



THOMPSON VILLAGER

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Friday, December 12, 2025

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Killingly football advances to second straight State Championship



KILLINGLY — The Killingly Trailblazers turned in a statement performance on December 8, powering to a 44-15 win over Ledyard behind a dominant rushing attack and a strong team effort on both sides of the ball. This will be Killingly's second straight State Championship appearance and 6th in eight seasons.

Senior running back Hayden Allard led the way with a stand-out performance, rushing for 229 yards and four touchdowns, including long scoring bursts of 70 and 63 yards that broke the game open. Quarterback Quinn Sumner added two short touchdown runs and connected on two passes for 74 yards to keep the

Ledyard defense off balance.

Killingly jumped ahead early with a 15-0 first-quarter lead and carried a 29-7 advantage into halftime. The Trailblazers finished with 338 total yards on just 26 plays, showcasing efficiency and big-play ability throughout the afternoon. The defense contributed in a big

way as well. Jaden Barnett came up with a key fumble recovery, while Joseph Mackie led the unit with 10 tackles and 4 assists. Kaiden Guertin, Payton Wallace, and the rest of the defense helped contain Ledyard's offense and limit their scoring opportunities.

Celebrate a Victorian Christmas at Roseland Cottage

WOODSTOCK — Step back in time and see Roseland Cottage decorated for the holidays as featured in Victorian Homes magazine.

Woodstock's festive Pink House, a National Historic Landmark, will be open for tours on Saturday, Dec. 13 and Sunday, Dec. 14 from noon to 4 p.m. at no charge. No reservations are required. Tours are on a first come, first served basis.

Costumed interpreters will lead visitors through the first floor of the museum, decorated according to the Bowens' written account of the family Christmas of 1887. Such accounts are rare—Roseland Cottage is fortunate to have such a detailed record to share with the public. The special tour will highlight the traditions, decorations, and festivities that were a part of the Bowen family's holiday. Included is an explanation of why, by law, Christmas Day fell on Dec. 26 in 1887.

"Each topic is addressed by Turn To VICTORIAN page A11

CVCC Board, Inc. donates \$50,000 as legacy to Community Kitchen



Courtesy Joe DiLeo (left), a member of the CVCC Board, Inc., presents a check for \$50,000 to Bob Kirk, president of Community Kitchen of Northeastern Connecticut.

DANIELSON — Community Kitchen of Northeastern Connecticut has received a donation of \$50,000 from the CVCC Board, Inc., the corporation charged with disbursing funds from the sale of the Central Village Congregational Church in May 2025. The church had closed last fall, holding its final Sunday worship service on Nov. 3, 2024.

"Our congregation was very grateful to Community

Kitchen for allowing us to serve our neighbors," said Kathy McKnight, co-chair of the CVCC Board. "Our membership had become smaller and older. By hosting Community Kitchen's Tuesday meal, we were able to be useful helping to feed people in our neighborhood."

Community Kitchen of Northeastern Connecticut is a 501(C)(3) nonprofit that provides a free nutritious noontime meal at four loca-

tions: First Congregational Church of Woodstock on Mondays, United Methodist Church of Danielson on Wednesdays, Creation Church in Thompson on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, and Moosup United Methodist Church on Fridays. Until it was sold, the Central Village Congregational Church was their Tuesday meal site.

At present Community Kitchen is providing over 2,000 meals each month, about 25,000 meals a year. All are welcome.

"To say that we are grateful to the CVCC Board for this gift is a colossal understatement," said Bob Kirk, president of Community Kitchen. "Rest assured that we will be careful stewards of this money, using it to better fulfill our mission of feeding our neighbors in need. We may use it to outfit a new fifth meal site, for example, or make long-deferred improvements of infrastructure. So many possibilities."

Joe DiLeo, a longstanding member of the Central Village church and now pastor of the Church of the Good Shepherd in West Woodstock, presented the \$50,000 check to Kirk on December 3, 2025.

Turn To KITCHEN page A11

Putnam Elks host annual Hoop Shoot



Jason Bleau

The winners of the 2025 Putnam Elks Hoop Shoot.

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

PUTNAM — The Putnam Elks held their annual Hoop Shoot competition on Dec. 6, challenging local children to test their skills in a free-thrown contest to compete on the state level.

This year, 26 kids took to the court at Putnam Middle School to put their shooting skills to the test. The contest has long been an annual tradition in the region, challenging participants to shoot 25 free throws with every successful shot resulting in a point. The kids with the most points in their age groups participate in a Hoop Shoot on the district level for the opportunity to take their talents to the state contest.

Dennis Golden, Hoop Shoot Chairman and a Past Exalted Ruler of the Putnam Elks Lodge, allows the kids to improve on their own past performance while

meeting new friends in the process.

"It provides confidence and camaraderie. They

compete against each other and themselves. Repeat per-

Turn To HOOP SHOOT
page A11

Holidays make for early deadlines

The submission deadlines for our Dec. 26 and Jan. 2 editions will fall a bit earlier than usual in order to ensure that the paper arrives in subscribers' mail boxes prior to the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

Any press releases or letters to the Editor intended for publication the week of Dec. 26 should be submitted no later than 4 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 18.

For the week of Jan. 2, the submission deadline will be Friday, Dec. 26 at 4 p.m.

Submissions can be e-mailed to the Editor at brendan@villagenewspapers.com.

Carleh Avery earns Westview’s September Employee of the Month Award

DAYVILLE — Carleh Avery gathered accolades in September as Westview’s Employee of the Month.

Avery is a Server and Dietary Aide at Country Living at Westview Commons; ensuring residents’ reliable meal delivery with genuine friendliness. She began working with the team at the Dayville, CT independent and assisted living facility in April 2023 while still a junior at The Woodstock Academy. She knew she wanted to find an opportunity to work with people and gain experience in the “humanities” as she prepares for a future career in nursing. Since that time, she has begun studying nursing at CT State Three Rivers; viewing her time at Westview Commons as an invaluable step toward understanding care and building relationships in a healthcare setting.

Beginning when she came on board with Westview Commons, Avery built strong rapport and mutual respect with the residents. In the moments building up to this recognition and press acknowledgment for Avery, several bystanding residents affirmed their appreciations.

Avery shares her gratitude in return. “I love the residents here! I always say they’re like my family; they’re like my grandparents. When I come through the doors, they greet me, ask me about school, and now that many know I’m pursuing nursing, they offer encouragement. That support really means a lot,” she remarked.

Her consistent engagement with residents allows her to further develop an understanding of empathy, communication, and individualized care. Her camaraderie extends to her coworkers just as well. In the dining domain, humor and collaboration are essential ingredients.



