the Centaurs to the ECC semifinals Saturday, where they will meet third-seeded Stonington, with 14 points while fellow senior Isabel D’Alleva-Bochain finished with 13. The win was also the 12th in a row for Woodstock Academy (17-4). Orianna Pescatello led NFA (7-15) with 12 points and Savannah Guernsey chipped in 10.

Boys Basketball

Eastern Connecticut

Conference Tournament Quarterfinals  
(3) NFA 78  
(6) Woodstock Academy 58  
The Wildcats advanced to the league semifinals thanks to a school-record nine 3-pointers by Jamier Ford who finished with 31 points, Josh Lavoie added 13 for NFA (12-9) which will play second-seeded New London in the ECC Semifinals on Saturday. Mert Coker paced the Centaurs (11-10) with 13 while Vuk Lisancic added 12.

Killingly High School Weekly Sports Wrap-Up

Girls Basketball

Vs. NFA  
Killingly Girls Basketball (9-12) was led in a loss against NFA (7-14) behind 18 points from Ella Adams while Catrina Turgeon added 11 points! Final Score: NFA 58 - Killingly 44

Gianna Peters added 9 points for Killingly. Jazin Torres scored 15 points and Savannah Guernsey scored 14 points for NFA.

Boys Basketball

Vs. St. Bernard’s  
Killingly Basketball (16-

6) took the victory over St. Bernard’s to advance to the ECC D1 Semi-Finals on Saturday! Final Score: 73-61! Quin Crowley scored a game high 22 points and had 6 rebounds to lead Killingly, while Greyson Marquez added 17 points and 6 assists! Quinn

Sumner had 13 points and 13 rebounds for another double-double! Ethan Hall had 10 points, Peter Kazantzis added 6 points and 3 rebounds, and Jake Beaudreault had 3 points and 12 rebounds for Killingly! Brevin Gonzalez led St. B’s with 18 points.

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# Women & wealth

WHAT THE NEXT PHASE OF THE WEALTH TRANSFER MEANS FOR FEMALE INVESTORS

The greatest generational wealth transfer in history is underway, and women stand to be its primary beneficiaries. Over the next two decades, an estimated \$124 trillion in assets will change hands as Baby Boomers and the Silent Generation pass their wealth to younger generations. Approximately 70 percent of this historic transfer will flow to women by 2048.

This represents an unprecedented opportunity for female investors, yet it brings unique challenges that require strategic navigation. Working with women to build financial knowledge and confidence is something I’ve been passionate about throughout my career, so this inflection point is particularly meaningful for me.

Data shows that women actually tend to be more prudent investors than men, and yet sometimes a lack of confidence in managing finances can make them hesitant to take control of their own financial matters. With the Great Wealth Transfer upon us, the time is now for women to overcome that hesitation.

Here’s a look at what’s to come, and how women can prepare.

Understanding the two-phase wealth transfer

The wealth transfer to women happens in two distinct phases. First, approx-

imately \$54 trillion will move through spousal inheritance, with 95% of surviving spouses being women. This reflects both women’s longer life expectancy and typical age differences in marriages to men.

The second phase involves vertical wealth transfer, where roughly \$47 trillion will pass from older generations to daughters and granddaughters. By 2030, women are expected to control 38% of investable assets in the United States—approximately \$30 trillion in financial power.

The Confidence Gap challenge

As I mentioned earlier, women face a persistent financial confidence gap. Recent surveys found that 80 percent of women who inherited from parents and 83 percent of widows face a “wealth transfer challenge” such as not knowing whether their benefactor had a will or where important documents were located.

This gap exists despite compelling evidence showing women excel as investors. Research demonstrates that women’s portfolios frequently outperform men’s by implementing patient, disciplined strategies focused on long-term goals. While 71 percent of women now own stock market

investments (an 18 percent increase from just two years ago) many still underestimate their financial capabilities.

Key challenges women face

Women encounter several unique obstacles when building wealth. The gender wage gap remains significant, with women earning approximately 80 percent of what men earn. This disparity compounds over time, resulting in median retirement savings of \$50,000 compared to men’s \$157,000.

