

The biggest mistake is to continually worry you will make one.

# THOMPSON VILLAGER

Friday, January 12, 2024      Serving Thompson since 2005      Complimentary to homes by request

## Day Kimball Hospital welcomes Northeastern Connecticut's first baby of 2024



Day Kimball Hospital's first baby of 2024, Emma Marie Ruiz with (left to right) Dr. Devon Jacobson, mom Jessica Ruiz, and dad Jack Ruiz.

PUTNAM — Every baby is special, but there can only be one first baby of the New Year born at Day Kimball Hospital's Burdick Family Birthing Center. This year, that honor belongs to Emma Marie Ruiz who was born at 9:05 p.m. on Jan. 2 to Jessica and Jack Ruiz of Brooklyn. Emma has an older brother, James, who is four years old. The healthy baby girl weighed in at five pounds, 13 ounces and measured 19.75 inches long. Emma and Mom are doing great! Emma's birth makes the first baby born at the Day Kimball Hospital and in Northeastern Connecticut in 2024.

About Day Kimball Health

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## State officials detail police involved shooting near Killingly Commons

BY JASON BLEAU  
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

KILLINGLY — State officials have released details, including body cam footage, concerning a police-involved shooting near Killingly Commons shopping plaza on Dec. 30. The incident blew up social media as police taped off a portion of the Mobil gas station and Taco Bell parking lot at 599 Hartford Pike, directly adjacent to the entryway for the plaza across from Interstate 395. Early reports confirmed a shooting involving a suspect and at least one police officer who had stopped to speak a suspect at the station. Police confirmed the suspect was shot but shared few details into the incident until days later on Jan. 3, when the Office of the Inspector General released an official statement confirming the suspect was shot by police after brandishing a gun. According to the report, the suspect, identified as Ruben Muller, whose address was not specified, was approached by an officer while at one of the pumps at the Mobil gas station. Rhode Island authorities had issued a broadcast that Muller was wanted for an attempted robbery identifying his vehicle as a Mercury Marquis with a Connecticut registration C257810. Trooper Joseph Godbout of the Connecticut State Police approached the vehicle at the Mobil station asking Muller for his license. The suspect stated he did not have his ID and fled the scene around the Taco Bell restaurant where he ran into a truck entering the lot. Gadbout attempted to taser Muller several times before the suspect attempted to brandish a revolver leading the officer to shoot Muller once in the chest. The Office of the Inspector General released a video from Gadbout's bodycam that confirmed the details of the report and shows that all of the action happened within the span of a single minute. It shows Muller fleeing the scene after being approached. The video confirms that Gadbout first attempted to TASER Muller in

Turn To **SHOOTING** page **A10**

## TEEG examining options for expansion

BY JASON BLEAU  
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

THOMPSON — The Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group, better known by the acronym TEEG, has called 15 Thatcher Rd. home since 2012 when a brand new town-owned building was erected to serve the agency and its growing list of programs. Now, over 11 years later, the agency has grown again with hopes of adding another building to the property to further support its needs. TEEG Executive Director Anne Miller approached the Thompson Board of Selectmen in December with a proposal, to consider adding a new building to the TEEG campus to offset storage and space issues at the current facility. Over the years, TEEG has outgrown its current building, which houses a free community food market, a single community room, a kitchen, and numerous offices. The community room alone serves many different programs depending on the time of year, sometimes multiple programs at once. Miller explained

that this is the main purpose behind considering a new expansion. "In looking at this building, there was no way to add on to create the space we need. We have one community room which is used for our play group, our Christmas distribution, our Thanksgiving distribution, it's open for community groups to use, our board uses it, and our camp uses it in the summer. We spend a good deal of time every week moving that room into different configurations and on a year-round basis moving some programs off-site because we can't accommodate them here when other programs need that space. During different times of the year, including holidays, we also have stuff stacked in our offices and around our desk spaces. We're just bursting at the seams," said Miller. The concept presented to selectmen would see a new building added to the edge of the parking lot directly across from TEEG. Currently, that space is already being utilized by a large storage container which houses much of TEEG's equipment. The conceptual drawings were created with input from a building committee and the assistance of the building's original architect as well as many individuals from within the town that were involved in the current building's design. Several new participants were also involved in the process as well, providing a fresh take on the new structure. Miller said many options were considered, but they felt these plans made the most sense. "Looking at costs it was determined that the best solution was to put this building in the parking lot across from our current facility. It would sit back from the lot into the hillside and give us the opportunity to put on a second story. The first story would be host deliveries and receiving, food storage, processing, and the food market. The upstairs would be for storage of things that would come in for the holidays or other programs we are running," said Miller. "We'd have a few offices and some meeting space there as well. We're trying to keep the building to a minimum. Turn To **TEEG** page **A10**

## ACT Performing Arts Magnet High School presents "A Thin Veil"



Courtesy

ACT students rehearse for the upcoming production of "A Thin Veil."

WILLIMANTIC — EASTCONN's Arts at the Capitol Theater presents "A Thin Veil" – our 2024 Student Dance Company Showcase directed by Tiana Mancuso – on Jan. 12 & 13 at the Capitol

Theater in downtown Willimantic (896 Main Street). Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$10 for children/seniors/members of the military and \$5 for ACT students and EASTCONN employees. Call 860-465-

5636 to reserve tickets or for more information. "A Thin Veil" explores the supernatural and all things not of this world, Turn To **ACT** page **A10**



# “Don’t Dress for Dinner” opens at Bradley Playhouse Jan. 12

PUTNAM — Even though true winter is just getting started, we have had enough rain and gloomy skies to send us all looking for something light-hearted and fun to cheer us after the holidays. The Theater of Northeastern Connecticut at the Bradley Playhouse has what you are looking for when it presents the first show of the 2024 season – “Don’t Dress for Dinner.” The fun begins Jan. 12 and runs for two weekends.

Many of you will remember a few years ago when TNECT presented the hilarious “Boeing Boeing.” Join us as Bernard and Robert continue their adventures, still trying to sort out the women in their lives and causing mayhem along the way. The same actors are on hand

to continue the chemistry they started in Boeing Boeing.

Performances are Jan. 12, 13, 19 and 20 at 7:30 p.m. and Jan. 14 and 21 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$23 for adults and \$20 for seniors, students, veterans and first responders. Adult content: recommended for mature audiences. Please note that this show runs for two weekends.

“Don’t Dress for Dinner” was written by French playwright Marc Camoletti and was adapted for the English-speaking stage by Robin Hawdon.

Marc Camoletti’s “Don’t Dress for Dinner” is the wildly funny sequel to the Broadway hit “Boeing Boeing.” Bernard’s plans for a romantic rendez-

vous with his mistress are complete with a Cordon Blue chef and an alibi courtesy of his friend, Robert. But when Bernard’s wife learns that Robert will be visiting for the weekend, she decides to stay in town for a surprise tryst of her own... setting the stage for a collision course of hidden identities and outrageous infidelities. The cook is Suzette, the lover is Suzanne, the friend is bewildered, the wife is suspicious, the husband is losing his mind, and everyone is guaranteed a good time at this hilarious romp in the French countryside.

The TNECT production of “Don’t Dress for Dinner” is directed by Kathleen Atwood. Mastermind Bernard is played by Dan Healy and the clueless Robert is Dave Ring. Dan’s real-

life wife, Christine Healy, appears as Bernard’s wife, Jacqueline. Alison Wiza is his mistress, Suzanne, and Tonya Brock plays the chef, Suzette. Of course, nothing can go wrong with two Suzies in the mix. William Corriveau appears as George, chef Suzette’s confused husband.

The Bradley Playhouse is located at 30 Front St. (Route 44) in Putnam. All seats are reserved. Reservations may be made with a major credit card online at [www.thebradleyplayhouse.org](http://www.thebradleyplayhouse.org) or by calling 860-928-7887. Tickets may be purchased at the theater box office, either before the performance, or at the door if available. Purchasing your tickets ahead of time is always a good idea.



Tonya Leigh Brock as the chef, Suzette.

Courtesy

BY JASON BLEAU  
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

KILLINGLY — The year 2023 was a busy and successful one for Killingly Parks & Recreation, and 2024 looks to continue to build on that success as the department explores new events, builds on existing traditions, and prepares to enter a new home on Westfield Avenue.

Parks & Recreation Director Bucky Lohbusch, now in his sec-

ond year in the post, met with the Town Council on Jan. 2 to review 2023 and discuss what they are building towards in the new year. The past year has seen a mix of old and new favorites as Killingly has sought to evolve its programming to draw even more public participation and continue the town’s sense of community. While previous annual staples like the Tomato Festival and Bike Night were discontinued, new events like

the Spooktacular parade and Celebrate Killingly proved to be big successes. Annual traditions that did remain like the Red, White and Blue celebration for 4th of July, Frosty’s Big Night Out, Breakfast with Santa, and Main Street Trick-or-Treat proved to be as popular as ever while the town’s theater program has thrived tremendously in recent years. Still, Lohbusch feels there is room to grow.

“We’re excited. We’re moving forward and that’s a good thing. We’re always improving. We know there will be blocks in the road and obstacles, but we’ll get through it, and we’ll be back here talking about how excited we are to be there, so we’re looking forward to it,” Lohbusch said.

A big part of their success is the committed members of the Board of Recreation who meet bi-monthly to discuss how to

improve current events and add new offerings throughout the town. Lohbusch joked that many members joined because they thought it would be fun, and while it is an enjoyable and rewarding experience there’s a lot of planning and decision making involved in their yearly calendar. Members often donate many hours of their own time beyond meetings to make these events happen. Looking at 2024, Lohbusch feels confident that dedication will continue. However, one big goal is to see Parks & Recreation be more involved with the local Board of Education.

“If we could try to get together with getting a liaison from the school board to try to be at our meetings, I think it’s important because of the amount of programming that we do outside of just the building,” said Lohbusch. “We’re in all the schools and so I like to get feedback. It’s hard to get feedback from the schools. If something’s happening or we’re doing something wrong, I want to know so that we can

fix those types of things and I want to be able to give feedback through the liaison at the board meetings so that we can work together.”

Lohbusch and the Town Council also discussed how more staff would benefit the department, especially with new responsibilities and a new home on the horizon. Parks & Recreation is expected to be one of the main tenants of the renovated high school building on Westfield Avenue while also maintaining the building as well as the police administrative offices on Soap Street. With expansions to the River Trail, completion of the Joyce Ricci Pavilion at Owen Bell, improvements at Lions Park, and other initiatives in the pipeline along with new and old weekly and monthly activities, both Lohbusch and Council members noted that adding personnel would only help continue the growth of Killingly Parks & Recreation department, although there wasn’t an official request made during the discussion.

Currently, the overall focus is maintaining and building on the success of 2023. Lohbusch noted that he hopes to see annual events continue to thrive in the new year while recreation officials plan out new events, such as a revamped Springfest, for 2025 and beyond. So far, the department has announced continued programming at the Little Theater on Broad Street, enlightenment programs, fitness courses, a new photography club, the Incredible Killingly Easter Egg Hunt, Desserts and Story, and the expected return of Spooktacular, Frosty’s Big Night Out, Celebrate Killingly and more for 2024. Killingly Parks and Recreation provides daily updates on their programs on their Facebook Page including a QR code with access to the departments winter and spring activities guide for both children and adults. Events are also represented on the town calendar on the Town of Killingly Web site.

## VILLAGER ALMANAC

### At CT AUDUBON

Bird sightings at the Connecticut Audubon Society Center at Pomfret and Wyndham Land Trust properties for the week of Jan. 1: Northern Harrier, Cooper’s Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-winged Blackbird, Song Sparrow, Canada Geese, White-throated Sparrow, Flicker, Raven, Robin, Bluebird, Mockingbird, Great-horned Owl, Junco. Visit [ctaudubon.org/pomfret-home](http://ctaudubon.org/pomfret-home).

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## Poets At Large season begins at Vanilla Bean Café

POMFRET, Conn. — The Vanilla Bean Café, 450 Deerfield Rd. in Pomfret, will again host Poets at Large spoken word and poetry performances on the last Saturday of the month, 7-9 p.m., from February through May.

Poets at Large is a regional group of poets who read in Connecticut and Massachusetts, now in its fifth year. The group’s coordinator, Woodstock author/poet Karen Warinsky, is the Emcee, and those wishing to be in the open mic segment can sign up by contacting her at [karen.warinsky@gmail.com](mailto:karen.warinsky@gmail.com). There is a 5-minute limit for open mic readers and these events are recommended for ages 14 and up.

The upcoming dates for these first shows are Feb. 24, March 23, April 27 and May 25. Admission is \$15, except for the first show on Feb. 24, which is a “Winter Blues” special and will cost \$10 to attend. Admission includes a chance at a give-away.

and Emcee) and Thompson Poet Laureate Steve Veilleux. Weiss was appointed Pomfret’s poet laureate in 2021, is a life-long resident and writes a weekly column for the Woodstock Villager. Warinsky has published poetry since 2011, authored three books, is a 2023 Best of the Net nominee and a former finalist in the Montreal Int’l Poetry Contest. Author Veilleux was appointed as Thompson’s poet laureate in 2023. All three write about relationships, politics and life events with a mix of concern and humor.

March 23 the Poets at Large show will feature well-known Worcester poets Tony Brown, John Hodgen and Karen Elizabeth Sharpe. Tony Brown has been writing for well over 50 years, and publishing and performing his work for more than 40. A seven-time Pushcart Prize and two-time Best Of The Net nominee, he is also the winner of the 2022 Stanley Kunitz Medal, endowed by the late Kunitz, a US poet laureate and Worcester native. Hodgen is the Writer-in-Residence at Assumption University in Worcester, Mass., and Advisory Editor for New Letters at the University of Missouri in Kansas City. Hodgen won the AWP Donald Hall Prize in Poetry for Grace in 2005, and is the author of five volumes of poetry. Sharpe is a poetry editor at The Worcester Review and the author of two volumes of

poetry. She has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize, Best of the Net, and is widely published.