Carleh Avery

Woodstock. Shopping registers as a hobby for her, as she is frequently drawn to Killingly Commons for a few finds. She loves to read a variety of fictional novels in quieter moments; often being charmed with romance narratives. Avery and her family are seasonal campers in Lebanon, CT and have a great appreciation for the great outdoors. Paddleboarding, swimming, and hiking are among their favorite pastimes while taking their 40-foot, fifth-wheel RV to go “glamping” (as she describes). Carleh is every bit as enthusiastic about international travel as well: during a 10-day European trip as a Woodstock Academy student, she visited Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, and England. She looks to continue exploring internationally, with plans to return to Italy following the completion of her degree.

Emphasizing her gratitude, Avery went on to say: “I am honored to be selected as Employee of the Month. I truly enjoy going to work each day. Honestly, it doesn’t feel like work to me because I consider our residents to be like family. I enjoy all of our shared conversations and the stories they tell. This award means a lot to me, and I am grateful to be recognized!”

David T. Panteleakos, Executive Vice

President of Country Living at Westview Commons, applauded Avery’s dedication and impact.

“Carleh’s warmth, reliability, and positive energy make her an such a strong member of our dietary team. Her rapport with residents, collaboration with colleagues, and eagerness to learn reflects the campus-wide spirit of Westview. Carleh helps us to create the welcoming, engaging, and caring atmosphere here at Westview Commons every day. Congratulations to Carleh!” he said.

Country Living at Westview Commons is part of the Westview family, along with Westview Health Care Center and Westview Child Care Center. Westview Health Care Center is a 103-bed inpatient skilled nursing facility, which includes a distinct and self-contained 28-bed sub-acute short term rehabilitation unit and outpatient physical, occupational and speech therapies including: Sports Medicine, Adolescent/ Pediatric, Adult, and Aquatic Outpatient Centers, all dedicated to providing outstanding quality health care services. The Dayville, Connecticut facility is consistently ranked among the top nursing facilities in the nation, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services as well as U.S. News and World Report, consecutively for the past 17 years.

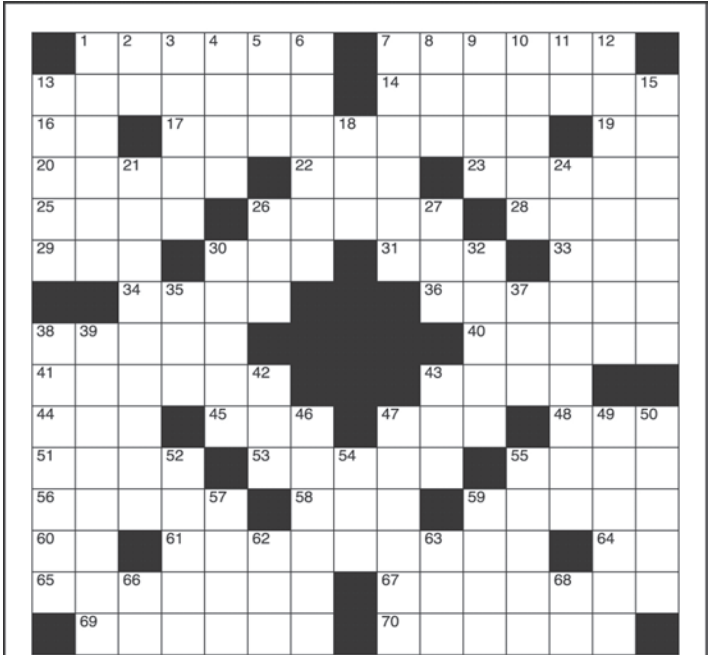


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- CLUES ACROSS
1. Spiritual leaders

7. A type of solution

13. Fortified wine

14. Edible mollusk

16. They precede C

17. A way to compare

19. Government lawyer

20. “Game of Thrones” actor Ciaran

22. The eighth month (abbr.)

23. Very willing

25. ___ ex Machina

26. Makes happy

28. Type of berry

29. A doctrine

30. Popular Dodge truck model

31. Dekagram

33. Naturally occurring solid

34. Company officer

36. Villains

38. Cricket frogs

40. Influential German psychologist

41. Endured

43. A female domestic

44. You can get stuck in one

45. Cigarette (slang)

47. Fiber optics network

48. Group of blood disorders (abbr.)

51. Employee stock ownership plan

53. Belonging to the bottom layer

55. Sound

56. MLB legend Hank

58. Very attractive person

59. Late beloved sportscaster Craig

60. South Dakota

61. Mocking

64. Symbol for gold

65. Longtime Braves pitcher Julio

67. Humor

69. Shawl

70. Preliminary patient assessment

- CLUES DOWN
1. Animal disease

2. Commercial

3. Necklace material

4. Containers

5. A way to save for your future

6. Colorado Heisman winner Rashaan

7. Dipped down

8. Head injury (abbr.)

9. Lay about

10. Intestinal

11. Opposite of yes

12. Caused to be loved

13. Spiritual leader of Islam

15. Businesslike

18. Not in

21. Number above the line in a fraction

24. An animal with its own day

26. Pouch

27. Swedish krona

30. Start over

32. Field flowers

35. Fourteen

37. A visual way to interact with a computer

38. Up-to-date

39. Campaigns

42. Touch lightly

43. “Boardwalk Empire” actress Gretchen

46. Violent seizure of property

47. Supporter of the Pope

49. Anxiety

50. Body fluid

52. One who’s faking it

54. Title of respect

55. Chilean city

57. City in central Japan

59. Silk garment

62. A form of dance

63. Automobile

66. The man

68. Justice Dept. head honcho

PUZZLE SOLUTION

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Pomfret School invites community to annual candlelight celebration



VILLAGER ALMANAC

At CT Audubon

Bird sightings at the Connecticut Audubon Society Center at Pomfret and Wyndham Land Trust properties for the week of Dec. 1: Brown Creeper, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Robin, Bluebird, Red-winged Blackbird, Junco, Red-tailed Hawk, Bald Eagle, White-throated Sparrow, Hairy Woodpecker, Cardinal, Northern Harrier.

POMFRET — Pomfret School will once again host its cherished candlelight celebration on Sunday, Dec. 14, from 7 to 8 p.m. in Clark Memorial Chapel. This annual tradition, open to the public, brings together students, families, neighbors, and friends for an uplifting evening of music, readings, and candle lighting in the spirit of peace and goodwill.

Doors will open at 6:30 p.m. Parking is available across the street from Clark Memorial Chapel, and light refreshments will be served afterward in Hard Auditorium. For those unable to attend in person, the event will be livestreamed at pomfret.org/live.