Career interruptions for caregiving responsibilities further impact financial positions. Nearly 39 percent of women have forfeited income or career advancement to care for children or aging parents. Additionally, women’s longer life expectancy—five to six years beyond men—means retirement savings must stretch further to cover healthcare costs and living expenses. Working with a financial advisor to plan for such circumstances can help ease anxiety in these areas.

Turning inheritance into lasting wealth

The key to maximizing inherited wealth lies in proactive planning. Recent research found that 93 per-

cent of women expecting an inheritance are building wealth independently rather than relying solely on those funds to achieve their financial goals.

When women inherit, they’re making smart choices. Studies show that 45 percent invest their inheritance for long-term growth, 43 percent use it to pay off debt, and 41 percent allocate funds for meaningful experiences. These decisions reflect women’s goal-oriented, values-based approach to financial planning.

Essential steps for female investors

Start investing early and don’t wait for an inheritance to begin building wealth. Women who begin investing earlier build significantly more wealth through compound returns. Millennial women now start investing at age 27 on average, compared to Gen X women at 31 and Boomers at 36.

Have transparent conversations with family members about estate planning before wealth transfers occur. Many inheritance challenges could be prevented through better communication about wills, account locations, and trusted advisors. These conversations may feel uncomfortable, but they’re essential for smooth wealth transitions.

Work with a trusted financial advisor who understands women’s unique

circumstances. A comprehensive wealth management partner can help you navigate tax implications of inherited assets, develop appropriate investment strategies, plan for longevity and healthcare costs, and integrate inherited wealth into your existing financial plan.

Develop a clear plan for inherited assets before they arrive. Women are more likely to leave rollovers uninvested for extended periods, missing potential market returns. Having a documented investment strategy prevents cash from sitting idle and losing value to inflation.

Take control of your financial future

The great wealth transfer presents a pivotal opportunity for women to achieve financial independence and security. While challenges persist, women have demonstrated strong investing capabilities when they engage proactively with their finances.

Whether you’re expecting to receive an inheritance, managing spousal wealth transfer, or building wealth independently, partnering with experienced advisors who understand your unique circumstances makes all the difference.

At WHZ Strategic Wealth Advisors, we work with women of all ages and in all stages of life to help women navigate complex

financial decisions with confidence. Our comprehensive Plan Well. Invest Well. Live Well.™ strategic process is designed to map out a financial plan that addresses your specific goals and life circumstances, helping to deliver on our goal of providing you with “Absolute Confidence. Unwavering Partnership. For Life.” Contact us for a complimentary consultation at whzwealth.com or call (860) 928-2341.

Authored by WHZ Senior Vice President, Financial Advisor Leisl L. Langevin, CFP®, CDFA®. AI may have been used in the research and initial drafting of this piece. Securities and advisory services offered through Commonwealth Financial Network®, Member FINRA/SIPC, a Registered Investment Adviser. 697 Pomfret St., Pomfret Center, CT 06259 and 392-A Merrow Rd., Tolland, CT 06084, 860.928.2341. <http://www.whzwealth.com>. 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. Past performance does not guarantee future results.

# Life for 19th century women in the Quiet Corner

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

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

Fish Fridays: Support Killingly Grange #112, an historic property (the old Killingly Centre school-house) 801 Hartford Turnpike. March 6, 13,20, 27, and April 3 from 4:30-6:30 p.m. Meal 1: Baked



**KILLINGLY AT 300 MARGARET WEAVER**

or Fried Fish dinner \$18-10 ounce fish fillet, potato, coleslaw, roll, dessert, drink. Meal 2: Clam cakes & chowder, \$12-6 clam cakes and 1 bowl of clam chowder. Al la Carte while supplies last: clam strips \$10; Clam cakes: 6 for \$8, 12 for \$14; clam chowder, \$6/bowl; Fried fish sandwich-\$5; Onion rings-\$4; French fries-\$3; Cheese sticks-\$3. Limited number of meals. Call or text Terry at 860-885-1813. At the door pay by cash, credit card or check payable to Killingly Grange.

\$1 per meal discount if you bring a nonperishable food item for the food pantry.