April 27 will feature two women poets reading in a volta-style on the issue of child abuse and healing. Massachusetts residents Candace Curran and Janet MacFayden created the piece and began performing it last year. Curran, twice named as Western Massachusetts Poets’ Seat Laureate and winner of the 2022 Elyse Wolf Prize, collaborated with MacFayden, who is the author of three full-length collections, the recipient of a 2022 Massachusetts Cultural Council grant and a seven-month Fine Arts Work Center fellowship. She is managing editor of Slate Roof Press. Also on the program will be Massachusetts resident Roger Kechawah Mbianda, a native of Cameroon in Africa. He is presently pursuing a Doctorate in Curriculum Development and Instruction. Mbianda has a poetry collection titled “Rays of My Days,” and is about to finish his first novel. The evening will also present several “Quiet Corner Poets” who will present work created through their monthly writing group.

May 25 will feature poets Wendy Haller and Catherine DeNunzio. Haller, a Rhode Island native, released her first book of poems last year and is a former preschool special education teacher with two published children’s books. Her poems center on family dynamics and individual growth. Connecticut’s DeNunzio has one volume of poetry and has published widely in lit magazines and anthologies. Her work is characterized as wide-ranging with a focus on what it means to be human.

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# VFW Auxiliary announces kick-off of annual Illustrating America Art Contest

PUTNAM — Albert J Breault VFW Auxiliary Post 1523 is excited to announce the kick-off of the VFW Auxiliary's annual Illustrating America art contest. Local students in grades K-8 can share how they view our world through their drawings and paintings while competing for national awards.

Students must submit an original two-dimensional piece of artwork. Coloring sheets, digital art and photography are not accepted. The entry must have been completed during the current school year and the application must include a parent or guardian signature.

Students begin by competing at the local VFW Auxiliary level. The first-place winner from each Auxiliary advances to the Department (state) competition. The contest consists of three grade divisions: K-2, 3-5 and 6-8. The Department (state) first-place winner in each grade division will be forwarded to the VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters.

There are awards for first, second and third place in each grade division. All state winning entries are judged at National Headquarters in Kansas City, Mo. in July and will be displayed at the VFW Auxiliary National Convention scheduled to take place in July in Louisville, Ky. Winners will be notified via the email address provided on the winners' entry form.

The contest rewards the artistic abilities of elementary and middle/junior high school students. Student entries must be submitted to VFW Auxiliary Post 1523 by March 31. Interested youth, parents/guardians and teachers should contact Lisa Salisbury at 860-564-3713 or at [vfwauxiliaryputnamct@gmail.com](mailto:vfwauxiliaryputnamct@gmail.com) for more information.

Visit <http://www.vfwauxiliary.org/what-we-do/youth-activities> for eligibility requirements, contest rules and an entry form.

About the VFW Auxiliary

The VFW Auxiliary is one of the nation's oldest veterans' service organizations and our members are the relatives of those who served in a location of foreign conflict. We have nearly 470,000 members representing all 50 states who volunteer millions of hours and give millions of dollars to support veterans, military service personnel and their families.

We are a voice for veterans on Capitol Hill and are instrumental in assisting the VFW pass or block legislation that impacts veterans and their families. We are one of the top 10 providers of volunteer hours in the VA medical system. Every year, members fundraise millions of dollars for charitable projects that benefit veterans and their families. We also provide hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships for our nation's youth. With more than 3,600 Auxiliaries, there is likely one in your area working to improve the lives of America's uncommon heroes. Learn more at [www.vfwauxiliary.org](http://www.vfwauxiliary.org).

## NDDH encourages homeowners to “Plan a Raid on Radon”

BROOKLYN — The Northeast District Department of Health (NDDH) is partnering with the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) to educate residents about the dangers of radon exposure and to encourage them to take action to protect their families and home.

“Radon is gas that you can't see or smell. It comes from the breakdown of rocks, soil, and water and can be in the air inside your home. It doesn't matter if your house is new or old, or if it has a basement or not, radon can still be present,” says Isaac Combs, NDDH Environmental Health Specialist. “In Connecticut, radon levels can be high in different places, and even houses next to each other may have different levels. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) says that around 1 in 15 homes in the U.S. have high levels of radon. Radon is a serious health risk, which can be reduced in several different ways, with the first step being to test your home for this harmful gas. Act now and encourage your friends and family to do the same.”

Radon is the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers and the second leading cause of lung cancer after cigarette smoking. Smokers exposed to radon have a much higher risk for developing lung cancer. The EPA and the Surgeon General's office estimate that radon is responsible for more than 21,000 lung cancer deaths each year in the United States.

It takes many years for lung cancer to develop. Most people do not have symptoms until lung cancer is advanced and harder to treat. The good news is that lung cancer from radon is preventable and simple steps can be taken to reduce the risk of radon exposure.

Ways to keep radon levels low:

- Increase air flow in your house by opening windows and using fans and vents to circulate air. However, natural ventilation in any type of house is only a temporary strategy to reduce radon.
- Seal cracks in floors and walls with plaster, caulk, or other materials designed for this purpose.
- You can cover the earth floor in crawl spaces with a high-density plastic sheet. A vent pipe and fan can be used to blow the radon from under the sheet and vent it to the outdoors.

NDDH is launching our ‘Plan a Raid on Radon’ campaign. We have a limited supply of free radon test kits and educational materials for district residents. Visit the health department at 69 South Main Street in Brooklyn to receive one free radon test kit per home with instructions for use and a radon fact sheet. Participants will receive a follow-up call from Stephanie Hynes, our Community Health Worker, within two weeks to ensure the kit was used and returned to the manufacturer according to instructions for analysis.

Radon levels vary seasonally and tend to be higher in the winter months. The best time to test for radon is between the months of November through March. Windows and outside doors should remain closed as much as possible during radon testing.

NDDH is unable to reserve kits or mail them. Test kits can also be purchased from a local hardware store or the American Lung Association by calling 1-800-LUNG-USA or by visiting [www.lung.org](http://www.lung.org).

The EPA recommends that homes with radon levels at or above 4.0 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) be fixed. Homeowners should consider reducing their potential lung cancer risk by fixing homes with radon levels between 2 pCi/L and 4 pCi/L.

Radon levels can be reduced by hiring certified radon mitigation professionals who can install ventilation systems, soil depressurization systems, and seal entry routes for radon gas in existing homes. New homes are built with radon-resistant features. To learn more about radon and to obtain a list of radon mitigation contractors, visit the DPH Radon Program website at [www.ct.gov/radon](http://www.ct.gov/radon).

Additional resources: NDDH <https://www.nddh.org/services/community-health/radon/>.

## Brooke Zahansky named to Dean's List at Hofstra University

HEMPSTEAD, N.Y. — Brooke Zahansky of Pomfret Center excelled during the Fall 2023 semester at Hofstra, achieving a GPA of at least 3.5 to earn a spot on the Dean's List. Brooke's major is Public Relations & Strategic Communications.

Hofstra University is a dynamic community of nearly 11,000 students dedicated to civic engagement, academic excellence and becoming leaders in their communities and their careers. Students can choose from approximately 175 undergraduate program options and 200 graduate program options in the liberal arts and sciences, education, health professions and human services, the Peter S. Kalikow School of Government, Public Policy and International Affairs, the Fred DeMatteis School of Engineering and Applied Science, the Frank G. Zarb School of Business, the Lawrence Herbert School of Communication, the Maurice A. Deane School of Law, the Hofstra Northwell School of Nursing and Physician Assistant Studies, and the Donald and Barbara Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell.

## Connor Thompson named to Husson University's Honors Fall 2023 Semester

BANGOR, Maine — Congratulations to Connor Thompson of Danielson, who has been named to Husson University's Honors for the Fall 2023 semester of the 2023-2024 academic year.

Thompson is studying toward a degree in Forensic Science at Husson.


Full-time students who earn President's List, Dean's List and Honors List recognition must be enrolled as an undergraduate, carry a full-time load of 12 credit hours over the course of 21 weeks, complete all attempted courses in the time allotted, and achieve a designated semester grade-point average. Credits from pass/fail classes do not qualify toward meeting the minimum credit hour requirement.

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For more information about educational opportunities that can lead to personal and professional success, visit Husson.edu.

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# POMFRET

## SCHWARTZ PUBLIC LECTURE

# NDABA MANDELA


Following in the footsteps of his grandfather Nelson Mandela, Ndaba is the founder of the Mandela Institute for Humanity, an organization dedicated to continuing the legacy of the icon leader by inspiring and uniting people to build a fair and just world.

## Friday, January 26

## 7:00 PM

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**FRANK G. CHILINSKI**  
PRESIDENT/PUBLISHER

**BRENDAN BERUBE**  
EDITOR

# The Power of kindness and class

In today’s fast-paced world, where the pursuit of success often takes precedence, it’s worth taking a moment to reflect on the significance of being a class act and a kind person. In recent times, the celebration of ruthlessness, competitiveness, and self-centeredness seems to have overshadowed the virtues of kindness, compassion, and class. As a society, we’ve perhaps overlooked the incredible positive impact that these qualities can have.

Being a class act goes beyond just politeness; it’s about demonstrating grace, dignity, and respect in all our interactions. It involves considering the feelings and perspectives of others and upholding a standard of decency.

In the pursuit of personal and professional achievements, many of us may have inadvertently downplayed the importance of character and values. However, true success should not only be measured by accomplishments but also by the kind of people we become along the way. Kindness is a potent force that can generate waves of positivity. It costs nothing but can yield immeasurable rewards.

In a world marked by division and polarization, the significance of kindness cannot be overstated. We are all part of a broader community, and our collective well-being depends on how we treat each other. Being kind doesn’t mean compromising our principles or avoiding necessary debates; rather, it means engaging in those discussions with respect, empathy, and an open heart.

The current absence of kindness and class in our society has resulted in a decline in empathy and understanding. We witness it in the way people engage on social media, in the political arena, and sometimes in our everyday interactions. We have become quick to judge, dismiss, and vilify others, often forgetting that behind every opinion or argument is a human being with their own experiences, hopes, and fears.

It’s time for a cultural shift towards embracing the power of kindness and class, not as a fleeting trend but as a way of life. By doing so, we can restore a sense of unity, empathy, and respect in our society.

### Letter submission policy

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

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

# OPINION

Opinion and commentary from the Quiet Corner

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Why are Thompson’s “Real Republicans” seating liberal officials?

To the Editor:

At the first Thompson selectmen’s meeting of 2024, self-proclaimed “Real Republicans” Selectmen Amy St. Onge and Susanne Witkowski voted to seat Liberal Democrat Brian Loffredo, a member of the Thompson Democratic Town Committee, to a vacant Republican seat on the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA).

An opening for an alternate on the ZBA occurred after Ms. St. Onge’s husband, Republican Jason St. Onge, resigned his position on the ZBA to accept an Alternate seat on the Planning & Zoning Commission as state statute prohibits a person to hold positions on both boards at the same time. The ZBA accepted Mr. St. Onge’s resignation and moved alternate Republican Paul Lenky into Mr. St. Onge’s seat, thus creating a vacant Republican alternate seat.

The Thompson Republican Town Committee voted unanimously to recommend Republican Robert Mann, RTC member and former Board of Finance member, for the alternate position on the ZBA at its December monthly meeting where 14 of its 19 members were in attendance. Susanne Witkowski voted in favor of Rob Mann, while the St. Onges were absent.

At the Jan. 2 Thompson Board of Selectmen’s (BOS) meeting, First Selectman St. Onge mentioned that both the Republican and Democrat Town Committees had recommended candidates for the ZBA Alternate position and made a motion, seconded by

Witkowski, to place the Democrat candidate, Brian Loffredo, in the vacant Republican seat. During discussion of the motion, Democratic Selectman, Ken Beausoleil, stated that tradition was that the BOS would defer to the Town Committees to fill elected positions when vacancies occurred. The DTC would fill the Democratic positions, the RTC would fill Republican positions, and since this was a Republican position, the RTC candidate should be chosen. This tradition recognizes the voter’s preference. The vote was 2-0 with Ken Beausoleil abstaining, to place the Democrat, Brian Loffredo in the Republican position.

Why would two selectmen who proclaimed they were the “Real Republicans” during the Republican primary election last year vote to install a liberal member of the DTC instead of the candidate recommended by their own town committee? A large donation to their campaign last year could be a factor. It is very strange for a member of the DTC to fund the opponent’s campaign of your endorsed candidate but according to SEEC filings, Loffredo was one of the biggest donors to their PAC.

The Thompson Republicans will be holding their caucus to select their members for the next two years on Saturday, Jan. 13 at 10:30 a.m. at the Thompson Library/Community Center. All Thompson registered Republicans are encouraged to attend.

BILL WARNER  
THOMPSON

### We need Dr. King’s message now more than ever

To the Editor:

This year seems especially hopeful to me that we begin with the celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s life and birth. When I look on-line and listen to WINY news reports, the national news seems dominated by strife, disagreement, violence, disparagement of this group or the other, pain, and justification for killing and putting one collection of people over another.