Candlelight has long been one of Pomfret’s most beloved gatherings, transforming the historic Clark Memorial Chapel into a sanctuary of warmth and reflection as the holiday season approaches. The program features performances by the Pomfret Festival Chorus & Orchestra, GriffTones, and Chamber Ensemble, alongside poems, passages, and messages of hope brought to life through student voices. Each year, the event explores themes of unity, compassion, and shared light — reminding attendees of the power we hold to brighten the world around us.

The evening culminates in the candle lighting ritual that gives the event its name. A single flame is shared from person to person until the Chapel glows with hundreds of flickering lights. The event concludes with communal singing that fills the space with shared voices, bringing the community together in reflection and celebration.

“Candlelight offers us a chance to pause, breathe, and reconnect with what matters,” says Director of Spiritual Life Bobby Fisher. “It is a celebration of our shared humanity, and an invitation to carry light into a world that needs it.”

Quiet Corner Al-Anon group meets Wednesdays

WOODSTOCK — An open Al-Anon meeting meets at the East Woodstock Congregational Church every Wednesday from 7:30-8:30 p.m.

The Quiet Corner Al-Anon Family Group is open to anyone affected by alcoholism, family or friend. Any enquiries can be directed to 860-634-3271.

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VILLAGER NEWSPAPERS
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PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER
FRANK G. CHILINSKI
860-928-1818 EXT. 103
Frank@salmonpress.news

BUSINESS MANAGER
RYAN CORNEAU
860-928-1818 EXT. 102
ryan@salmonpress.news

OPERATIONS DIRECTOR
JIM DINICOLA
508-764-6102
jdinicola@stonebridgepress.com

EDITOR
BRENDAN BERUBE
860-928-1818 x.323
brendan@villagernewspapers.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER
JULIE CLARKE
860-928-1818, EXT. 305
julie@villagernewspapers.com

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Day Kimball Health names Sean Grous Employee of the Month



Courtesy
Sean Grous, surgical coordinator for The Ortho Group, has been named Employee of the Month for October 2025.

PUTNAM — Day Kimball Health (DKH) has named Sean Grous, surgical coordinator for The Ortho Group, as its employee of the month for October 2025.

Grous joined DKH in October 2023 as a patient services representative in internal medicine before transitioning to pediatrics. His dedication, professionalism, and strong work ethic paved the way for his advancement to surgical coordinator in June 2025.

In this role, Grous is an essential member of the orthopedics team, overseeing the scheduling and coordination of a wide range of

surgical procedures. He also manages pre-rehab coordination and daily communication between physicians and staff to ensure seamless, patient-centered care.

When asked how he felt about receiving this recognition, Grous said he is humbled by the honor.

“I feel truly honored to be named employee of the month,” Grous said. “I love where I work and everyone I work with. They are like my second family.”

Kyle Kramer, president and CEO of Day Kimball Health, praised Grous for his commitment to excellence and compassion.

“Sean exemplifies the values that define Day Kimball Health,” Kramer said. “His attention to detail, his positivity, and his dedication to our patients and team members make a meaningful

impact every day. We are grateful for his contributions and proud to recognize him for this well-deserved honor.”

Grous’ favorite part of his role is meeting with patients to schedule their surgeries and offering reassurance during what can be an overwhelming time. He holds an Associate’s degree in business administration from Quinebaug Valley Community College and a Bachelor’s degree in healthcare management from Bellevue University.

Grous lives in Griswold with his partner and their two dogs. Outside of work, he enjoys cooking, reading, and spending time with his family, friends, and coworkers. He is also an active community member and has volunteered to support several local initiatives, including helping

build new playgrounds for the town’s elementary and middle schools.

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

Student-owned business brings new ‘purpose’ to downtown Willimantic



Courtesy
Caio de Sousa (left) and Griffin Ryan print a t-shirt.

BY NOEL TETER
EASTERN CT STATE UNIVERSITY

WILLIMANTIC — Eastern Connecticut State University student Caio de Sousa has wasted no time getting involved in Willimantic’s small business scene. Along with friend Griffin Ryan, the sophomore accounting major co-owns and operates T-Shirts with a Purpose (T-SWAP), a printing and marketing service located on Main Street.

T-SWAP provides commercial apparel printing and graphic design for local businesses, as well as digital marketing services for small businesses. Additionally, T-SWAP outsources designs from freelance artists, who receive 30 percent of profits from products featuring their work, and houses a performing arts venue called the Inkwell.

T-SWAP’s clients include Asian Bistro Mansfield, local author Charles Bruckerhoff, Thread City Diner II, Rusty Kiln LLC, Khuyay Farm Alpacas, and more.

Though the business has taken much hard work to build and maintain, de Sousa says the opportunity “fell into our lap” during the COVID-19 pandemic. His father had a silk-screen press from his college days, which Ryan began using while living with de Sousa and his parents.

Thread City Diner II (then called the Hoppy Days Diner) was the duo’s first client.

“We made these ‘pot head’ shirts, but with (a picture of) a coffee pot,” said de Sousa. “We realized it’s lucrative.”

Four months later, Ryan bought the duo’s first “big boy” industrial-grade press, and the two began mass-producing tie-dyed t-shirts in de Sousa’s home.

“It was a mess that was the catalyst toward being like, ‘okay, we’re in it now,’” de Sousa said.

Keen to no longer make a mess of dyes and inks in his family home, de Sousa struck gold while power-washing the storefront of his mother’s (art and art history Lecturer Daniela de Sousa) business, Spiral Arts Studio, when he met Joe Smith, the property

manager of the space T-SWAP now occupies.

“We had just gotten a contract from the Asian Bistro to start doing their social media marketing,” said de Sousa. “He invited us in; we saw the space. We thought it’d be a perfect place to put the shop, and he offered to split it with us.”

De Sousa and Ryan upgraded from subletting to ownership when the building’s owner at the time, attorney Joan Sinder, was eager to sell it.

“We just wanted to buy oil for the winter, so we got in contact with her, and she was so happy to get rid of that thing,” he said. “She made us an offer we couldn’t refuse.”

Now, de Sousa does the heavy lifting of maintaining his space, leaning on his background and friends.

“My dad is a contractor, so I grew up around him building,” he said. “When it comes to building, it’s easier for me to go for it, and I can have Joey (Smith) and Griffin (Ryan) help me out when I need them to.”

De Sousa aspires for T-SWAP to become a community cornerstone in an increasingly vibrant Main Street scene. He, along with other area business owners, participates in the Willimantic Downtown Neighborhood Association, maintaining solidarity with each other.

“I would like to be a big part of the revitalization of downtown Willimantic,” he said. “I’m happy that there’s something going on here. You just need movement, so I think that within the next 10 years, we’re going to be able to see major change in this area.”