Saturday, March 7. Mary

Dixon Kies of Killingly and Her Times. 12:30-1:30 p.m. Putnam Municipal Complex. Sponsored by Putnam Public Library and the Aspinock Historical Society of Putnam. Join Killingly Municipal Historian Margaret Weaver for a Women’s History Month program. Mary is considered the first woman to receive a U.S. Patent in her own name. Reflect on why she applied for the patent and how life was changing in Northeastern Connecticut in the early 1800’s. There will be time for questions and discussion following the program.

If you read the above announcements, you know I have been busy working on my presentation on Mary Dixon Kies, the first U.S. woman to receive a patent in her own right, for tomorrow (March 7) at Putnam Public Library.

March is Women’s History Month, so it is most fitting to talk about how different life was for women in years gone by in the 18th and 19th centuries. Mary turned 18 in 1770 on the day she married her first husband (Isaac?) Pike. (We haven’t yet found proof of his first name.) She lived until 1837 and died about age 85. That’s a long life for any woman. Mary lived through the Revolution and then at a time when Northeastern Connecticut and Killingly were rapidly changing. It’s sad to say, but life was still very restrictive for adult, married women. Mary lived at a time when coverture was the law in Connecticut. “Under this principle, a married woman’s legal rights were subsumed by her husbands’ (She had) no separate legal identity...and could not act independently in legal matters. Any property, earnings, or inheritance a woman had before or during her marriage came under her husband’s control. The wife could not enter into contracts or sue others in her own name. The Married Women’s Act of 1877 formally abolished this system.” (AI overview). The laws of Coverture must have affected Mary Kies as she prepared to apply for her 1809 patent. They certainly would have applied to any profits that would be gained from her “invention” of weaving straw with silk. Do try to attend the Putnam program and participate in the discussion. If you are unable to attend, please feel free to email me your thoughts.

When discussing coverture with Tom Kelleher, historian at Old Sturbridge Village, he commented that in Laura Thatcher Ulrich’s Pulitzer Prize Winning book, “A Midwife’s Tale, The Life of Martha Ballard Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812,” after they married Martha Ballard referred to her daughters as Mrs., not by their given names. (conversation 2/11/26). I thought

I remembered married women being referred to by their husband’s names in Windham County Transcript articles so decided to take another look at some old papers.

The Thursday, Oct. 17, 1946 Transcript provided a wonderful example. “Sarah Williams Danielson Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution entertained over 60 members and guests at the Palmer Homestead in Brooklyn last Friday. The rooms were artistically arranged and decorated with more than 36 different floral groupings from the garden by Mrs. Orray Potter, who is in charge of the homestead. Mrs. Henry A. Myers, vice regent of the local chapter and Miss Marion D. Chollar, the honorary regent, were co-hostesses for the afternoon. Miss Bernice D. Cogswell and Mrs. Sabin S. Russell received the guests upon arrival and Miss Adah Danielson, regent, presided over the business session.” (p.1). Did you notice that the given names were used for unmarried women but not those who were married? This fact is important to note if you are searching old newspapers for articles on ancestors. Take Mrs. Sabin Russell, for example. You might be thinking of her with her given name, but the article won’t know that. Be sure to broaden your searches. Include names of spouses or even just surnames. Good luck and have fun!

How long did it take for women to be recognized in their own right by the newspapers? I checked the Thursday, Sept. 18, 1975 Transcript and found a mixed representation (and even found my name-under my husband’s). “October 11 has been formally announced as Alumni Day at Killingly High School and the official kickoff for activities sponsored by the Killingly Bicentennial Commission... Spearheading a year of special bicentennial functions, the initial event has been

planned for several months by the Commission in general with special efforts by subcommittee members Carolyn R. Cooper, June Desrochers, Anthony R. Muscente, Louisa Viens, George Meehan (chairman), and Louise S. Berry, Killingly Bicentennial chairman...Under the direction of Mrs. Charles Weaver, Heritage subcommittee chairman, a comprehensive and chronologically annotated history of public education in Killingly has been developed and is soon to be presented...”(p.1.)