While Dr. King was, at times, considered controversial, he always stood for simple human caring, nonviolence, dialogue, Christian principles and a world where no one group was better than another. Ironically, the most controversial statements Dr. King made (in my memory) were those in opposition to the Vietnam War. And what is more violent than war? How could he keep his conscience and look the other way when our government continued to lie and fund the slaughter of Viet Cong, Vietnamese and our own young men and women sent to invade a country that had never harmed us? (Yes, I think this may still be controversial all these decades later.)

Dr. King made a decision early on in the fight for civil rights for Black people that he would not be part of violence to secure those rights. Because of his decision, arguably, thousands of lives may have been saved. He did not condone planting bombs, sniper fire at officials who blocked equality, robbing banks, kidnapping of loved ones of key congressional or administration leaders, or violent insurrection in Washington, D.C. If Dr. King and those around him had not held the standard of nonviolent protest, our U.S. history would have looked very different during that time of turmoil.

We need his message now. It’s not only killings at schools, malls, churches, and neighborhoods that engulf us. Threats and actual action to kidnap governors; shoot up or bomb federal, state, and municipal buildings; an unbelievable effort to hang our outgoing vice president– all are the exact opposite of what Dr. King employed as nonviolent Christian ways to bring about justice and move toward equality for Black citizens. And while we’re at it, remember when Jesus urged us all to seek revenge for his crucifixion? Well, no. Because Jesus’ teachings were about loving one another, forgiving each other seven times seventy, turning the other cheek among other guidance. It has always looked to me that Dr. King truly tried to follow what Jesus would have him do.

Why do all of those things: loving one another, forgiving each other, turning the other cheek now fall into the category of “weak” to so many people? If you find you are wrong or have made a mistake, why would you not apologize, try to make amends and endeavor to avoid that same mistake again? So much of what is now a source of division and contention is people not admitting, apologizing or attempting to change their future behavior or become open to a different attitude. It seems to make us more afraid of each other. I have heard so many times over the past several years that people cannot talk to their family members or lifelong friends about certain topics. What changed?

We are so fortunate that we can learn from Dr. King’s teachings. Remember that

he was a preacher, the son of a preacher and missionary. From the preacher’s kids that I have known in my life, it appears impossible to live an unexamined life in such a home. I think it has been easier for the rest of us; we can choose whether or not to introspect and self-evaluate. Well, what would happen if we decided to introspect and self-examine our lives right now? This seems like a good time of year to do that, with some of us making resolutions and de-cluttering our lives.

I believe that every baby is born a good human. Things happen that shape our lives. Some of us have almost no chance of living the lives that we want. Remember how much choice of what to do, where to sit, when to eat we had up until we could walk? And almost none of us could choose our parents, who tried best they could to raise us well. Unless their own problems, trauma or illness prevented them from doing right by us. We didn’t get to choose our upbringing, but it shaped our lives in ways we probably don’t always remember. And some people became so separate, so distressed that they cause terrible harm to others. A very wise woman who counseled well over a hundred people in her lifetime once said: “Show me a monster and I will show you a child with a broken heart.”

What does this have to do with Dr. King? He did not target monsters with hate and violence. He did not vow revenge against those who arrested him, beat or killed his friends and allies and vilified him. He always chose to engage in ways that he could envision Jesus doing: no guns, no retaliation with fists or knives, instead a conviction that righteousness and justice will prevail because it is God’s will.

I am delighted that there are at least two area celebrations of Dr. King’s life nearby to us. Our local Windham-Willimantic NAACP program with keynote speaker Dr. Dennis C. Canterbury, Emeritus Professor of Sociology, Anthropology, Criminology and Social Work at Eastern Connecticut State University and featuring African drumming by renowned musician Bob Bloom takes place at Calvary Baptist Church in Willimantic from 1-4 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 13. The free event is titled “It Starts With Me: Shifting the Cultural Climate Through the Study of Kingian Nonviolence.”

And the Living Faith United Methodist Church program in Putnam on Dr. King’s actual birthday, Monday, Jan. 15 at 11 a.m., including lunch (\$10 donation) features a presentation by a representative of the Poor People’s Campaign and performances by local musicians Sally Rogers and Leslie Sweetnam at this celebration of the life and birth of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

We need these ideas and to be reminded of our history of a nonviolent revolution that resulted in a big step forward for Black citizens–and for us all. Let’s try to picture how different our country can be if we reflect on the power of nonviolent action and maybe try to ask, “What would Dr. King do?”

Respectfully,

CLAUDIA ALLEN  
THOMPSON

### Talking about tipping

“To Insure Promptitude” is the origin of the term “TIP,” a tidbit in an article in the Jan. 1 & 8, 2024 issue of The New Yorker magazine, entitled, Tipping Points, by Zach Helfand. Every day it seems, I am in a situation that may or may not call for a tip and I am eager to learn the current expectations.

After I read the article, I dropped by the Vanilla Bean Café, where I had an interesting conversation with owners Barry and Brian Jessurun about tipping as it pertains to their four restaurants.

Tipping at restaurants was once quite straightforward. The customer gave ten to twenty per cent of the bill as a tip if the service and the food were good. Fancy restaurants with more elaborate presentations might call for larger percentages. At coffee shops and diners it was simple to tuck a few bills under the saucer. Tip jars, often with hand-lettered signs saying “College Funds” appear on counters and at summer food stands. It was easy to drop change or small bills into the jar when picking up a clam roll as we always paid in cash.


Most of the time, I have very little cash with me. I often wish I planned ahead when I go out to have at least a few ones in my pocket for panhandlers or street musicians. Soon, I suppose, they will take Venmo. I have several credit cards and I use them for almost every transaction. When I pay with a card in a restaurant and the iPad is turned toward me for my signature or I slip the card into a device, I am offered the chance to add a tip, with a suggested minimum. My choice is either no tip at all or a tip at the number the machine suggests. What to do?

The New Yorker article says that “etiquette experts studied the so-called guilt-tip boom” that has followed the pandemic. Gratuities increased in most areas and in new ones I never considered. Do I tip the person when I pay for a cup of coffee that I then pour myself? If I’m handed a pizza I ordered on line, do I tip the teenager who hands it to me? I see people leave bills on the table, but, how can I do it when I’m paying with plastic? What about my hair dresser, who rents a chair in a large city, and whom I pay directly? It is her business, but historically, one always tips the hair dresser.

Brian and Barry Jessurun had read the article, and have strong opinions. Since the pandemic, they have seen an uptick in tipping, which creates more of a disconnect between the front and the back of the house. A good server is charming, upsells the experience by suggesting better wine and highlighting special qualities of the food, but they don’t suggest the tip, which Brian said is normally 20 percent of the bill. As costs and thus prices go up in restaurants, so does the tip, creating an even bigger disparity between the servers and the chefs and line cooks.

New minimum wage laws are in effect and materials are most expensive. The costs are passed on to the consumer and the soup and sandwich bill rises. As for the complexities of tipping, Barry Jessurun summed it up by saying, “The people who benefit most are the people who leave the tip.”

The lesson is to enjoy the culturally laden process of tipping and carry some cash for moments when plastic won’t do. Tipping is here to stay.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Putnam trash 2.0 – how to betray your constituents

To the Editor:

It only took less than a week of the year 2024 for Mayor Barney and the Putnam Board of Selectmen to throw transparency and credibility with the voters straight out the door.

In a meeting that never made it onto the calendar now falsely labeled “All Meetings,” the controversial trash revamp passed with a unanimous vote. This lack of transparency is apparently by design. If you nerd out on the Town of Putnam Web site and do some extra digging, you’ll find out that Board Of Selectmen meetings have been quietly moved off of that calendar now falsely labeled “All Meetings” and buried a few clicks deeper, in the Board Of Selectmen section, where you’ll find in a note section that meetings are on the first and third Monday with exceptions in January, February, July, August, and September. How many people do that, though?

Welcome to Putnam, where “all meetings” doesn’t mean all meetings, and the First Amendment is reduced to an annoyance that gets you arrogant and dismissive responses if you exercise it, and that’s before they pull stunts like this that systematically silence people. Still think democracy isn’t on the ballot this November?

To recap, the now unanimously supported incoming program raises costs the most on people who generate the least trash because the usage-based billing component has been eliminated... at least for you the consumer. All of this with numerous residents’ concerns unaddressed for both renters and landlords. An utter collapse at the negotiating table as far as I’m concerned.

Putnam residents, by doing this, your town’s leadership has shown that they’ll team up with other towns to railroad out a public health director they don’t like, but Casella can just roll all over eastern

Connecticut willy nilly for the benefit of their shareholders. Then there’s the Putnam Democrats, showing that they would rather use their platform for dissenting opinions as the “opposition party” in this town to cry about not liking someone the mayor appointed for the Special Services District, but this nonsense and the stealth meetings used to pass it get a free pass, or did someone actually speak up at the meeting about this? I don’t know. I suppose I’ll have to dig even more to find where the meeting minutes are going to end up since the town leadership decided to go all stealth mode on the very voters that elected them.

Don’t think the Republicans are innocent of this either as the majority. I’ve seen Rick Hayes complain on his state rep page about stuff in Hartford getting passed behind people’s backs in the middle of the night, yet the vote for this little stunt was unanimous despite the circumstances.

This is just the latest step in the death march that is Putnam’s trash program being run as badly as the brass can get away with before the usual “government can’t do anything right” speech and the elimination of the program, which I’m sure Casella will love when they eliminate Putnam’s pesky town negotiating bloc and can divide and conquer the residents individually.

To the concerned Putnam residents who actually tried to exercise their constitutional rights as Americans despite this response from the Putnam Establishment, thank you for not being a pushover. Speaking up and standing up for what you believe is what America’s all about, even if the town brass dismissively takes little verbal swipes at you saying you don’t know what you’re talking about half the time.

JAY GERHART  
PUTNAM

We need to tune out the satc

To the Editor:

Americans have become a fickle lot. Rather than appreciate how good we have it compared with most of the world, we instead seem to fear monsters in every closet. Much of this has to do with the incredible (dis)information overload that the 21st century has brought us. Once upon a time, the news was the news. People could listen to radio or television and tune in to the likes of Edward R. Murrow or Walter Cronkite. They described the scenes. We heard the sounds and saw the pictures. We were able to form our own conclusions. This all changed with the advent of cable news networks such as CNN, MSNBC and most notably Fox. The airwaves became filled with 24/7 opinion pageants. And now with the Internet, there are literally millions of websites and podcasts as well as social media. Indeed, more “experts” have been created than the Wizard of Oz could ever have done if he handed out a diploma to every straw man in existence.

Which brings us to the upcoming presidential contest. One would think that America is a destitute and dangerous state that is on the verge of complete collapse. In truth, though, things are pretty, pretty good. The job market is historically strong as employers duke it out to find skilled workers to fill open positions. Unemployment remains near historical lows.

Inflation spiked not only here, but worldwide due to the Covid crisis. This was a global black swan event. Unlike the rest of the world, though, America is on the verge of taming it. Inflation has dropped close to the Fed’s target rate, and a soft landing without a recession, a seemingly impossible outcome, is more and more likely. Real wage growth is up, and the stock market just completed another phenomenal year as record highs were touched. Our GDP remains high unlike most other world economies.

In addition, we are no longer at war. At least not directly. In supporting Ukraine’s fight against Russia, America has avoided placing its own soldiers in harm’s way while we quell the expansion of our historic enemy. At the same time our newest foe, China, still reels from an inept covid policy along with American led economic sanctions.

Immigration is, as it has always been, a concern, but pundits paint an America under siege by terrorists and drug kingpins. Illegal immigration which is at historic highs is not a uniquely American issue, Europe in general has a much larger problem. Yes, the sheer number of people is overwhelming our system, but these people are nearly all victims of their own failing countries of origin. They do not pose a clear and present danger to American citizens. Most importantly, the White House is not ignoring the issue. Simply building a big wall and sending more troops to the southern border won’t solve a multifaceted issue. Just like Europe we would find immigrants arriving on our coasts by boat, not to mention through our northern border. Nor can the White House wave a magic wand. This will

take Congress once and for all passing legislation to correct the flaws in our system. Still, as we have seen both here and abroad, all immigrants are easy marks by those thirsting for political power.

One would think that the sky is falling.

And therein lies the conundrum. In today’s environment of disinformation, it is understandable why Mr. Biden is ridiculed as a failing leader and why Mr. Trump is leading the pack. That our current President oversees a safe and prosperous nation while the former President still questions (against all factual evidence) that he lost in 2020 is being ignored by too many voters. Our economy is strong, the nation is safe, Mr. Biden has implemented the most comprehensive policies to combat climate change. On the other hand, Mr. Trump lauds the January 6th insurrection, does not believe he has any duty to support the Constitution, and brags about how he placed judges on the Supreme Court who overturn Roe v. Wade. He does not believe that America should be responsible for our environment future. He perpetually cries over being harassed by a Deep State, but each day finds another critic to threaten, investigate and throw in jail.

There are also the cries that Mr. Biden has benefitted from illegal foreign money based on \$4000 he was paid by his son (payback of a personal loan) while a private citizen. They of course ignore the billions Trump’s son in law made from Saudi Arabia alone or the millions Trump hotels received from China. They accuse the Biden family of making millions if not billions of dollars in illicit businesses, yet all my eyes see are the Trump family’s penthouses and planes and resorts.

Unfortunately, Mr. Biden’s age is a factor. Really the only factor that would belie his ability to remain as president for another term. It would be best for him to step aside and allow a younger protégée to take his place. But Mr. Trump, should he win, would be older than Mr. Biden was when Biden was elected. In other words, a vote for Trump should not be a vote for youth. Mr. Trump is not a poster child for vim and vigor.