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Request for Proposal (RFP)

Lawn Care Services for the Danielson Fire Department
47 Academy Street, Danielson, CT 06239

The Borough of Danielson is seeking sealed proposals for lawn care and landscape maintenance services for the Danielson Fire Department, 47 Academy Street, Danielson, CT.

A walkthrough will be held December 18, 2025 at 12:00 PM (rain/snow date: December 19, 2025).

Full RFP details and specifications are available at www.boroughofdanielson.org

Proposals must include an itemized cost proposal, references, and proof of insurance. Sealed proposals must be clearly marked “Landscape Proposal for DFD – Attn: Borough Administrator.” Electronic submissions will also be accepted.

Deadline: Proposals must be received by January 14, 2026 at 3:00 PM at PO Box 726, Danielson, CT 06239 or emailed to admin@boroughofdanielson.org

The Borough reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to accept the proposal deemed in its best interest.

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FRANK G. CHILINSKI
PRESIDENT/PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

A season that teaches us to pay attention

Winter has a quiet way of reminding people to slow down. Even on days when the sun manages to break through, there is a certain stillness that settles over the hills and valleys of Northeast Connecticut. It is not the stillness of inactivity, but the kind that encourages people to notice things they might otherwise pass by without a second thought.

In this season, routines become more deliberate. Mornings start a little earlier, and evenings seem to arrive before we’re ready for them. It becomes second nature to check the sky, step carefully, and give ourselves a few extra minutes to get from one place to another. These small adjustments may seem ordinary, but they reflect a broader truth: winter asks us to live with intention.

This intentionality extends beyond the practical. It shapes how we interact with one another. When the days are short, a brief conversation at the post office or a friendly wave from across a parking lot carries a certain weight. Moments of human connection feel more meaningful when the world outside seems a little more demanding. A simple greeting can lift someone’s spirits. A shared acknowledgment of the cold can create unexpected camaraderie.

Winter also sharpens our sense of awareness. People notice the way the wind moves through the trees, the quiet of an early morning, or the long stretch of headlights along a familiar road at dusk. These scenes prompt reflection, not because they are extraordinary, but because they remind us that there is beauty in the slower pace the season imposes.

And yet, while winter encourages attentiveness, it also requires resilience. There are days when plans change, when the weather refuses to cooperate, or when the ordinary demands of life feel a little heavier than usual. But resilience in a small community is rarely individual. It is shared, even silently, through gestures of patience and cooperation.

That shared spirit is one of the region’s most enduring strengths. People do not need to know every neighbor personally to feel a sense of collective responsibility. It is built into the way they move through each season—driving with care, treating one another with consideration, and recognizing that everyone is navigating the same challenges.

Perhaps that is what winter ultimately offers: an opportunity to pay closer attention to the world around us and to the people sharing it with us. It reminds us that community is not defined only by large events or celebrations, but by the quiet continuity of daily life. It grows through small acts that accumulate into something steady and dependable.

As we continue through the colder months, it is worth taking a moment to appreciate the way this season shapes our habits, our interactions, and our perspective. Winter may bring its share of difficulties, but it also offers clarity. It shows us what deserves our attention, what benefits from our patience, and what strengthens our sense of belonging.

In a time when much in the world feels hurried and uncertain, the season encourages us to pause, observe, and remember that the pace of life can be gentler—and more thoughtful—when we allow it to be.

OPINION

Opinion and commentary from the Quiet Corner

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Say It Ain’t So

To the Editor:

Please tell me it isn’t so.
That my country,
Which not so very long ago:
Helped save the world from Nazism;
Upheld the rule of law at Nuremberg;
Stood strong with Europe against a hungry Russia;
Ended slavery and
Had begun to stare down its racist past, including Jim Crow’s
Insidious, lingering legacy and
“Indian removal,” and
Saved more than 26 million lives across the globe with anti-HIV PEPFAR
Is now:
Blowing civilians in speedboats out of the water with \$32 million taxpayer-funded drones;
Using military helicopters, flash-bangs, rap-pelling sliders
In our own cities, against our own

people;
Betraying our ally, Ukraine, in favor of our enemy, Russia;
Telling Europe that it “faces the stark prospect of
Civilizational erasure...because it is more plausible that within a few
Decades at the latest, certain NATO members will become non-European.”
(Does anyone think they meant something other than “non-white?”)
Lying about almost everything;
Ignoring the rule of law;
Calling an entire community of refugees, “garbage,” and
Deciding that the 26 million lives were worth sacrificing to build
A ballroom.
Say it ain’t so.

JOHN A. DAY, JR.
WOODSTOCK VALLEY

America, it is time to hold the Supreme Court accountable

To the Editor:

The Supreme Court of the United States was established in 1789 under Article Three of the Constitution. Congress was given the power to shape the Court. Justices serve for life, which makes the Court’s makeup and conduct especially important. Yet its history shows a deep lack of diversity and ethical conduct. Out of 115 justices, only six to date have been women. For a body that hands down decisions with lasting effects on our society, a bench that reflects the nation matters. Ethical conduct and diversity build confidence, credibility, and public trust.

Right now, public trust is at a record low. Polls show many Americans believe the justices are guided by personal beliefs instead of impartial judgment.

In May of this year, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse introduced S.1814, the Supreme Court Ethics, Recusal and Transparency Act of 2025. Every federal judge follows ethics rules except the justices of the Supreme Court. Ethics, transparency, and clear recusal standards are basic protections for our democracy. Congress has the authority to set those rules, and it is up to us to push them to act. As we saw with the release of the Epstein files, public pressure works.

The need for Supreme Court reform is obvious. There are no enforceable ethics rules. SCOTUS rulings on elections, gerrymandering, civil rights, immigration, corporate money, presidential immunity, and more, affect us all. Several justices have accepted luxury trips, political favors, or gifts from wealthy benefactors with business before the Court. News outlets have reported that Justice Clarence Thomas took 38 luxury trips, private flights, and superyacht travel. Justice Samuel Alito accepted a private jet trip from a billionaire with cases before the Court. Justice Neil Gorsuch sold property to a major law firm

with active cases before the Court. Chief Justice John Roberts’ wife earned millions recruiting lawyers for firms that appeared before the Court. There have been no recusals or accountability.

The Court has also expanded its use of the “shadow docket,” issuing major rulings with little or no explanation and without full briefing or oral argument. This practice deserves close scrutiny and reform.

The impact of controversial decisions is clear. Citizens United handed enormous power to wealthy interests and weakened the voice of everyday Americans. The overturning of Roe v. Wade stripped millions of women of access to reproductive health care. The Court has expanded gun access even as firearms remain the number one cause of death for children. On immigration, recent rulings have opened the door to racial profiling. Next, the Court will decide the legality of tariffs and the future of birthright citizenship. These decisions will shape the daily lives of Americans for generations.