Progress in Women’s Rights was being made in a big way in Connecticut by 1975. An article in the above paper revealed that Ella Grasso was Connecticut’s Governor in September, 1975. “ Ella Grasso was Connecticut’s first female governor, inaugurated in January 1975. She was a trailblazer who became the first woman in the United States elected governor in her own right, meaning she did not follow her husband into office. She served from 1975 until resigning due to illness in 1980. She served in the Connecticut General Assembly (1952-1959), as Secretary of the State (1959-1970), and in the U.S. Congress (1971-1975). She gained recognition for her leadership during the Blizzard of 1978.” (AI overview).

Margaret M. Weaver Killingly Municipal Historian, February-March 2026. Special thanks to Tom Kelleher. Windham County Transcripts are available online at [killinglypl.org](http://killinglypl.org) under archives (Killingly Public Library). For additional information email me at [margaretmweaver@gmail.com](mailto:margaretmweaver@gmail.com) or visit the Killingly Historical Center at 196 Main St., Danielson, Wednesday or Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. or call 860-779-7250. Like us at Facebook [www.facebook.com/killinglyhistoricalsociety](http://www.facebook.com/killinglyhistoricalsociety).



Courtesy The Putnam Democratic Town Committee raised \$3,600 to benefit Daily Bread and Interfaith Human Services of Putnam. The event, held at Montana Nights in Putnam, featured six teams of celebrity bartenders competing for donations and drew an attendance of over 200 people from Northeast Connecticut. Pictured are Mike Bogdanski, Karen Osbrey (accepting the donation), and Joe Carvalho.



# Paws Cat Shelter to hold fundraising social

WOODSTOCK — Paws Cat Shelter is holding a social fundraising event on Wednesday, March 11 from 4-8 p.m. at Taylor Brooke Brewery, 818 Route 171 in Woodstock. Join us on National Dream Day when our cats are dreaming of a forever home. Beer and wine for purchase, basket raffle, light snacks for purchase or bring your own. Destination Events Co. photo booth for added fun.

Paws is a non-profit, all volunteer organization caring for the cats of our communities. For more information or to make a monetary donation, contact Paws at 860-315-1228.

# Area students named to UConn Dean’s List

STORRS — The University of Connecticut congratulates the following students on being named to the Dean’s List for the Fall semester of 2025.

|                |                                                                     |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Undergraduate  | Ricciardone, Isabella Spaderna, Haiyang Wu.                         |
| WOODSTOCK      | Hannah Darigan, Skylar Dodge, Rebecca Douglas, Elijah Saine.        |
| WOODSTOCK      | VALLEY-Melinda Morin.                                               |
| Graduate       |                                                                     |
| BROOKLYN       | Johnpaul Rimoczy.                                                   |
| DANIELSON      | Joselyn Perez.                                                      |
| POMFRET CENTER | Justin McDermott.                                                   |
| STORRS         | Naomi Inman, Yukta Lodha, Serzat Safaltin, Madeline Uretskyresnick. |
| TOLLAND        | Sydney Laxton, Amanda Noble.                                        |

Undergraduate

BROOKLYN-Stephanie Bellows, Christopher Dooley.

PLAINFIELD-Paige Ferreira.

STORRS-Paolo Alderucci, Shuhan Bian, Cooper Clark, Matthew Doucette, Michael Frank, Xinrui Ge, Tianyang Jiang, Yelin Kim, Autumn Mahoney, Joseph Marcellino, Dalton Milgram, Bexultan Turashov, Zonghuan Xie, Tianze Xu.

TOLLAND-Anna Cadman, Aidan Darcey, Michael Davis, Rémi Dupuis, Serene Gherri, Saad Khan, Madelyn Milne, Owen Nivison, Julia Poulin, Emerson

# OBITUARY

## Raymond Walter Brendlinger, 71



Raymond Walter Brendlinger, 71, of Brooklyn, CT passed away peacefully on Friday February 20, 2026 at Day Kimball Hospital, after a brief battle with cancer. Born on August 27, 1954, in Cook County, IL son of the late Samuel and Janette Brendlinger, Raymond lived a life defined by service, family, faith, and connection. He proudly served in the United States Air Force for 16 years as an aircraft mechanic. Raymond shared a lifelong love of trains with his twin brother, Richard, a hobby they enjoyed from childhood. They spent countless hours building and collecting trains, with HO models being Raymond’s favorite. These shared memories stayed with him throughout his life, even after Richard’s passing, a loss that weighed heavily on his heart. He is survived by his loving wife, Karen Brendlinger; his stepdaughter, Jennifer Manuilow; his sister and brother-in-law Peggy and Dave Bailey, and their children Lacey Gomez and Jeff Bailey; Karen’s late brother Dennis Manuilow; her siblings Joanne (Timothy) Lantry and John (Christine) Manuilow and cherished nieces and nephews: Dennis (Christina) Manuilow, Rene Muller, Nicole (Conor) Clifford - and their children, twin boys