Neither man is an ideal choice, but it is becoming harder and harder for another Democrat to step in. A more desirable outcome is for Mr Biden to pledge to delegate authority and manage in a Reaganesque manner. Republicans on the other hand, could still choose a younger candidate who could run on Trump policies but not with the age issues (or the legal baggage). Then we could debate what truly matters namely programs and actions.

If Americans can tune out the static. If we could focus on what is factual. If we can support those who truly want to serve the public and not just their own egos, we need not snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

LEE WESLER  
WOODSTOCK

It hit home..

To the Editor:

I was just getting ready for the snow storm last Friday, and our Putnam Walmart was my last stop before going home. The day was exhausting, after a flat tire that three different tire establishments did not have in stock, and two remotes that didn’t work. It was a stressful afternoon, but I could not have been prepared for my brief stop at Walmart.

As I left the store, the few shoppers leaving with me were complaining about the increasing cost of bottle deposits. This exercise in the free expression of their First Amendment right could not have prepared me for the shocking abuse of that right. I didn’t hear the following comments on the news or in a movie. I heard the comment clearly... next to me... “what we need is a few assassinations.”

Villager readers deserve better than DeLuca’s misrepresentations

To the Editor:

With all due apologies, I said I’d never give any oxygen to the propaganda regurgitated by Ed DeLuca after successfully proving he was citing references that either didn’t exist or he couldn’t prove existed, and after challenging him to hold Donald Trump accountable for the classified documents he refused to return when asked.

However, in his rambling all-over-the-place response to the excellent letters of Billy Taylor, I am going to challenge one item. Just one because I’m not going to throw so much stuff out there with added insults that would make your head spin, like Ed does. No, I’m picking this because many readers might miss the not-so-subtle omission by Mr. DeLuca.

Once more, in this case, he has not lied, but instead has failed to disclose the full story.

Ed spends his last paragraph talking about President Biden pardoning marijuana offenses. This is quite true. What Ed doesn’t say is that the offenders were not engaged in any other crimes at the time of their arrest. No burglaries. No drug dealing. Nothing. So essentially,

“Unaffiliated” status is democracy in its purest form

To the Editor:

A recent letter in the Villager regarding Unaffiliated voters had me a bit confused. The writer seemed to think that designation was degrading and deceptive.

I chose “Unaffiliated” when I first registered to vote over 50 years ago, and my reasons for doing so haven’t changed.

Like me, I suspect that most Unaffiliated voters can’t completely identify with the ideologies of any of the political parties including the Independent Party.

In politics, “Independent” and

To the Editor:

Will Ed DeLuca’s lying ever stop? I suspect it’s unlikely. After all, the lying is the point. Former President Trump and his cult employ it to convince the rest of us that everyone lies and, therefore, are just as dishonest and corrupt as Trump. After that, it’s not very hard to incite supporters to storm the Capitol, injure over 100 police officers, attack an FBI office and threaten innocent election workers with death. Please, please review the history of authoritarians over the last century. There you will recognize the same path down which Trump is trying to lead the country.

Mr. DeLuca recently lied about Adam Schiff destroying evidence from the Congressional investigation into the Jan. 6 attack. In his latest letter, Mr. DeLuca repeats the lie that some authority, of course unnamed, has prohibited the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance or saying, “Merry Christmas.” He lies again when he says that the Biden Administration labels all people who speak out at school board meetings as “terrorists.” Faithful readers of your opinion page will note that Mr. DeLuca rarely, if ever, refutes me when I point out his lies and outrageous utterances. The authoritarian strategy is just to keep on lying.

Asserting that Trump has not tried to silence people is ludicrous. His constant name-calling and lying about his perceived enemies (anyone with whom he disagrees or who tries to hold him to account for his crimes) is an attempt to silence them and incites his cult to violence. Even some GOP critics have admitted that they were silenced out of fear for their, or their families’, safety. Witness McCarthy and McConnell who both initially blamed Trump for the insurrection before their cowardice prevailed.

Have you noticed how Mr. DeLuca arrogantly purports to know what news media I consume? I doubt we have any friends or acquaintances in common and, even if we did, I rarely discuss the news with them. I’ve never spoken to him so how does he know? Maybe

How much insanity is needed to speak such words over an increase in bottle deposits? This is January! Days will get longer and temperatures higher; but do we need to reach the bottom of the barrel that holds civility and tolerance for the rest of the year? With my vehicle in mind, can we keep the engines from overheating?

I started that day with a flat tire, but three neighbors came to help me in less than two minutes. I had never met them in the years we’ve lived close by. Another neighbor surprised me by blowing brush from my driveway caused by a fallen tree! That’s what this Quiet Corner represents... people who care for each other ... without asking for IDs or political affiliation. Let’s keep it that way! Bite your tongue!

LYDIA RIVERA-ABRAMS  
DAYVILLE

they were in jail, most of them people of color, for doing something that is now legal. Ed also fails to mention how much the taxpayer is footing the bill to keep these offenders behind bars. Clearly it is better for all that they be released.

Now the biggest hypocrisy from the master of spin and hypocrisy. Ed fails to mention that near the end of his term, Trump pardoned many. Several of these were suspicious. The relevant one I am referring you to is that of Jonathan Braun. Mr. Braun was near the end of his sentence; however, he was convicted of drug smuggling, not just smoking a joint. Further, Mr. Braun has been connected to the Kushner family, you know Trump’s son-in-law, and by pardoning him it short circuited an active investigation by the DOJ.

Facts matter, Mr. DeLuca. I’ll let Mr. Taylor address the rest of the absurdities you wrote in the Jan. 5 Villager. I’m content with showing that again, you cherry pick stories to present your point of view and present them as undeniable facts. The readers of the Villager deserve better.

BRIAN LOFFREDO  
NORTH GROSVENORDALE

“Unaffiliated” aren’t always synonymous. At least in theory, Unaffiliated voters cast their ballots for a candidate without feeling an obligation to any party. I’ve always been adamant about my responsibility to vote, but I’ve never been tempted to switch my voting status to vote in primaries. Doing that just to disrupt the process seems like “dirty pool” to me. In my opinion, being an “Unaffiliated” voter represents our democracy in its purest form.

TODD PATRIE  
POMFRET CENTER

DeLuca’s lies continue

To the Editor:

he’s clairvoyant? Nah, it’s just easier to falsely assert that I drink the left’s “Kool Aid.” But I know better to unquestioningly accept “news” from a cable network that knowingly lied about the 2020 election and has been found liable for nearly \$800 million in damages so far, with additional trials to come. And, sorry Mr. DeLuca, but polls overwhelmingly indicate that Fox News watchers are woefully more misinformed than the general population.

In reality, Mr. DeLuca has no clue as to the media I read, the process I use to determine what’s credible, or how I’ve voted. But he can know that I reject Trump’s cultivation of racists; his normalization of lying, name-calling, and political violence; his mocking of the disabled, US military heroes and veterans, and women; his sexual assault of women; his fraudulent business practices; his separation of migrant children from their mothers; his using his own charity to pay personal expenses; his mocking of John McCain’s military service and disability; his refusal to admit the truth about his 2020 election defeat; his adulation of dictators like Xi, Putin, Kim, Erdogan and Duterte; his efforts to deny women control of their reproductive health; his lies during the Covid pandemic that cost tens of thousands of lives; his complete lack of intellectual curiosity; his attempt to overturn the legal, fair election of the president of the US; his lack of ethics and morality; his narcissism and lack of empathy; his tariffs that resulted in tens of thousands of lost jobs and imposed a nearly \$80 billion tax increase on Americans, one of the largest in history; etc.

Mr. DeLuca seems to labor under the illusion that I have some duty to defend or criticize President Biden because I’m a critic of Trump. Wrong again. Although Biden has proven to be superior to Trump in almost every conceivable way, I’ll have a choice between possibly five or more candidates in this year’s election. One thing’s for sure: Trump has eliminated himself from consideration.

BILLY G. TAYLOR  
KILLINGLY



# 2024 resolution: Set your financial strategy now, benefit all year (and beyond)

As 2024 gets underway, the resolution routine is in full swing, and that's great! But in addition to planning your new workout schedule and piecing together your 2024 vision board, make time to set out a strong financial strategy for the year, too. It's one resolution that could pay dividends not just in 2024, but in all the years that follow, too.



FINANCIAL  
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LANGEVIN

There's a lot to consider, but don't let that deter you to help you get started. Here are ten key planning topics to consider adding to your plan.

1) **Boosting Your Retirement Contributions**  
Workplace accounts. Are you maximizing contributions to your workplace plan? If not, now's the time to think about increasing your contribution to take full advantage of any employer match benefit. For 2024, the maximum employee deferral for 401(k), 403(b), and 457 accounts is \$23,000, and individuals ages 50 and older can defer an additional catch-up of \$7,500. For SIMPLE IRAs, the maximum deferral is \$16,000 and the catch-up is \$3,500.

**Traditional IRA.** Maxing out your contributions to a traditional IRA is another option. The original SECURE Act repealed the maximum age for contributions, so individuals ages 70 and a half and older who earn income in 2024, can contribute to a traditional IRA. Modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) lim-

its for contributions to traditional and Roth IRAs increased in 2024, so be sure to review MAGI eligibility thresholds. The maximum contribution amount to a traditional or Roth IRA in 2024 is \$7,000, with a \$1,000 catch-up for clients ages 50 and older.

**New Roth IRA options.** Under the recently enacted SECURE 2.0 act, eligible taxpayers will have the ability to contribute to SIMPLE Roth accounts and SEP Roth IRAs.

More changes to come in 2024. You may hear about additional changes to retirement accounts pursuant to SECURE 2.0, such as the indexing of IRA catch-up contributions to inflation, which begins in 2024. We'd be happy to discuss these future changes with you and what they mean for your planning.

2) **Maximizing HSA Contributions**  
If you have a high deductible health plan (HDHP), now is a good time to explore how you can maximize your health savings account (HSA) contributions this year. In 2024, the maximum contribution for an individual HSA is \$4,150, and the maximum for a family HDHP is \$8,300. If you're age 55 or older, you can contribute an additional \$1,000. Working weekly or monthly HSA contributions into your budget in a way that will achieve those maximum amounts

will lower your tax liability and provide more funds for healthcare to help keep you feeling and living well.

3) **Managing Your Marginal and Capital Gains Tax Matters**  
If you're on the threshold of a tax bracket, you may be able to put yourself in the lower one by planning to defer some income to 2025. Here are a few thresholds to keep in mind as the year progresses:

37 percent marginal tax rate: Taxable incomes exceeding \$609,351 (individual), \$731,201 (married filing jointly), \$609,351 (head of household), and \$365,601 (married filing separately)

20 percent capital gains tax rate: Taxable incomes exceeding \$518,901 (individual), \$583,751 (married filing jointly), \$551,351 (head of household), and \$291,851 (married filing separately)

3.8 percent surtax on investment income: The lesser of net investment income or the excess of MAGI greater than \$200,000 (individual), \$250,000 (married filing jointly), \$200,000 (head of household), and \$125,000 (married filing separately)

0.9 percent additional Medicare tax: W-2 earnings and self-employment income above the same MAGI thresholds as the investment income surtax (For clients with W-2 earnings above the MAGI thresholds, total Medicare taxes will be 2.35 percent; for self-employed clients, total Medicare taxes will be 3.8 percent.)

4) **Rebalancing Your Investment Portfolio**

Reviewing your capital gains and losses may reveal tax planning opportunities, such as harvesting losses to offset capital gains which would mean potentially paying less in taxes.

5) **Making Your Charitable Giving Pay Off**  
If you're older than 70 and a half, you can make a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) of up to \$105,000 directly to a charity; if you're married and filing jointly, you may exclude up to \$105,000 donated from each of your and your spouse's IRA.

Under SECURE 2.0, taxpayers may begin to take advantage of a one-time opportunity to use a QCD to transfer up to \$50,000 to a charitable remainder trust, charitable annuity trust, or a charitable gift annuity.

6) **Forming a Plan for Stock Options**  
If you hold stock options, it's a good idea to develop a strategy for managing your current and future income while considering a potential concentration of the stock across your entire book of business. As part of this, be sure to have your tax advisor prepare an alternative minimum tax (AMT) projection. Keep in mind, AMT exemption limits increased in 2024 to \$85,700 for single tax filers and \$133,300 for married joint filers.

7) **Adjusting Your Withholding Amount**  
If you think you may be subject to an estimated tax penalty, consider asking your employers (via Form W-4) to adjust your withholding to cover shortfalls. The IRS tax withholding calculator

can help you with your estimates.

8) **Assessing Your Estate Plans**  
Year-end is always a good time to review and update your estate plan to make sure it's still in line with your goals and accounts for any change in circumstances. Depending on your net worth, establishing a defective grantor trust, spousal lifetime access trust, or irrevocable life insurance trust may be an effective strategy to reduce your estate tax exposure. In addition, take the time to update your beneficiary designations and review trustee appointments, power of attorney provisions, and health care directives.

9) **Adding Key Financial Dates to Your Calendar, And Keeping On Top of Your Finances Each Month**  
Creating a financial strategy for the year isn't much use if you don't stick to it and stay on top of it. Be sure to check out the Monthly Financial Checklist and Key Planning Dates on our website at whzwealth.com/resources to help with your planning now, and to help you stay on track later.

10) **Invest In Professional Help From a Trusted Partner**  
This checklist is a great starting point to set you up for healthier finances in the months and years ahead. But as I noted at the outset, there are many other things to consider and it can get complicated, especially if you have a high income and/or a fair amount of investments already.

That's why the tenth and final thing to consider is reaching out for professional help as you plan your financial strategy to best build and manage your wealth. In terms of your financial health, it's as important a relationship as the one you have with your primary care provider to keep your physical health as great as it can be.