Other reform ideas also deserve attention. These include:

- Implementing term limits for Supreme Court Justices. H.R.1074 Supreme Court Term Limits and Regular Appointments Act of 2025. (Introduced in the House February 2025)
- Expanding lower courts to ensure the judiciary is more reflective of the nation’s makeup.
- Reforming the judicial nomination and confirmation process utilizing a bipartisan commission to ensure fair-minded judges.
- Public pressure drives change. “We the People” have the power to demand action. Call your senators and urge them to support S.1814, now sitting in the Judiciary Committee. If enough Americans speak up, Congress will have no choice but to act.

LISA ARENDS
BROOKLYN

It doesn’t take an experiment to prove a scientific theory falsifiable

To the Editor:

I would like to address some statements made by Kevin Farnham in the Dec. 5 edition responding to my letter to The Rev. Phil Cannistraci, Sr. in the Nov. 28 edition of The Villager.

In his letter, Mr. Farnham states that for science to be falsifiable, it requires an experiment to prove it false. This is not what I stated in my letter. New data or discoveries can prove a standing theory false; it does not require an experiment. But to be science, it must be falsifiable, in one way or another.

He then goes on to say that the Theory of Evolution is not falsifiable because there cannot be an experiment to run to prove it false. This is not a true science position, as an experiment is not necessary, only data and discoveries. At the time Darwin developed his Theory of Natural Selection, he never used the word “Evolution”; there were other prominent theories of how species originated and changed in the environment. There was, of course, the biblical explanation that the earth, universe, and all life was created by God in six days and remained unchanged since then. This, of course, is not supported in the fossil record, and is not falsifiable. It is faith, not science. But there was also the theory of spontaneous generation, where new organisms suddenly appear, fully formed, and then change, depending on the climate, longer fur in colder climates, for example. There is some evidence in the fossil record to support this theory. There was Lamarck’s theory that suggested that organisms can pass on traits acquired during their lifetime to their offspring, such as a giraffe stretching its neck to reach higher leaves, resulting in longer necks in future generations, or muscle builders passing on larger muscles to their offspring. Again, there is some evidence in the fossil record to support this, but not strong evidence.

But Darwin’s theory falsified all those other theories with stronger evidence. Darwin knew that animal breeders could mate animals to get certain desirable traits. Faster, stronger, kinder, more vicious in order to provide certain ser-

vices. Darwin thought nature did the same, by having organisms that are more fit for a certain environment to pass on those traits, and the less fit would not live to reproduce and pass on the traits. Darwin, in addition to this, also compared anatomy of various organisms, like chimpanzees and humans, who have nearly identical bone and organ structure and placement. He also compared fossils of extinct organisms to structures of existing organisms and finding similarities, pointing to common ancestry. But some of his best evidence was creatures and plants on the Galapagos Islands. For example, the finches on each island were different, even though the climate was exactly the same. What was different were the food sources on the islands and these finches were all adapted perfectly to their environment.

But Darwin did not understand how these traits were passed on. That knowledge did not come about until Gregor Mendel’s work on genetics came out several years later. This gave the mechanism of passing on traits, and strengthened Darwin’s theory. In the middle of the 20th century the discovery of DNA further supported Darwin’s theory. We now know that humans, for example, share exact same genetic sequenc-

Turn To LETTER page A8

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.

The comfort of words

“If you can keep your head, when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you...” the first lines of the poem, “If,” by Rudyard Kipling buzzed through my brain as I sat enrobed in a paper bib while undergoing dental surgery. My jaw was numb, but my mind wasn’t, and the only way to remain in control and block out the sounds of drills and picks was to try to harness my mind by silently reciting poems. It’s a practice I’ve followed for as long as I can remember, and it works fairly well.



NANCY WEISS

My husband likes to recite lines from Tennyson’s poem about Ulysses, “much is taken, but much abides,” which an old boarding school friend of his enjoys hearing. It’s a balm for aging. He also likes a paragraph from “Moby Dick,” condensed here to: “so in the soul of man there lies one insular Tahiti, full of peace and joy, but encompassed by all the horrors of the half-known life...”

We may feel and be told that all is fleeting. There is no settled place in our lives or time, but in a few mental nooks and crannies there is peace. As we watch much of what we thought was settled and true be upended, we see the power of language to incite, confuse and divide, but the strength of words for goodness, comfort and clarity is always there. At this special season, words bring us the pleasure of familiarity and memories of happy times, especially when we sing together or listen to choruses and choirs.

At the lighting of the Day Kimball Hospital Hospice tree in my town, tears sprang to the eyes of those of us standing in the cold when Donna Bessette, a remarkable musician, conductor and teacher, who had just conducted an inspired performance by the Concert Choir, led a group of students from Rectory School in singing carols. The familiar words created a bond that made the pain felt by those who had lost a loved one just a little less and softened the uncertainties of a troubled world. We sang “Silent Night” and “We Wish You a Merry Christmas,” requested by the kids, a mix of religious and secular.

Words said in judgement are often never forgotten. There is so much power in what is uttered by the key people in our lives. In an off-hand remark a woman told me that her mother said she was the pretty one and her sister was the smart one. It seemed that at least one of the girls believed that her path was beauty not brains.

Remember the teacher who encouraged young writers or the one who told kids they were never going amount to anything. Call a kid lazy and the hurt goes on forever. My husband was an athlete in school and can recall the words of his coaches with clarity. Doctors have super powers when they talk to patients even when the comments are merely observations not science. Positive comments are welcome, but it is the negative one that we hold on to as if they are ancient wounds that never quite heal.

But there is real freedom in memorization of poetry, speeches, lines from Shakespearean plays and sonnets. As Alexa anticipates what I’m going to ask and AI thinks more clearly than I do, the lines we engrave on our brains remain with us when the ink goes dry, the electricity goes off and the cellphone is lost. There is joy in the words of familiar holiday songs and even escape to one insular Tahiti.

Temporary tax breaks for seniors: How to leverage them before they're gone

If you're 65 or older, 2025 brings unprecedented tax relief that won't last forever. Understanding how to maximize these temporary benefits before they expire in 2028 could save you thousands of dollars. Here's a breakdown of what to know, and how to prepare.

The new \$6,000 Senior Bonus deduction

The most significant change for seniors comes from the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA). This legislation introduces an additional tax deduction specifically designed for older Americans. Individuals age 65 and older can now claim an extra deduction of up to \$6,000 per person, on top of existing standard deductions.

For married couples where both spouses qualify, this translates to a potential \$12,000 deduction. This benefit applies whether you take the standard deduction or itemize your taxes, making it valuable for a broader range of taxpayers than traditional deduction increases.