Merrick and Hudson Clifford and daughter Avery - Kyle Manuilow, Wade Manuilow, and Collin Manuilow. He is also survived by his beloved dog, Lily. He was a devoted member of the Lighthouse Church of God. On April 27, 1991, he married the love of his life, Karen Brendlinger, his military pen pal. Their bond was filled with laughter, friendship, and unwavering support, and together they built a life rich in love and shared adventures. Raymond cherished every moment with Karen, and she was his greatest companion and confidante. He welcomed his stepdaughter, Jennifer Manuilow, as his own, nurturing and supporting her. Alongside his beloved wife, one of his happiest routines was their daily outing together, sitting with friends in their usual spot where stories were told, laughter was easy, and no one was ever a stranger. Those moments meant everything to him. A calling hour will be held in Tillinghast Funeral Home 433 Main Street Danielson, CT on Friday March 13, 2026 from 10-11 AM with a memorial service beginning at 11. Burial with full military honors will be private and at the convenience of Raymond’s family. tillinghastfh.com



Send all obituary notices to Villager Newspapers, PO Box 90, Southbridge, MA 01550, or by e-mail to [obits@stonebridgepress.news](mailto:obits@stonebridgepress.news)

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

~ ~ ~

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# LEGALS

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
**ESTATE OF**  
**Daniel J Lafontaine (26-00065)**  
The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated February 24 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:  
Tamara Lafontaine  
c/o NICHOLAS SEAN MAZZARELLA, KAPLAN AND BRENNAN, LLP,  
643 NORWICH ROAD,  
PLAINFIELD, CT 06374  
March 6, 2026

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
**ESTATE OF**  
**Leigh M Johnson (26-00032)**  
The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated February 20 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:  
Kendra Williams,  
3627 Dean Hollow Road,  
Nickelsville, VA  
24271  
David P Johnson,  
413 Browning Ave.,  
Bismarck, ND 58503  
March 6, 2026

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
**ESTATE OF**  
**Edward Carleton Page, AKA Edward C Page (26-00060)**  
The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated February 20 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:  
Carlene Page-Redmann  
c/o KEVIN JOSEPH HECHT, LW OFC

KEVIN HECHT P,  
220 SOUTH MAIN ST, POB 67,  
CHESHIRE, CT 06410  
March 6, 2026

**Town of Woodstock PZC**  
On February 19, 2026, the Town of Woodstock Planning & Zoning Decision made the following decision:  
**Approved Application:** #673-02-26, 103 Rawson Road (MBL#5705-12-14) two lot subdivision (Construction of New Single Family Home). Applicant: Christopher & Briana Cremers. Details of this approval may be obtained by contacting the Woodstock Land Use Department at [landuse@woodstockct.gov](mailto:landuse@woodstockct.gov)  
March 6, 2026

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
**ESTATE OF**  
**Ronald Edward Morin, Sr. (26-00067)**  
The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated February 24, 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:  
Sarah Boss  
c/o NICHOLAS SEAN MAZZARELLA, KAPLAN AND BRENNAN, LLP,  
643 NORWICH ROAD,  
PLAINFIELD, CT 06374  
March 6, 2026

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
**ESTATE OF**  
**Steven A DeCubellis (26-00027)**  
The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated February 24, 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:  
Steven A DeCubellis, Jr.  
c/o THOMAS A BORNER, BORNER SMITH ALEMAN HERZOG & CERRONE,LLC,  
155 PROVIDENCE STREET,