So please feel free to contact us for a complimentary consultation to see how our Plan Well. Invest Well. Live Well.™ process can guide you in creating a financial plan and wealth management strategy that's optimized just for you. You can call us at (860) 928-2341 or book a consultation on our website at whzwealth.com.

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## Places from our past

In case of inclement weather, listen to WINY or call the Killingly Historical Center a little after 10 to see if it is open. If you get the answering machine, leave a message. We are probably closed. Thank you.

Several of the volunteers at the Killingly Historical Center have been busy cataloging our extensive photo collection. One of the women, who didn't wish to be named, was working with a photo of the East Killingly Ladies Aid Society at the Union Baptist Church, ca. 1920. It was taken on the front porch of Jonathan and Carrie Smith's home (Bailey Hill Road). I found the accompanying note was rather amusing, "Jonathan Smith was a very large man--well over 300 pounds. The large window on the left was installed by Jonathan when he built the house so they would not have to take down any doors when he died to get his casket out of the house. They could just slide it out through the window." ("Submitted by Henry McGinty," is written on the reverse of the photo).

Over the Christmas-New Year's holidays, I began thinking of topics for future columns. One thought was places from our past--some of which you might still remember; others, probably not. I live not far from a circa 1742 tavern

(Felshaw's Tavern), one of the earliest in Killingly and Northeastern Connecticut, so thought I would jog your memories about inns, hotels, and "places of public entertainment" from our past. I quickly discovered there were way too many for one column. I'll choose just a few.

How many of you remember the Kingswood Hotel (also called the Kingswood Inn by locals), which stood on the site of the present Killingly Memorial School during the 1930's and early 1940's? According to an entry in the Killingly Business Encyclopedia by Natalie L. Coolidge, it was formerly the estate of Timothy Earl Hopkins. It "was remodeled and first opened as a hotel by the late Earl Clinton Rogers of Putnam." Another entry noted that Rogers, also the owner of the Putnam Inn, Putnam, "was elected vice-president of the Connecticut Hotel Association" in March, 1934. For a photo of the grand mansion see p. 28 of Images of America Killingly by Natalie L. Coolidge and Robert A. Spencer. A Business Encyclopedia entry noted that the "property was purchased by the town of Killingly in 1943 (for \$14,850) as a possible site for the erection of a new school building. The proposed new school building has been planned as a post-war construction project."

Perhaps you have heard of another Killingly hotel, with a similar beginning to its name--Kingsbury Hotel. This hotel, which is still standing on the north side of Route 101 across from Dog Hill Road in what was known as Killingly Centre, was occupied for almost fifty years by George Kingsbury. Across from the Aspinock Mills and the Killingly Town Meeting House, it was advertised as a temperance house in 1868. Kingsbury died in 1877, and the hotel "was for many years profitably occupied as a summer hotel by the late C. W. Marsh. " Marsh's successor was Larry Norton. (See Killingly Business Encyclopedia). See p. 78 of Images of America, Killingly for a photograph of the hotel.

Maybe you recall the Ben Grosvenor Inn on Route 44 in Pomfret. "Built in 1742, it was demolished in 1960." Some of the remaining buildings from the property have been maintained by Pomfret School. ("Pomfret: Through the Years: 300 years of history of Pomfret, Connecticut as seen through its people, places, and events") Edited by Walter P. Hinchman (p. 99).



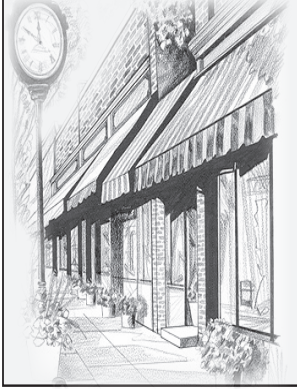
KILLINGLY  
AT  
300  
MARGARET  
WEAVER

I personally love the stories that are told about the Vernon Stiles Inn in Thompson. In her "History of Windham County, Connecticut," historian Ellen D. Larned, while writing about the 1830's and 1840's wrote. "Captain Vernon Stiles,... claimed that 'more stage passengers dined there every day than at any other house in New England.' His bar-room was the headquarters of the Democratic party, now very powerful in town, and his spacious hall the scene of many festive entertainment.

Stiles tavern was especially noted for its matrimonial facilities. Thompson's local position, cornering upon two States, afforded some peculiar advantages. Its 'Line-taverns' enabled legal fugitives and liquor-sellers to dodge back and forth into Rhode Island and Massachusetts, and its convenient access tempted young lovers to evade the prolonged publication in the above states. A single notice read before or after church service satisfied legal requirements in Connecticut, and so it became very much the fashion for affianced pairs to drive to Thompson Hill on a Sunday and there celebrate their weddings." (Vo. II, p. 439, Swordsmith edition).

Did you know that General Israel Putnam kept a tavern in Brooklyn following his participation in the Revolutionary War? The site hmbs.org (the Historical Marker Database) has a photo of a marker with the inscription, "Here with his wife (2nd) Mrs. Deborah (Avery Gardiner) Putnam, he dispensed a famous hospitality at the General Wolfe Tavern." Of course, you recall his daring exploit as a young man in crawling into Wolf Den to shoot a wolf, which had been killing the sheep.

Killingly was incorporated in 1708 and extended north to the Massachusetts border. The earliest Killingly tavern/inn that I found reference to was that of Isaac Cutler. According to Ellen D. Larned, he "was early allowed to keep a house of public entertainment and his tavern was noted as the last landmark in civilization on the road from Connecticut to Providence." (Op. cit., Vo. I., p. 139). On the same page she noted that Isaac operated a sawmill in 1709. This was most likely on a brook in what is now East Putnam, south of present-day Route 44, but was then in Killingly. Natalie Coolidge's Occupations binder of the Killingly Business Encyclopedia notes, "License for house of public entertainment for strangers, travelers and others and also to retain strong drink issued to Isaac Cutler, June 28, 1726 Session of Windham County Court, extracted from Windham County Court Record Book 1726-1732 by Marcella Pasay. Cutler was reissued licenses through 1735 according to Pasay. Larned noted that by the late 1720's Samson Howe and Mrs. Mary Lee (widow of Samuel) were permitted



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SPORTS

Despite close call, ‘mental toughness’ helps Centaurs force overtime against Windham



Woodstock Academy's Camden Nason releases a pass off his fingertips.

BY DEAN P. ST. LAURENT  
SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

WOODSTOCK — Down three points, Woodstock Academy boys’ basketball inbounded the ball

with just under 10 seconds left in regulation. After multiple passes to try and free up a shooter, the ball found the hands of senior guard Hunter

Larson, who rose up from the left wing and splashed a 3-pointer at the buzzer to send the Centaurs to overtime against Windham on Wednesday,

Jan. 3. Unfortunately for Woodstock Academy, the comeback came up short after Windham’s Anden Gonzalez hit two free throws with under 10 seconds left in the period to ice the game. The Centaurs were defeated by the visiting Whippets, 78-73. Despite the outcome not ending in the favor of Woodstock Academy, the second-half performance to cut down an 11-point halftime deficit to force overtime was a beauty to watch. It all came down to what the Centaur coaching staff preaches day in and day out.

“Every day my guys come in and we teach them mental toughness,” expressed Woodstock Academy Donte Adams. “We teach them life lessons through basketball, so you have to be mentally tough to be prepared in life. That is all I told them at half. I said, ‘Listen, we will be fine, we come in every day and no one has been in the position we have been in.’ We were on the unlucky side with the basketball gods, but my guys competed and played hard and that is all I ask for them to come in and do.”

The Centaurs began the fourth quarter down 49-42 after winning the third quarter 19-15. The momentum continued when Woodstock Academy began the fourth quarter on an 8-0 run sparked by two Larson 3-pointers to give the Centaurs a 50-49 lead. Turnovers were cleaned up by Woodstock in the second half and it was a huge reason for their success.



Hunter Larson of Woodstock Academy leaps into the air scanning the court for an open teammate to pass to while being heavily guarded.



Woodstock Academy's Matthew Hernandez keeps the ball away from Windham's defender while trying to attempt a layup.

“It is all about adjustments,” stated Adams. “I feel like we came out lateral in the first half. I said, ‘Let’s just settle down.’ The pressure was nothing we hadn’t seen before. We have seen worse and we contained it. Once we settled in, able to contain the pressure and get open shots, it paid off for us in the second half.”

Down the stretch, it was clear who the Centaurs wanted with the ball in their hands. Junior forward Brady Erickson led the way with a team-high 30 points and Larson chipped in 16. The pair combined for 18 of the

team’s 20 fourth-quarter points. Each had nine points in the quarter.

“Those guys have been under me for a year, so they know what I expect out of them and they just come in and play hard,” expressed Adams. “I give them the utmost confidence and they go out and play with confidence. That is all I ask them to do. I expect them to make big shots and they came down with some big plays down the stretch, but like I said we were on the unlucky side today, but the good thing about it is we live to see another day.”

Killingly High School

Boys’ Basketball

Robbie Scavello led Stonington (5-1) to victory over Killingly (2-3) with a 46-point performance for the Bears on Wednesday, January 3rd, by a final score of 70-64. Johnny Kazantzis had 19 points, 15 rebounds, and 7 assists for Killingly. Quin Crowley added 17 points for Killingly.

Girls’ Basketball

Molly Crabtree led all scorers with 22 points as Killingly defeated Stonington 62-42 for their 4th straight win on Thursday, January 4th. Laura Farquhar added 15, while Arianha Headen chipped in with 10.

Killingly falls to 4-3 with a loss to Fitch 39-35 on Saturday January 6th. Molly and Sydney Crabtree led Killingly with 8 points each while Arianha Headen chipped in with 6. Singleton led Fitch with 11 points.

Woodstock Academy

Boys’ Hockey

Xavier defeated Woodstock Academy 5-4 in OT on Tuesday, January 2nd. The Centaurs broke out to a three-goal lead in their home opener at the Jahn Ice Rink at Pomfret School but could not sustain the effort. Xavier put together a 66-shot attack and three of them got past Woodstock Academy goalie Brady Hebert (61 saves) to tie the game at four. Senior Aidan Spring’s second goal of the game with just 1 minute, 6 seconds left in overtime gave the Falcons the come-from-behind win.

Senior Don Sousa had a goal and two assists, giving him 99 career points for the Centaurs. Noah Sampson and Maxx Corradi each added a goal and an assist while Alex Gessner had his first career goal for Woodstock Academy.

Fairfield Warde/Fairfield Ludlowe defeated Woodstock Academy 6-4 on Wednesday, January 3rd. Senior Don Sousa did have a personal highlight for the Centaurs as he recorded his 100th career point with a third-period goal but the Centaurs fell to 2-5 with the loss at Sacred Heart University. Maxx Corradi had a pair of goals for the Centaurs while Brady Lecuyer had a goal and an assist and Noah Sampson also added an assist.

Boys’ Basketball

Woodstock Academy defeated Plainfield 61-38 on Friday, January 5th. Hunter Larson had the hot hand from the outside as the Woodstock Academy senior buried four 3-pointers to lead the Centaurs to a 61-38 win over Plainfield on Friday night. The win brought the Centaurs back to the .500 mark at 4-4. Larson had three of those 3-pointers and 15 points in total in the first half as the Centaurs built a 10-point lead by halftime. Six points by junior center Brady Ericson, who finished with a double-double 14 points and 16 rebounds, and a stingy defense which limited Plainfield to just five third quarter points saw that lead balloon to 20 by the end of the third quarter.

Cheney Tech defeated Woodstock Academy 45-36 on Saturday, January 6th. The Beavers had scored 94-plus points in three wins this season so the Centaurs goal was to slow down that offense. They accomplished that and trailed by just two, 30-28, going into the final quarter. But a pair of 3-pointers by Mohamed Camara (13 points) and another

by Damnic Gittens in the fourth quarter gave Cheney Tech the win. Hunter Larson led Woodstock Academy with 12 points while Garrett Bushey added 10.

Girls’ Basketball

Woodstock Academy defeated East Lyme 61- 25 on Tuesday, January 2nd. Sophomore Sidney Anderson scored 20 points, had five steals and three blocks to lead the Centaurs to their seventh straight win. Woodstock Academy again broke out to an early lead, 13-5, after the first quarter thanks to sophomore guard Kaylee Saucier who scored seven of her 12 points in the opening stanza. That lead grew to 24 points, 32-8, by the half.

Woodstock Academy defeated East Lyme 49-33 on Thursday, January 4th. For a second time in three nights, the Centaurs handled the Vikings. The game was close in the first half with the two teams going into the locker room tied at 20 but Woodstock Academy put the game away with a 20-5 third quarter run. That spurt was fueled by junior center Eva Monahan who scored 12 of her game-high 20 points in the third. Isabel D’Alleva-Bochain added 12 for the Centaurs who have now won eight straight.

Woodstock Academy defeated Amistad 46-21 on Saturday, January 6th. For the second time in a week, the Centaurs and Wolves matched up, this time in Northeastern Connecticut. The results were much the same as Woodstock Academy jumped out to a 15-0 lead in the first quarter and led 34-10 at the half to roll to its ninth straight win.

Kaylee Saucier led a balanced Centaur attack with 14 points while Eva Monahan added seven and Reegan Reynolds contributed six rebounds, five off the offensive boards.

Wrestling

The Centaurs (0-4) avoided the shut-out when senior Lucas Theriaque took his match with a 6-2 decision. NFA improved to 11-2 with a 78-3 win over Woodstock on Wednesday, January 3rd.