Understanding the income limits

While this deduction sounds straightforward, there's an important catch: income phaseouts. The full \$6,000 deduction is avail-

able only to singles with modified adjusted gross income below \$75,000 and married couples filing jointly with income below \$150,000.

Once your income exceeds these thresholds, the deduction decreases by six cents for every dollar you earn above the limit. The benefit disappears entirely at \$175,000 for single filers and \$250,000 for joint filers. This means strategic income management becomes crucial for maximizing your tax savings.

The clock is ticking

Here's what makes this deduction particularly time-sensitive: it expires after the 2028 tax year. Unless Congress extends or makes it permanent, you have only four tax years to take advantage of this benefit. Given the uncertainty of future legislation, planning now is essential.

Stacking your tax benefits

The new bonus deduction stacks on top of other tax breaks already available to seniors. For 2025, a single filer age 65 or older can combine the standard deduction of \$15,750, the existing additional standard deduction of \$2,000, and

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• • • • •
JONATHAN MATTHEWS

the new \$6,000 bonus for a total of \$23,750 in deductions.

Married couples where both spouses are 65 or older could deduct up to \$46,700 when combining all three benefits. This substantial reduction in taxable income can dramatically lower your tax burden or even eliminate it entirely for many seniors.

Strategic considerations before 2028

To make the most of these temporary benefits, consider these planning strategies:

Timing income wisely: Be mindful of when you take IRA distributions, sell investments, or realize capital gains. Large withdrawals could push you over the income thresholds, reducing or eliminating your bonus deduction. Consider spreading distributions across multiple years to stay within the limits.

Roth conversion planning: If you've been considering Roth conversions, the next few years present a unique opportunity. However, test conversions carefully against the various phaseouts. Even a modest conversion could impact your senior deduction, SALT deduction eligibility,

and Medicare IRMAA premiums.

Document everything: Keep meticulous records of your income sources and deductible expenses. The IRS requires you to include Social Security numbers for qualifying individuals on your return, and married couples must file jointly to claim the deduction.

Review your withholding: With these enhanced deductions, you may be over-withholding taxes from pension payments or retirement account distributions. Adjusting your withholding could improve your monthly cash flow immediately.

The bigger picture

While the new deduction provides significant relief, it's part of broader tax legislation affecting retirees. The SALT deduction cap has also increased temporarily from \$10,000 to \$40,000 for most taxpayers earning below \$500,000, effective through 2029. This change particularly benefits seniors in high-tax states who itemize deductions.

Understanding how these provisions interact with your overall financial picture requires careful analysis, and it may prove beneficial to work with a financial advisor to maximize

these potential benefits. Our wealth management advisors at WHZ can help you make these nuanced decisions about when to claim Social Security, how much to withdraw from retirement accounts, and whether to itemize or take the standard deduction.

Don't wait to act

The window to leverage these benefits is limited. Meeting with a qualified financial advisor or tax professional now allows you to develop a comprehensive strategy for the remaining years these deductions are available. Waiting until 2027 or 2028 means missing valuable opportunities to optimize your tax situation.

These temporary tax breaks represent the largest tax relief for seniors in recent history. For many older Americans, proper planning around these provisions could mean the difference between paying substantial taxes and owing little to nothing on their retirement income.

Ready to take control of your tax planning and overall financial strategy? At WHZ Strategic Wealth Advisors, we help seniors navigate complex tax situations and develop strategies that maximize benefits

while minimizing liabilities. Our "Plan Well. Invest Well. Live Well.™" process ensures you're taking full advantage of available opportunities before they disappear.

Don't let these valuable tax breaks slip away. Contact us for a complimentary discovery session at whzwealth.com or call us at (860) 928-2341 to discuss how to optimize your tax strategy before time runs out.

Authored by WHZ Associate Vice President, Wealth Advisor Jonathan Matthews. AI may have been used in the research and initial drafting of this piece. Securities and advisory services offered through Commonwealth Financial Network®, Member FINRA/SIPC, a Registered Investment Adviser. 697 Pomfret St., Pomfret Center, CT 06259 and 392-A Merrow Rd., Tolland, CT 06084, 860-928-2341. <http://www.whzwealth.com>. WHZ Strategic Wealth Advisors does not provide tax or legal advice, and nothing in the accompanying pages should be construed as specific tax or legal advice.

The origins of a caroling favorite

Holiday Closings: The Killingly Historical & Genealogical Center will be closed Wednesday, December 24 (Christmas Eve) through Wednesday, Dec. 31 (New Year's Eve). It will reopen on Saturday, Jan. 3 at 10 a.m. Merry Christmas & Happy New Year to everyone.



KILLINGLY AT 300 MARGARET WEAVER

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

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

BUY A SPECIAL GIFT FOR A LOVED ONE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON! The Killingly Historical & Genealogical Society has books, maps, postcards, photos, tote bags, gift memberships and gift certificates for sale. Shop Wednesday and Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. during the Historical Center's regular hours. Images of America Killingly and

"Images of America Killingly Revisited" are also available at Pourings and Passages bookstore in Danielson during its regular hours of operation.

The Killingly Historical Center recently received several donations of Killingly High School memorabilia, including what we believe was a public speaking badge from the family of Edith Nicol, a member of the Class of 1940. We had never seen one before. A check of the Killonian yearbook revealed that she was a resident of Sterling who was attending Killingly High School. While doing a quick check of the Alumni files for 1939 and 1940, I came across some interesting tidbits in the 1940 Killonian news-

paper, which the students published. Several new clubs were mentioned under club news: "The Latin Club under the direction of Miss Reynolds and President Louis Woisard, has been playing Latin quiz games at recent meetings. The purpose of this club, which is primarily for pupils taking Freshman Latin, is to promote a better of the Latin language and culture." "The purpose of the Recreation Club, under the supervision of Miss Swanson, is to learn to use leisure time profitably and yet enjoyable (sic). During the year, several types of card games will be learned, and the correct behavior of hostess and guest at parties will be discussed." I wonder what card games they learned? Bridge? Whist? (Both tidbits Dec. 16, 1940 Killonian newspaper).

Did any of you older readers attend movies at the Orpheum Theatre during school time? The Oct. 9, 1940 Killonian newspaper had the following: "Through the cooperation of Mr. Henry Johnson, manager of the Orpheum Theatre, and the English and history departments at school, there will be special high school matinees this year for approved movies of value to high school students. At these matinees, students will be admitted with a special ticket of the reduced price of 20 cents. This plan has been carried out successfully in many large city high schools. With the special rate, students will be encouraged to see the better movies. The first of this series was the picture, 'The Howards of Virginia', having as its setting historic old Williamsburg...". It's too bad that there's no longer a local theater.