PO BOX 166,  
PUTNAM, CT 06260  
March 6, 2026

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
**ESTATE OF**  
**Daniel Hennessey (26-00036)**  
The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated February 25, 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:  
Jason D Hennessey  
c/o THOMAS A BORNER, BORNER SMITH ALEMAN HERZOG & CERRONE,LLC,  
155 PROVIDENCE STREET,  
PO BOX 166,  
PUTNAM, CT 06260  
March 6, 2026

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
**ESTATE OF**  
**Douglas J Burlingame (26-00066)**  
The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated February 24 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:  
Tiffany O'Brien  
c/o ANDREA L TRUPP A, LAW OFFICE OF ANDREA L. TRUPPA, LLC,  
880 ROUTE 171,  
WOODSTOCK, CT 06281  
March 6, 2026

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
**ESTATE OF**  
**David H Zielenski (26-00061)**  
The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated February 19, 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:  
Christine Plaza  
c/o ANDREA L TRUPP A,  
LAW OFFICE OF ANDREA L. TRUPPA, LLC, 880 ROUTE 171,  
WOODSTOCK, CT 06281  
March 6, 2026

**LEGAL NOTICE**  
**WOODSTOCK PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**  
The Woodstock PZC will hold a Public Hearing on Thursday, March 19, 2026 at 7:45 p.m. at Woodstock Town Hall, 415 Route 169, Woodstock, for the following:  
Application #674-02-26, 253 Rt 169 (MBL#5779-73-20): Change of Use (Tattoo, Art gallery, Permanent Make-up). Applicant: Haley Kuhn. The public may speak and submit written communications until the close of the public hearing. Details of the application are available from the Town Planner, [landuse@woodstockct.gov](mailto:landuse@woodstockct.gov) or available in the Land Use Office.  
David Morse  
Chairman  
March 6, 2026  
March 13, 2026

**TOWN OF KILLINGLY**  
**METERED USE**  
**LEGAL NOTICE**  
Payments will be received in the Revenue Office, 172 Main Street Killingly CT 06239, as follows: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 8-4:30pm, Tuesday 8-5:30pm, and Friday 8-11:30am. By mail, online, or in our drop box.  
The second installment of metered use is due March 1, 2026. If payment is not received on or before April 1, 2026 the installment becomes delinquent and subject to interest at the rate of 18% per annum, 1.5% per month, or any fraction of a month, from the due date. A minimum of \$2.00 interest will be charged for each delinquent tax bill and installment. Please visit our website for full details and online payments [www.killingly.org](http://www.killingly.org).  
April Lamothe, CCMC  
Revenue Collector  
Town of Killingly  
February 20, 2026  
March 7, 2026  
March 27, 2026



# Fire & Ice continues Putnam tradition



Multiple businesses set up ice-themed bar displays offering a variety of adult beverages.



An ice sculptor takes a chainsaw to his block as his creation takes shape.



One of the most notable pre-made ice sculptures spread around Downtown Putnam, this sculpture depicts a copy of the Declaration of Independence for the United States of America's 250th birthday.



Putnam's official Town Crier, Romeo Blackmar made his annual trek through Putnam's Main Street for Fire & Ice.



The students of the Complex Performing Arts Center work on their personalized ice sculpture that eventually served as an advertisement for their production of "Legally Blonde: The Musical."

PUTNAM — Despite being delayed due to the heavy winter snow earlier in February, Putnam's annual Fire & Ice festival went off without a hitch on Feb. 27, continuing an annual tradition that celebrates both the Valentine's Day holiday and the joys of the New England winter. Ice sculptures, winter-themed sports, music, vendors, and more made for one of the biggest crowds the event has ever seen. The event also serves as the unofficial kickoff of Putnam's 2026 event calendar welcoming the first major visiting crowd of the year to the Quiet Corner.



Summer and Stephen Walason of Griswold pose for a photo in a special Taylor Swift themed Igloo dance party giving youngsters a break from the busy street displays.



Visitors to Fire & Ice could partake in a popular ice-themed sport, and right after the Olympics, curling.



Young Fire & Ice guests meet with a mascot for Paws Cat Shelter in Putnam.



Glass blowers and artists create new products at one of many vendors spread throughout Downtown Putnam.



A pair of ice sculptures representing the Putnam Police Department and local radio station WINY border the Putnam streets welcoming guests to Fire & Ice.

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