Ellis Tech

Girls’ Basketball

Ellis Tech won 38-11 on Tuesday, January 2nd against Grasso Tech. Rose Lopez led all scorers with 14 points and Kylie Damble added 10 points.

Ellis Tech won 25-23 on Friday, January 5th against Windham Tech. It was a neck and neck game with great defense. Kylie Damble accounted for 8 points and 9 rebounds, Kiara Cartier shut down their best player and accounted for 3 steals. Sadie Murray pulled down 8 rebounds and accounted for 2 steals and 3 assists.

Ellis Tech won 27-20 on Monday, January 8th against Tourtellotte. We are off to a hot start and now hold a record of 8-2. Defense again was top notch. Kylie Damble accounted for 9 rebounds and 2 steals and a block. Rose Lopez pulled down 7 rebounds and added 2 steals and Sadie Murray anchored the defense with 4 steals, 4 rebounds and 3 assists.


Boys’ Basketball

Ellis Tech was defeated by Grasso Tech 61 to 55 on Tuesday, January 2nd. Ian Brais led the Golden Eagles with 21, Owen Lefebvre added 12 points.

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SPORTS

Tourtellotte clips Clippers with strong third quarter play



Jason Mckay photos

Tourtellotte's Joshua Carlson pulls up for a 3-point jump shot versus Putnam.



Putnam's Noah Rudman releases a free throw as all the players watch with anticipation.



Deonte Snow of Tourtellotte provides his team with a 3-pointer in front of a Putnam defender.

By Dean P. St. Laurent  
Sports Correspondent  
PUTNAM — Tourtellotte High School boys' basketball (5-2) came out of the gates swinging in the third quarter against Putnam High School (3-4) on Friday, Jan. 5, beginning the quarter on a 10-2 run to extend their lead to nine points, 32-23.

Putnam had the lead momentarily early in the third when Noah Rudman scored moments into the quarter, but Tourtellotte, due to active rebounding and 3-point shooting, held onto a lead for the rest of regulation to defeat the Clippers, 52-46.

"Huge, we made some shots," expressed Tourtellotte Head Coach Gino Manzi about the third-quarter run. "Our defense was phenomenal the whole game, and Deonte Snow was huge tonight. He had four 3's and it seemed like all of them that he hit were at a crucial time. Putnam is a great team and they're well-coached, you know they aren't going to quit. Even when we went up nine or 10, I knew we

weren't going to pull away from this team. They are too good. So, we held them at bay, played phenomenal defense and Jake Patterson did an amazing job on Noah. He may have had 23 (24), but going into the fourth quarter he didn't have that many and he worked for everything he got. It was a good team win."

Manzi also added some insight into how much emphasis was put into rebounding leading into this game.

"We did a lot better tonight, we are focusing on that (rebounding)," stated Manzi. "We didn't even touch a basketball two practices ago. All we did was work on defense and rebounding, so I was very happy with that effort."

The offensive outburst from Tourtellotte senior Deonte Snow was massive for the Tigers due to Putnam focusing so heavily on Josh Carlson who is a main offensive threat for Tourtellotte. Snow led the team with 21 points.

"We knew what we had

to do," stated Putnam Head Coach Shawn Deary. "We talked about being disciplined and shutting down Josh, their player who is a very good scorer. We did that tonight, we executed. Deonte Snow played very well and hit some big 3's down the stretch, which was a dagger."

Carlson added 13 points and Jake Patterson chipped in 16.

Despite Putnam going down nine a couple of times during the third quarter, they never quit. They kept to their game plan and got some fourth-quarter production from Rudman, who scored 11 of his game-high 24 points in the fourth quarter.

"Offensively we look to go through Noah," stated Deary. "All of our guys can score. Tonight we got out-rebounded. With him going to the rim, playing the inside-outside game it takes a guy out of the middle and they out-rebounded us probably 2-1 in the second half."



Brady Devlin of Putnam, left, fights over control of the ball with a Tourtellotte defender.



Tourtellotte's Louis Ochoa passes the ball to his open teammate as a Putnam defender rushes in and lunges for the ball.



Aysaiah Chavez of Putnam releases a high-arching jumper versus Tourtellotte.

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Help Wanted



# The Town Meeting

For centuries, literally, Woodstock has had a town meeting form of government. The town meeting is the legislative body of the municipality.

New England colonists kept or adapted elements from the later medieval period in England – manorial courts and parish meetings, those responsible for the financial solvency of the parish. When the Mayflower landed in 1620, travelers gathered to adopt their own rules of government – the Mayflower Compact. The Massachusetts Bay Colony set the benchmark and was an example to other colonies as they developed. The General Court of Massachusetts, the legislature for the entire colony, “gave broad mandates to all such assemblies of townsmen; they were authorized to make bylaws not repugnant to the laws of the colony and to choose their own particular officers” (Kenneth Lockridge, “A New England Town the First Hundred Years”).

Town meeting is a public, decision-making entity. It is distinct to

## WOODSTOCK THROUGH THE YEARS

CHARLENE PERKINS CUTLER



the small communities in New England – direct democracy. The power of this form of government comes from the participation of voters. In the early decades, there was no separation between church and state. Town meetings created the distribution of land resources and regulated taxation. They decided on religious matters, like settling a minister. They decided the mundane, like how many trees could be cut from swamps and which families could build certain forms of structures. The participants argued and discussed all the little of their lives, worked out ways to live in their community, and constricted those things requiring regulation. The decisions of those early meetings still affect communities today. Thomas Jefferson wrote that town meeting “is the perfect exercise of self-government and for its preservation.” The political philosopher Alexi de Tocqueville (1831) felt that the town meeting gave New

England great political independence. While the socio-political value of town meeting was celebrated, human characteristics, including suspicion, argumentativeness, and contradiction, were also apparent in the public proceedings.

In Woodstock, or New Roxbury at the time, the first town meeting was held on August 25, 1686, for the purpose of deciding a location for fields to plant and home lots to construct dwellings. There was apparently some confusion over the decisions, or lack thereof, at the first meeting. So, another town meeting followed the next day to choose seven men who would be responsible for: staking out roads, designating a lot for the minister, deciding on land convenient for the planters to settle on, and a convenient place for the meetinghouse (Ellen Larned, “History of Windham County”).

The importance of voter participation was not lost on the residents of early Woodstock.

A new rule went into effect on Sept. 18, 1691: If a voter was “absent from town meeting, unless excused by sickness, they were required to pay three shillings,” a fine that would be felt. [Converted to 2024 dollars, the three shillings would be \$48.76.] In 1724, it was noted that “Town meetings were now carried on with a great deal of form. Notices were posted; summons served on voters, sometimes as early as six o’clock in the morning” (Bowen, “History of Woodstock,” 35,74.) For town meeting to work well, each eligible voter needed to participate.

In the 21st century, questions have been raised about the effectiveness of town meeting in New England as communities get larger and there is a dearth of volunteers to participate on town boards, committees, and commissions. Fewer qualified people are willing to run for office. There is frequent turn-over in elected positions, a trend toward professionalizing those same positions, and a lack of reasonable wages paid for some very complicated jobs. The Mirror

published an article by Tom Condon in August of 2023, “The town meeting is a Yankee tradition. Does it still make sense?” Condon verified that town meeting is the municipal legislative body in more than half of the 169 Connecticut towns. Town meeting was created for small communities with common interest, but as those communities grow, is it still relevant?

The issue of participation is center stage in 2024. Whether at town meeting or a referendum, voters are not choosing to take part in their local government. Woodstock had three referenda in the spring of 2023. If the fines adopted at the 1691 town meeting (3 shilling for missing a town meeting) were corrected to 2024 dollars (\$48.76) and levied against voters not participating (4,470) in all of the three referenda, the town would be due \$6,538.71 in fines. It is a whimsical notion at best but it illustrates both the lack of participation and an alarming relinquishment of power.

The work of the town of Woodstock has been accomplished in town

meeting for 337 years and the records of most of those meetings are sitting in the town hall. One can read every decision made. Are Woodstockians going to give up their ability to self-govern through town meeting? Will the next chapter of the town’s history document a change in our form of government and speak of town meeting in the past tense?

Books on Woodstock history available at any of the town’s four libraries and the website for the Woodstock Historical Society ([www.centerfor-woodstockhistory.com](http://www.centerfor-woodstockhistory.com)):

Bowen, Clarence Winthrop. History of Woodstock. Boston: James R. Osgood, 1882.  
Larned, Ellen D. History of Windham County, Connecticut. 2 vols. Worcester, Massachusetts: Printed by Charles Hamilton, 1874.  
Woodstock Tercentenary Committee. Heritage and Horizons, Woodstock Remembers 300 Years. Woodstock, CT, 1968.

## Empowering strategies for kids bullied on the bus

BY MIKE BOGDANSKI

A five-year-old we know often complains of being bullied and harassed on the bus along with other children. The bullies on a school bus have a captive audience, including a driver who is focused on the road. I have a few tips for dealing with bullying on the school bus. Now that your child is in a contained environment with a ride that can last up to 30 minutes and longer, with very little supervision, you can see why buses are one of the top places where bullying takes place. Being bullied on the school bus is a scary experience for children, impacting their emotional well-being and overall school experience. To help empower kids facing this challenge, here are four effective strategies they can employ:

**Confidence Building:**  
One of the most powerful weapons against

bullying is self-confidence. Encourage your child when entering the bus to stand tall, make eye contact, and project confidence. Bullies often target those they perceive as vulnerable, and a confident demeanor can deter potential aggressors. Over sixty percent of communication is nonverbal and, practicing assertive body language, and having a warrior face (if needed) can help your child feel more in control and less susceptible to intimidation. Like any other skill, this needs rehearsal as a tool against bullies who are looking to make intimidation their game. Even small people can have a “you can’t defeat me” attitude.

**Establish Support Networks:**

Creating a support network can significantly help a child facing bullying. Encourage your

child to identify friends or peers on the bus who may be experiencing similar challenges. Strength lies in numbers, and having allies can provide emotional support and deter bullies. Many years ago we had a similar situation with a kindergarten karate student. We had a black-belt eighth grader on the same bus who addressed the bullies—no more problems. When a bystander sticks up for a child being bullied, the bullying stops in thirty seconds or less, over 80 percent of the time.

Communication with school staff and teachers ensures that adults know the situation and must intervene appropriately. Telling the bus driver is not being a tattletale, it is reporting a breach of school policy. Establishing a sense of teamwork with friends both on the bus and within the school envi-

ronment reinforces the idea that no one should endure bullying alone and yes sometimes we may need a bodyguard.

**Utilize Technological Tools:**

Technology can be a powerful ally in combating bullying in the digital age. Encourage older children to use their smartphones (if they are old enough) to discreetly document instances of bullying through photos, videos, or voice recordings. This evidence can be crucial when reporting incidents to school authorities, providing concrete proof of the behavior. Additionally, there are various safety apps available that allow children to send distress signals or share their location with trusted contacts in real-time. These tools can empower kids to take control of their safety and find help when needed.

**Develop Conflict Resolution Skills:**

Teaching children effective conflict resolution skills equips them to handle bullying situations with poise and intelligence. Encourage your child to practice assertive communication, express their feelings, and set boundaries calmly. Role-playing scenarios and teaching a child to remain calm with long slow breaths are helpful. Saying “back away” with a strong voice and good eye contact is the million-dollar defense. Rehearsing this with your children will make them feel more prepared and confident in addressing bullying situations. Also, teaching empathy to your child, allows them to be an upstander instead of a bystander fosters a “no bullying” community, and promotes a positive and inclusive environment on the bus.

Encourage your child to practice positive self-talk. Make sure they know they have your support and that you are always available to listen. Finally, remind them that they are strong and can stand up for themselves if needed.

By implementing these strategies, children can develop the resilience and skills needed to navigate the challenges of being bullied or watching bullying on the bus. Empowering them to build confidence, establish support networks, leverage technology responsibly, and develop conflict resolution skills will contribute to a safer and more positive school bus experience. There is no easy solution to this problem.

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

## Civil War memorabilia and firearms 2023 auction results



I’ve shared results from our 2023 auctions over my last three columns. In today’s column, I’ll focus on Civil War memorabilia and firearms that sold well at auction.

**Firearms** manufactured in or before 1898 are considered antiques, according to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF). Antique firearms can be sold without having to be transferred by a federally licensed firearms dealer.

We sold several antique rifles and pistols from a northern central Massachusetts estate in our August auc-

tion. One of the rifles from the collection was a British Tower rifle. The Union Army used these .577 caliber rifles during the Civil War. It is estimated that around 500,000 rifles were imported during the war. The Enfield was a very accurate rifle, and many considered it to be the best firearm in the world at the start of the Civil War in 1861. The Enfield in our auction brought a little over \$1,000.

Later in the 19th century, an American rifle became known as “the gun that won the West.” Oliver Fisher Winchester started out in the men’s shirt business in 1810 but bought a controlling inter-

est in Volcanic Repeating Arms Company in 1857. Winchester refined designs and formed the Winchester Repeating Arms Company in 1866, according to the company’s website. In 1873, the Winchester repeater rifle (the gun that won the West) was developed with lever action, allowing for faster firing. We sold an 1894 Remington lever action rifle that also sold for a little over \$1,000.

It’s not only the hardware that appeals to collectors. Letters from Civil War soldiers provided insights into the battles they fought and also offer a window into how the war affected the soldiers and their family members back home. The Library of Congress has many letters online for academics and also people who are generally curious. Locally,

Brandeis University and Wellesley College received a grant to preserve Civil War letters for students, scholars, and researchers. They have nearly 450 letters in their collection.