I checked several online December, 1940 Windham County Transcripts (killinlgypl.org) to see what some of the Christmas activities were that year. The December 12, 1940 issue listed a number. Sunday at 8:15 the Congregational Church was to have "A service of sacred

music by the Byzantine Choir of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Seminary in Pomfret. The choir of 35 voices sings a capella. This service is sponsored by the young people of the Greek Orthodox Church for the benefit of Greek war relief. A silver offering will be received." I had not heard of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Seminary so will try to find out more about it. Thursday at 7:30 the Congregational Church would hold its Christmas party in the vestry. "This is an old-fashioned Christmas party for all ages. There will be entertainment in the form of recitations, stories, and movies. There will be a Christmas tree and St. Nicholas will be present to greet everyone. Each person is asked to bring a gift of food or some article for the baskets for the needy folk of our community."

Under the Methodist Church, Mr. Hutchinson wished "to correct an announcement he made at the carol festival Sunday evening. The big community carol sing in Railroad Square will be held on Christmas eve at 7 o'clock...". The annual Methodist church school Christmas party would be held Friday evening, December 20." (All WCT Dec. 12, 1940, p. 7). How many remember Railroad Square?

The Thursday, Dec. 19, 1940 Transcript added to the Christmas festivities that were being held by area organizations. "Killingly Grange No. 12 held its regular meeting in I.O.O.F. (H)all Monday evening with Worthy Master Nettie M. Carroll in the chair.... Members of other Granges were also present. The literary program included a solo, Silent Night, by A. P. Burns, the Juvenile Grange singing the last verse." Emma Appley sang a solo of It Came Upon a Midnight Clear; everyone sang Hark the Heralds Angels Sing. At that point in time there were also juvenile Grange members so Juvenile Lecturer Nancy Wood "took over the program". Norma Eldridge read the story of Jesus' birth from the Bible. Juvenile Grange members sang O

Little Town of Bethlehem. Norman Davis recited the poem, The Naughty Little Mouse...Perhaps you were a Juvenile Grange member in 1940. If so, please share your memories.

Do you know anything of the history of "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear?" My curiosity got the better of me once again. Wikipedia provided a quick answer. "Edmund Sears composed the five-stanza poem in common metre doubled during 1849. It first appeared on Dec. 29, 1849, in The Christian Register in Boston, Massachusetts. Sears served the Unitarian congregation in Wayland, Massachusetts... He wrote It Came Upon the Midnight Clear while serving as a part-time preacher in Wayland. Writing during a period of personal melancholy, and with news of revolution in Europe and the United States' war with Mexico fresh in his mind, Sears portrayed the world as dark, full of 'sin and strife', and not hearing the Christmas message.

Sears is said to have written these words at the request of his friend, William Parsons Lunt, pastor of United First Parish Church, Quincy, Mass., for Lunt's Sunday school. One account says the carol was first performed by parishioners gathered in Sears' home on Christmas Eve, but to what tune the carol was sung is unknown as Willis' familiar melody was not written until the following year. According to Ken Sawyer, Sears' song is remarkable for its focus not on Bethlehem, but on his own time, and on the contemporary issue of war and peace. Written in 1849, it has long been assumed to be Sears' response to the just ended Mexican-American War. The song has been included in many of the

Christmas albums recorded by numerous singers in the, composer of the tune common to the United States. In 1850, Richard Storrs Willis, a composer who trained under Felix Mendelssohn, published a 'choir study' that was originally paired with other lyrics. This tune eventually came to be known as "Carol". Pairings of Sears lyrics with Willis tune had already begun to appear by 1880, and it is still the most widely associated tune with Sears' lyrics in the United States. The full song comprises five stanzas. Some versions, including the United Methodist Hymnal[7] and Lutheran Book of Worship, omit verse three, while others (including The Hymnal 1982) omit verse four. Several variations also exist to Sears' original lyrics."

So, in this time of strife and unrest in our

world, I quote the first verse: "It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old, From angels bending near the earth To touch their harps of gold; 'Peace on the earth, good will to men From heaven's all-gracious King' -The world in solemn stillness lay To hear the angels sing." May we all work and pray for peace now and in the coming year. Happy Holidays!

Margaret M. Weaver Killingly Municipal Historian, December 2025. For additional information email me at margaretmweaver@gmail.com or visit the Killingly Historical Center at 196 Main Street Danielson Wednesday or Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. or call 860-779-7250. Like us at Facebook at www.facebook.com/killinglyhistoricalsociety.



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The Harris family of Windham made the trip to Danielson to visit Santa.

Santa visits Killingly for annual breakfast

DANIELSON — Santa paid his annual visit to Downtown Danielson on Dec. 6 as Killingly hosted Breakfast with Santa. Kids and their families could enjoy a delicious meal cooked by the Danielson Lions before visiting with the jolly holiday icon accompanied by Mrs. Claus. Photos were taken with the set for The Little Theater’s production of “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer” as the backdrop adding to the festive atmosphere of one of the region’s most popular holiday staple events.



The Shartier family of Killingly enjoy their breakfast before visiting with Santa Claus.



Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus posed for photos with kids after breakfast. Here they welcome Logan Willow of Brooklyn.



Young guests to Breakfast with Santa build their own ornaments, one of several crafts adding to the festivities.



Members and volunteers from the Danielson Lions helped cook the delicious breakfast food which included French toast, pancakes, and sausages along with breakfast drinks like hot cocoa and orange juice.



Jason Bleau

While these young visitors were clearly big fans of the Grinch, they also embraced the character’s eventual love of Christmas cheer.



Bentley and Hadley Hender of Killingly pose with a Rudolph poster before breakfast. The red-nosed reindeer was a quiet presence throughout Breakfast with Santa as the Little Theater presented the play version of the story for the holidays.



Jade Oliveira of Danielson poses for a photo in a Rudolph cutout.



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The warmth we carry

Winter has a way of revealing things the rest of the year keeps politely hidden. On a cold morning, a person can step outside and immediately know what sort of day it will be—not because of forecasts, but because the air itself offers an opinion. Sometimes it greets you with a sharpness that demands respect. Other times, it hangs like a quiet reminder to move slowly and mind your footing.

These winter days shape our routines, but they also shape our conversations. People talk differently when the cold settles in. There’s a certain honesty that comes out when we scrape our windshields in the half-light or stamp snow from our boots before stepping indoors. No one pretends

the season is easier than it is. Instead, there’s a mutual understanding that we’re all doing our best to stay warm and keep moving.

I’ve noticed that winter seems to encourage the kind of small kindness that doesn’t draw attention to itself. There’s something about a short day and a long night that brings out the quiet helpers among us—people who brush off a neighbor’s steps because they were already outside, or who carry an extra pair of gloves in case they come across someone who forgot theirs. These aren’t grand gestures, but they’re the moments that make win-

ter feel less like an obstacle and more like something we endure together.