Two sets of letters from Blackstone Valley estates were the top selling military related items in our 2023 auctions. A group of Civil War letters from Charles Carr along sold with a plate showing Lieutenant Charles Carr died in 1864, brought \$1,300 in our January auction. A larger group of letters sent by George Maynard to Nellie Brown in Westborough, Mass. brought \$3,775. The consigning family was pleased to have these important letters be sold to somewhere they can be researched and appreciated.

Our major auction of art, sterling, gold and platinum jewelry, and historical items recently ended. We are now accepting consignments of vintage collectibles, including sports cards, non-sports cards, comic books, and other memorabilia for a spring auction. Later in the spring,

we expect to run another auction with more art, jewelry, sterling silver, and other antiques and collectibles. I will also be teaching my night class at the Bay Path Evening School in Charlton again in the spring and I’ll be at the Learning in Retirement event in Danielson, Connecticut on May 6. Please visit our Web site, <https://central-massauctions.com>, for

links to other upcoming events.

Contact us to consign items or for auction information at: Wayne Tuiskula Auctioneer/ Appraiser Central Mass Auctions for Antique, Collectibles Auctions and Appraisal Services [info@centralmassauctions.com](mailto:info@centralmassauctions.com) or (508-612-6111).

ANTIQUES, COLLECTIBLES & ESTATES  
• • • • •  
WAYNE TUISKULA



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SHOOTING

continued from page A1

the drive through area of the Taco Bell. When the suspect did not surrender, the officer can be heard asking him to “stop” before the suspect is hit by a vehicle. Gadbout can be heard yelling “No!” as the suspect reached for a weapon before the officer discharged his own weapon, confirming shots fired on his radio. Muller can be seen dropping a revolver to the ground after being shot. Medical assistance was provided on scene

with Muller taken to Day Kimball Hospital in Putnam. The suspect was eventually moved to UMass Memorial Medical Center to receive further treatment. The incident is currently under further investigation by the Office of Inspector General, Connecticut State Police Eastern District Major Crime Squad, and the Windham Judicial District State’s Attorney’s Office. The 56-second video of the incident is available for public viewing on the Office of Inspector General YouTube page.

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**email: mikaela@villagernewspapers.com**

SNHU announces Fall 2023 Dean’s List

MANCHESTER, New Hampshire — It is with great pleasure that Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) congratulates the following students on being named to the Fall 2023 Deans List. The fall terms run from September to December. Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.500 to 3.699 for the reporting term are named to the Dean’s List. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits over each 16-week term or paired 8-week terms grouped in fall, winter/spring, and summer. Jake Ross of Brooklyn Lindsay Thompson of Danielson Brian Lowell of Dayville Reilly Allen of Dayville

Lisette Hernandez of Putnam Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) is a private, non-profit institution with a 91-year history of educating traditional-aged students and working adults. Now serving more than 225,000 learners worldwide, SNHU offers approximately 200 accredited undergraduate, graduate and certificate programs, available online and on its 300-acre campus in Manchester, NH. Recognized as one of the “Most Innovative” regional universities by U.S. News & World Report and one of the fastest-growing universities in the country, SNHU is committed to expanding access to high quality, affordable pathways that meet the needs of each learner. Learn more at [www.snhu.edu](http://www.snhu.edu).

SNHU announces Fall 2023 President’s List

MANCHESTER, New Hampshire — It is with great pleasure that Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) congratulates the following students on being named to the Fall 2023 Presidents List. The fall terms run from September to December. Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.700 and above for the reporting term are named to the President’s List. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits over each 16-week term or paired 8-week terms grouped in fall, winter/spring, and summer. Melisa Moone of Brooklyn Latisha Chamberlain of Brooklyn Bethany Paul of Brooklyn Eric Borkiewicz of Brooklyn Emmelia Gardner of Brooklyn Hannah Reid of Brooklyn Jean Foraker of Danielson Katherine Perry of Danielson

Janette Lajoie of Killingly Elizebeth Benoit of North Grosvenordale Elizabeth McLean of Thompson Samantha Langlois of Thompson Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) is a private, non-profit institution with a 91-year history of educating traditional-aged students and working adults. Now serving more than 225,000 learners worldwide, SNHU offers approximately 200 accredited undergraduate, graduate and certificate programs, available online and on its 300-acre campus in Manchester, NH. Recognized as one of the “Most Innovative” regional universities by U.S. News & World Report and one of the fastest-growing universities in the country, SNHU is committed to expanding access to high quality, affordable pathways that meet the needs of each learner. Learn more at [www.snhu.edu](http://www.snhu.edu).



Elyssa A. Foley, Clerk

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
**ESTATE OF John Spendolini (23-00445)**  
The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of North-east Probate Court, by decree dated December 22, 2023, 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:  
Deborah Spendolini  
c/o NICHOLAS SEAN MAZZARELLA,  
84 ROBERTSON A VENUE,  
DANIELSON, CT 06239  
January 12, 2024

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
**ESTATE OF Leon P Jezierski, Sr. (23-00442)**  
The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of North-east Probate Court, by decree dated December 29, 2023, 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:  
Alan J. Jezierski & Leon P. Jezierski Jr.  
c/o EDWIN C HIGGINS, BACHAND,  
LONGO & HIGGINS,  
168 MAIN STREET, P.O. BOX 528,  
PUTNAM, CT 06260  
January 12, 2024

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
**ESTATE OF Susan Dumas (23-00443)**  
The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of North-east Probate Court, by decree dated December 29, 2023, 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.

The fiduciary is:  
Ashley Sterling  
c/o MATTHEW-ALAN HERMAN,  
LAW OFFICE OF  
ALAN SCOTT HERMAN,  
16 SOUTH MAIN ST. , P.O. BOX 663,  
PUTNAM, CT 06260  
January 12, 2024

**TOWN OF THOMPSON**  
*Planning and Zoning*  
**LEGAL NOTICE**  
**At the Thompson Planning and Zoning Commission meeting held on December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 7:00 PM in the Merrill Seney Community Room in the Thompson Town Hall, 815 Riverside Drive, North Grosvenordale, CT 06255 and via ZOOM, the following action was taken.**  
**PZC 23-56 –Mountford Construction, LLC owner of 0 Logans Lane Map 137, Block 20, Lot 6M Zone Rural Residential Agricultural District (RRAD) request a 3 lot re-sub-division, in compliance with 2023 Amended Sub-division Regulations Article III and Article IV, PUBLIC HEARING January 22<sup>ND</sup> 7:00PM**  
Respectfully submitted.  
Joe Parodi-Brown, Chairman  
Files may be reviewed at the Planning and Zoning Office  
January 12, 2024  
January 19, 2024

**TOWN OF WOODSTOCK**  
On January 4, 2024, the Planning and Zoning Commission approved the following subdivision modification application: #356-93-05M David & Kerri Mullen, 135 & 145 Perring Rd lot line adjustment. (Map 5787 block 43 lot 05-1 & 05-1B). Jeff Marcotte, Chairman.  
January 12, 2024

TEEG

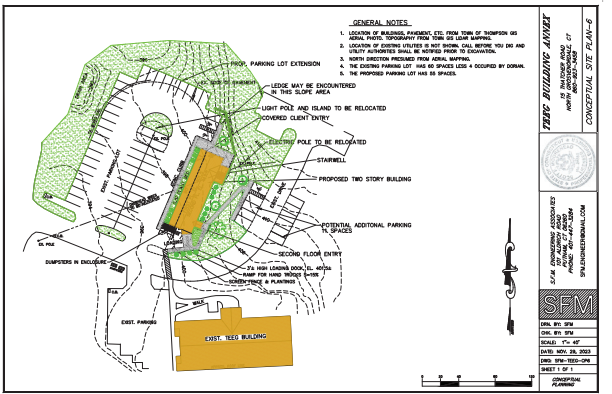
continued from page A1

The town would own the building like they do our current facility, and we would lease it from the town like we currently do for a dollar a year.” Miller stressed that these plans are very preliminary and that the next step would involve drawing up the actual specs for the building to determine a more precise cost estimate. There are no plans to seek money from any of TEEG’s three communities, Pomfret, Thompson, and

ACT

continued from page A1

in a concert dance fully choreographed and designed by ACT students. Student co-directors Layla Edmiston (Sterling) and Madisyn Raymond (Thompson) worked with fellow dancers Aiya Butler (Groton), Layla Hellandbrand (Coventry), Audrey Houk (Coventry), Caitlyn Kurcinik (Willimantic), Michaela LaFlamme (Willington), Morgan Labonte (Plainfield), Julie Margelony (Vernon), Najah Wells (Norwich) and Tatyana Winston (Sprague) to choreograph seven original dance pieces to fit their collaborative vision. They are joined by students from the dance, music, tech and acting departments to complete their company: Amaree McKnight (Willimantic), Jaeden Prochorchik (Willimantic), Ray Smith



Courtesy

**Conceptual drawings of TEEG’s proposed second building on the agencies Thatcher Road campus.**

Woodstock. The intent is to fully fund the project with grant money or similar means.

(Columbia), Izabella Garceau (Lebanon) and Josmar Hernandez (New London). Each student choreographer was paired with a student lighting designer to create an evening of dynamic dance that will be out of this world. From fiery Aries to sensitive Pisces, “Exploring the Enigmatic World of Zodiac Signs” by Caitlyn Kurcinik and Michaela LaFlamme blends the unique movements and emotions of every zodiac sign in a mesmerizing opening group dance that symbolizes the harmony of the diverse cosmic energies. Coming back from the stars to the ground with “Escapism” by Layla Edmiston, we see an altered reality where a girl escapes the reality of poverty and family issues into a dream that reveals her subconscious. Visiting the other side is “Interlinked,” choreographed by Julie Margelony, Morgan

Labonte and Tatyana Winston, following tied souls in the afterlife that always find their way back together no matter how long it takes. “Heal in Hell” by Aiya Butler follows a girl’s journey to release her inner demons not by fighting them, but outgrowing them. Another fraught journey is shown in “Mind Invasion” by Najah Wells and Audrey Houk, with demonic entities that take over in sleep. The power of the otherworldly is explored by sea in “What Lies Below” by Madisyn Raymond, inspired by Greek mythology’s Sirens who would lure sailors with their beautiful songs. With each unique dance you will experience elements that live on the other side of “A Thin Veil.” Our box office opens one hour prior to the performance; cash or checks are accepted at the window.

Eastern women’s basketball to hold annual breast cancer awareness game

WILLIMANTIC — Eastern Connecticut State University’s women’s basketball team will host its annual breast cancer awareness game on Jan. 27 in the Geissler Gymnasium against the University of Southern Maine. With a fundraising goal of \$7,500, donations will benefit the Susan G. Komen Foundation. According to head coach Denise Bierly, more than 20 women who have survived or are currently battling breast cancer will take the center court and be recognized after the game. Additional people may be recognized if they notify Bierly at BierlyD@easternct.edu. “We would love to have the stands packed and make them feel the Eastern love,” said Bierly, adding that guests

are encouraged to wear pink. “We want them to feel loved and supported for their fight.” Guests can donate at the game or online via the link below. Anyone who donates \$20 will receive a t-shirt. Those who donate in advance should contact Bierly at BierlyD@easternct.edu, who will set aside a t-shirt for pick up on game day. The Susan G. Komen Foundation is an organization dedicated to finding a cure for breast cancer and supporting women who are combating it. Last year’s breast cancer awareness game raised approximately \$5,000, surpassing the original goal of \$1,500. Donation link: [https://secure.info-komen.org/site/TR/DIYFundraising/ONE-SEC?px=26562719&pg=personal&fr\\_id=9961](https://secure.info-komen.org/site/TR/DIYFundraising/ONE-SEC?px=26562719&pg=personal&fr_id=9961) Women’s basketball Web site: <https://gowarriorathletics.com/sports/womens-basketball>.

LEGALS

**TOWN OF THOMPSON**  
*Planning and Zoning*  
**LEGAL NOTICE**

**Please post in the Thompson Villager on the following publication date: January 5, 2023**  
**At the Thompson Planning and Zoning Commission meeting held on December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 7:00 PM in the Merrill Seney Community Room in the Thompson Town Hall, 815 Riverside Drive, North Grosvenordale, CT 06255 and via ZOOM, the following action was taken.**  
**PZC 23-56 –Mountford Construction, LLC owner of 0 Logans Lane Map 137, Block 20, Lot 6M Zone Rural Residential Agricultural District (RRAD) request a 3 lot re-sub-division, in compliance with 2023 Amended Sub-division Regulations Article III and Article IV, ACCEPTED for public hearing.**  
**PZC 23-58 – Earthlight Technologies, property Owner Patrice Bernier and Danielle Wallace of 1012 Quaddick Town Farm Road, Map 143, Block 16, Lot 57, Zone LD 7.21 Acres, to install a ground mounted (395 sq ft) solar PV System, Zoning Permit with Site Plan Review by Commission, according to the Town of Thompson Zoning Regulations Article 275-14.5, B and C. (1) a – e and (2) a-e.**

**ACCEPTED**  
**PZC 23-59 – Gustafson Alan G. Revocable Trust (Alan Gustafson) of 19 Market Lane, Map 169, Block 93, Lot 2. Zone DMRD, .31 Acres request to increase existing Multi-Housing from 8 apartments to 11 apartments (increase of 3 Apartments) Zoning Permit with Site Plan Review by Commission, according to the Town of Thompson Zoning Regulations Article 12, 274-12.2 #21 and Article 4. 275-4.4 A. and B.**  
**ACCEPTED**  
Respectfully submitted.  
Joe Parodi-Brown, Chairman  
Files may be reviewed at the Planning and Zoning Office  
January 12, 2024

**TOWN OF KILLINGLY**  
**BOROUGH OF DANIELSON**  
**TAX AND SEWER USE NOTICE**

The third quarter installment of real estate and personal property taxes for the Town of Killingly and the Borough of Danielson and the second half of the Sewer Use charge is due January 1, 2024. Supplemental Motor Vehicle taxes are also due January 1, 2024. Taxes and Sewer Use will become delinquent on February 2, 2024. All are 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 bill and installment. FAILURE TO RECEIVE A BILL DOES NOT RELIEVE OR EXCUSE THE OBLIGATION OF TAX OR INTEREST DUE. Payments will be received in the Revenue Office, 172 Main Street Killingly CT 06239, during the posted hours, by mail, online, or in our drop box. 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  
December 22, 2023  
January 12, 2024  
January 26, 2024

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
**ESTATE OF Mary E. Zollin (23-00312)**  
The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of North-east Probate Court, by decree dated December 27, 2023, 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:  
Lynn Anne Zollin,  
52 Roseland Park Road,  
Woodstock, CT  
January 12, 2024







# Recycle your Christmas tree into the landscape

Don't drag that Christmas tree to the curb to be hauled away by the trash collectors. Give it a second, even third life, in your landscape. No live Christmas tree? Don't worry. I'm sure your friends and neighbors will share theirs.

Move your locally grown Christmas tree outdoors after the holidays. Avoid trees imported from other states that may host invasive insects that can infest your landscape and nearby Christmas tree farms. Your local municipality or Department of Natural Resources has more information on any threats and disposal recommendations for your area.

Use your cut Christmas tree to protect evergreens in your landscape from winter winds and sun. They make excellent windbreaks while shading sensitive plants in your landscape. Strategically place your



## GARDEN MOMENTS

MELINDA MYERS

discarded tree on the windward side of rhododendron, boxwood, and other broadleaf evergreens to reduce problems with winter burn. Place it on the south side of these plants to shade them from the drying winter sun.

Or remove the branches and use them as winter mulch over bulbs and perennials. Layer the boughs over the plants and soil to keep the soil consistently cold. This reduces the risk of early sprouting and winter damage that can occur during winter thaws.

Or set the tree in the landscape for a bit of added greenery. Secure it in a snow pile or use stakes and guy wires in

milder climates where the soil is not frozen. The birds will enjoy the added shelter and you will enjoy watching these visitors to your landscape.

Then consider adding a bit of food for your feathered visitors. Decorate the trees with fruits, berries, and seeds the birds can enjoy. Stringing cranberries and popcorn is a fun family activity and makes an attractive outdoor garland. Slices of oranges on colorful yarn and homemade bird ornaments can complete the adornments.

Sweep up the fallen needles that were under your tree indoors and use them as mulch in the garden. Place them directly on the soil or atop the snow. As the snow melts, the needles will be right where they belong. And don't worry, they will not make the soil too acidic. In fact, as they break down, they add organic matter to the soil.

As spring arrives, con-



Melinda Myers

**Removing the branches from Christmas trees and layering them over bulbs and perennials keeps the soil consistently cold, reducing the risk of early sprouting and winter damage.**

sider chipping and shredding your tree into mulch for trees and shrubs or pathways in the landscape. No chipper? You and your neighbors may want to rent a chipper to shred these and other prunings for use as mulch in your landscapes.

And, if this is not possible, check for recycling resources in your community. Many municipalities have special pickups for Christmas trees. These are chipped, shredded, and made available for citizens to use in their

landscapes.

Lake communities often sink the discarded trees to the bottom of lakes and ponds to provide habitat for the fish. Another great way to give your tree a second life.

And once you discover the value of this free resource you may find yourself collecting a few more from the neighborhood. However, your family may ask that you wait until dark to drag your evergreen treasures back home.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including the recently released *Midwest Gardener's Handbook*, 2nd Edition and *Small Space Gardening*. She hosts *The Great Courses* "How to Grow Anything" instant video and DVD series and the nationally syndicated *Melinda's Garden Moment* radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine. Myers' Web site is [www.MelindaMyers.com](http://www.MelindaMyers.com).

## Brooke Peloquin completes intensive research project

WORCESTER, Mass. — Brooke Peloquin, resident of Putnam, Conn., a member of the class of 2025 majoring in Mechanical Engineering and Physics at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), was a member of a student team that recently completed an intense research project titled *Developing Storytelling Methods for Venice Projects*.

At WPI, all undergraduates are required to complete a research-driven, professional-level project that applies science and technology that addresses an important societal need or issue. About two-thirds of students complete a project at one of the university's 50-plus off-campus project centers, which are located around the world. A signature element of the innovative undergraduate experience at WPI, the project-based curriculum offers students the opportunity to apply their scientific and technical knowledge to develop thoughtful solutions to real problems that affect the quality of people's lives-and make a difference before they

graduate.

"The WPI project-based curriculum's focus on global studies brings students out of the classroom and their comfort zones and into the global community to apply their knowledge and to solve problems," said Professor Kent Rissmiller, professor of Integrative & Global Studies and associate dean of The Global School. "Students are immersed in all aspects of a different culture, from the way people live and work to the values they hold to the foods they eat - all valuable perspectives for surviving and thriving in today's global marketplace. They also learn the meaning and magic of teamwork; make a real and meaningful difference in their host community; and gain a competitive edge for any resume, or graduate or professional school application."

About Worcester Polytechnic Institute WPI, a global leader in project-based learning, is a distinctive, top-tier technological university founded in 1865 on the principle that students learn most effectively

by applying the theory learned in the classroom to the practice of solving real-world problems. Recognized by the National Academy of Engineering with the 2016 Bernard M. Gordon Prize for Innovation in Engineering and Technology Education, WPI's pioneering project-based curriculum engages undergraduates in solving important scientific, technological, and societal problems throughout their education and at more than 50 project centers around the world. WPI offers more than 70 Bachelor's, Master's, and doctoral degree programs across 18 academic departments in science, engineering, technology, business, the social sciences, and the humanities and arts. Its faculty and students pursue groundbreaking research to meet ongoing challenges in health and biotechnology; robotics and the internet of things; advanced materials and manufacturing; cyber, data, and security systems; learning science; and more. [www.wpi.edu](http://www.wpi.edu)

## WOODSTOCK BY THE WEEK

### JAN. 15-21

TOWN HALL MEETINGS (agendas and minutes at [woodstockct.gov](http://woodstockct.gov))  
Monday the 15th  
• Town Hall closed  
Wednesday the 17th  
• Quasset School Advisory Com., 4 p.m.  
Thursday the 18th  
• Board of Selectmen, 6 p.m.  
• Planning & Zoning Com., 7:30 p.m.  
COMMUNITY EVENTS  
Each Weekday  
• Stepping into Sobriety Meetings, South Woodstock Baptist Church.  
Monday the 15th  
• Community Kitchen Free Lunch, First Congregational Church, noon.  
• Yoga Roots to Fly Wellness, Senexet Grange, 6 p.m.  
• Quilting, Senexet Grange, 7 p.m.  
Tuesday the 16th  
• The Bridge Young Adults, Evangelical Covenant Church  
• Yoga Roots to Fly Wellness, Senexet Grange, 6 p.m.  
• Book Club "Great Circle," West Woodstock Library, 6 p.m.  
• Woodstock Fair Annual Meeting, South Woodstock Baptist Church, 6:30 p.m.  
Wednesday the 17th  
• Story Hour, West Woodstock Library.  
• Knitting Group, Town Hall.  
• Yoga, Roots to Fly Wellness, Senexet Grange, 6 p.m.  
• Youth Group, South Woodstock Baptist Church and Evangelical Covenant Church.  
• Woodstock Academy Winter Concert, Loos Center, 7 p.m.  
• Quiet Corner Al-Anon Family Group, East Woodstock Congregational Church, 7:30 p.m.  
Thursday the 18th  
• Lady's Small Group and Men's Bible Study, South Woodstock Baptist Church  
• Quilting, Senexet Grange, 1 p.m.  
• Senior Social film, "The Nine Lives

of No. 9," First Congregational Church, 1:30 p.m.  
• This Is Me, Community Art Exhibit, The Loos Center, 3-6 p.m.  
Friday the 19th  
• Story Time Hour, May Memorial Library, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.  
• New England Trivia, Taylor Brooke Brewery, 6:30-8:30 p.m.  
• Arm Knitting Workshop, Taylor Brooke Brewery, 7 p.m.  
Saturday the 20th  
• Veggie Visions Sandwiches, Taylor Brooke Brewery, noon – 7 p.m.  
Katie Perkins live music, Taylor Brooke Brewery, 2-5 p.m.  
Sunday the 21st  
• "Woodstock Through the Camera's Eye" exhibit, Woodstock Historical Society, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.  
• Chris Cofoni live music, Taylor Brooke Brewery, 2-5 p.m.  
• Book Club "The Book Women's Daughter," May Memorial Library, 4 p.m.  
• No Coast Kitchen Food Truck, Taylor Brooke Brewery, noon – 6 p.m.  
UPCOMING EVENTS  
Jan. 24  
• Home Design & Remodel Expo, Taylor Brooke Brewery, 5:30-8 p.m.  
• American Legion Meeting, Post 111, 6 p.m.  
• Senexet Grange Meeting, Senexet Grange, 6 p.m.  
Jan. 25  
• Shepherd's Pie Dinner, Senexet Grange, 4:30-6:30 pm  
Jan. 26  
• Outlaws (southern rock), Loos Center for the Arts, 7:30 p.m.  
May 3 & 4  
• "The Addams Family," musical comedy production by Woodstock Academy, Loos Center for the Arts.  
To submit calendar items: [woodstockbytheweek@gmail.com](mailto:woodstockbytheweek@gmail.com).

## VFW Auxiliary announces kick-off of annual Young American Creative Patriotic Art Scholarship Contest

PUTNAM — Albert J Breault VFW Auxiliary Post 1523 is excited to announce the kick-off of the VFW Auxiliary's annual Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest. Local students in grades 9-12 have the opportunity to compete for \$37,000 in national scholarships.

Students must submit an original two-dimensional piece of artwork. Digital art, photography, jewelry and weapons are not accepted. The entry must be completed during the current school year and the entry form must include a parent or guardian's signature.

Students begin by competing for one of the nineteen scholarships at the local VFW Auxiliary level. The first-place winner from each Auxiliary advances to the Department (state) competition. Department (state) first-place winners compete for their share of \$37,000 in national awards, and the national first-place winner is awarded a \$15,000 scholarship. National first-through twelfth-place winners are featured in VFW Auxiliary Magazine, on the VFW Auxiliary website and

are displayed at VFW Auxiliary National Convention scheduled to take place in July in Louisville, Ky.

All Department (state) winning entries are judged at National Headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri.

The VFW Auxiliary started the Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest in 1979 to recognize up-and-coming artists and encourage patriotism in youth. Approximately 4,000 students participate each year and in addition to \$38,000 in national scholarships, local and state VFW Auxiliaries throughout the nation award more than \$150,000 in Patriotic Art scholarships every year.

Student entries must be submitted to sponsoring participating VFW Auxiliary 1523 by March 31, 2024. Interested students, parents and teachers should contact Lisa Salisbury at 860-564-3713 or at [vfwauxiliaryputnamct@gmail.com](mailto:vfwauxiliaryputnamct@gmail.com) for more information.

To download an entry form and see the last year's winners, visit <https://vfwauxiliary.org/scholarships>.

## VFW Auxiliary announces three-dimensional Patriotic Art Scholarship Contest

PUTNAM — Albert J Breault VFW Auxiliary Post 1523 is excited to announce the kick-off of the VFW Auxiliary's 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest. Local students in grades 9-12 have the opportunity to compete for \$5,500 in national scholarships.

Students must submit an original -dimensional piece of artwork. Digital art, jewelry and weapons are not accepted. The entry must have been completed during the current 2024 school year and the application must include a parent or guardian's signature.

Students begin by competing at the local VFW Auxiliary level. The first-place winner from each Auxiliary advances to the state competition. Department (state) first-place winners compete for their share of \$5,500 in national awards, and the national first-place winner is awarded a \$2,500 scholarship. National first-through third-place winners are featured in VFW Auxiliary Magazine and on the national VFW Auxiliary website. All state winning entries will be displayed at the VFW Auxiliary National Convention that will take place in July in Louisville, Ky.

The VFW Auxiliary started the 3-Dimensional American Creative Patriotic Art Contest to recognize up-and-coming artists and encourage patriotism in youth.

Student entries must be submitted to VFW Auxiliary Post 1523 by March 31, 2024. Interested students, parents and teachers should contact Lisa Salisbury at 860-564-3713 or at [vfwauxiliaryputnamct@gmail.com](mailto:vfwauxiliaryputnamct@gmail.com) for more information.

To download an application, visit <https://vfwauxiliary.org/scholarships>.

About the VFW Auxiliary  
The VFW Auxiliary is one of the nation's oldest veterans' service organizations and our members are the relatives of those who have served in overseas combat. We have nearly 470,000 members representing all 50 states who volunteer millions of hours and give millions of dollars to support veterans, military service personnel and their families.

We are a voice for veterans on Capitol Hill and are instrumental in assisting the VFW pass or block legislation that impacts veterans and their families. We are one of the top 10 providers of volunteer hours in the VA medical system. Every year, members fundraise millions of dollars for charitable projects that benefit veterans and their families. We also provide hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships for our nation's youth. With more than 3,700 Auxiliaries, there is likely one in your area working to improve the lives of America's uncommon heroes. Learn more at [www.vfwauxiliary.org](http://www.vfwauxiliary.org).

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