It’s easy to overlook kindness when life gets busy. In warmer months, everything seems to move faster—conversations, errands, even the hours of the day. But winter slows our steps just enough to notice things we might otherwise hurry past. A porch light left on for someone expected home late. A path shoveled a little wider than necessary. A simple greeting exchanged between people who recognize the effort required to get out the door that morning.

Of course, winter also reminds us of our limits. There are days when no

amount of planning prevents delays or discomfort. The wind seems to have a mind of its own, and the cold can cut right through the bravest coat. But even then, there’s something steadying about knowing others are facing the same weather. The shared experience builds a kind of unspoken companionship, even among strangers.

Some evenings, when the house settles into its nighttime quiet, I think about how much warmth we actually carry with us—not the kind produced by fireplaces or heaters, but the kind that comes from being thoughtful in a season that requires patience. We tend to think of warmth as something we seek, but in truth, it’s something we create. A kind

word, a gesture of help, even a simple acknowledgment of another person’s day can shift the feeling of a place more effectively than any thermostat.

The beauty of Northeastern Connecticut is that the landscape itself seems to invite reflection during this time of year. The stillness after a snowfall, the clear starry evenings, the sound of tires crunching along a quiet road—they all encourage a slower, more attentive way of being. Winter insists that we notice things: how we move through the world, how we treat one another, how we choose to meet each day.

And maybe that’s why kindness feels particularly meaningful now. In a

season where the cold can feel overwhelming, every warm action stands out. It doesn’t take much—holding a door against the wind, checking on someone who hasn’t been out in a while, or simply offering patience in a moment when patience is not easily found.

As the weeks continue and the season unfolds, I find comfort in remembering that winter, for all its challenges, gives us a chance to practice gentleness. Not the grand, sweeping kind that fills speeches or headlines, but the everyday kind that keeps people connected. The warmth we offer one another may not show up on any forecast, but it has a way of changing the weather around us nonetheless.

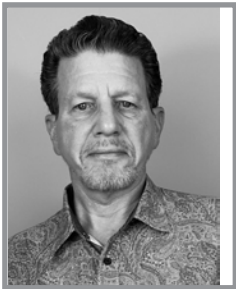
I often share a classic story that we tell in my family that captures the idea praying for others. My maternal grandparents used to travel from Oregon to Montana once year to visit. At that time in their lives, they were not attending church. One day my Grandmother was obviously distraught. My eight-year-old brother noticed, and asked her what was wrong. She told him that she had a headache and was not feeling well.

Since my brother had been well-trained in Sunday School, he responded to her need in faith. He told her that Jesus would heal her if he prayed for her. She agreed and he took her hand and

prayed for her. Withing minutes, my grandmother’s headache was gone. That prayer not only gave pain relief, it made an impression on my grandmother. In later years, she made a greater commitment to God, was baptized in Jesus’ name and filled with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The fact that she often retold this story indicates just how powerful praying for others can be.

It has been my experience that praying for others has many benefits. Here are a few.

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BEYOND THE PEWS
• • • • •
BY BISHOP JOHN W. HANSON
ACTS II MINISTRIES

It helps us be more graceful and empathetic toward others

God is able to reach people who were not already open to believing in Him

Sometimes praying for others is easier than praying for ourselves. According to Scripture, we don’t earn healing, but our attitude can make a difference in

how God responds to our needs and our requests. Sometimes it is easier to have a right attitude when we are praying for someone else’s needs. I was once asked to pray for someone’s sister who was in the hospital. When I found her, she was in a coma and the family was not there. So, it was just me, her, and Jesus. I was not emotionally involved, and it was not me that was in need. So, I just prayed on principle, knowing that God hears and answers prayer. I don’t remember feeling anything. A few weeks later I heard that she came out of her coma.

On another occasion, I prayed for a domestic situation of someone who came to church but was having trouble committing her life to God. She had been missing church and had invited a man to move in with her. One day I stopped at a grocery store and met her in the parking lot. I asked how it was going and she admitted that she had been unwise in inviting a guy to move in. Now she wanted him to leave, but she couldn’t get him out or her house. I suggested that she repent and pledge to God that she would get back on track if He would help her with her situation. I prayed for her there in the parking lot.

Later she told me that upon arriving home from the grocery story her live in was angry about something and told her he was leaving and never coming back.

I have found that it is often my own fear or pride that keep me from being bold enough to pray for others. Once I recognized how selfish that is, I determined to make the most of every opportunity to pray for others. As a result, I have been blessed to see many miracles.

Bishop John W. Hanson oversees Acts II Ministries in Thompson. For more resources or sermon videos please visit www.ActsII.org.

LETTER

continued from page A4

es as all other organisms. The exact same gene sequences can be found in humans, mice, worms and yeast. This is strong evidence of common ancestry. In comparing Chimp and Human DNA, there is a greater than 98 percent match, showing strong evidence of recent common ancestry. All this new evidence further strengthened Darwin’s theory. To falsify Darwin, it only requires contrary evidence. For example, find an organism that does not share any identical genes with any other organism, or does not share any anatomical structures with any other organism, thus no common ancestry. Find fossilized objects in the wrong strata, like modern human bones in the same rock layer as dinosaurs. It is very unlikely that the theory of evolution will ever be falsified, but it is possible.

Mr. Farnham’s claims about climate are similar. We do not have to go back to 1600 and put the world in a box to prove or falsify the human impact on climate. The information is all in the geological record. We know that the earth had gone through several ice ages and thaws. The proof is in the geological record and in ice core and rock samples. We are able to look at the composition of the atmosphere, trapped in bubbles, in ice and rock, and date it to the time it was trapped. We know that in thaw cycles, carbon dioxide in the atmosphere increases. What we also know is that in this current thaw cycle, the carbon dioxide is higher than in the last several thaws, and that we are currently warmer than in the last several thaws. By examining tree rings we can see how the climate has change over several hundreds of years, and see it increasing rapidly since the start of the industrial revolution. The carbon being released is carbon that was buried under the earth for hundreds of millions of years, where it was stored from dead plants and animals from a time when the planet was much warmer. In a very short time we, humans, have burned and returned much of that carbon dioxide to the atmosphere.

To falsify the theory of human contribution to climate change simply requires alternate data to be found, or proof as empirical evidence that atmospheric carbon dioxide does not contribute to warming. Or, find another non human cause for the warming that has not already been factored into the equations. Climate science is still in its infancy, but it is absolutely falsifiable, and so is a valid scientific theory, or more technically, hypothesis.

DAVE CLARK
THOMPSON

Weekend of thanks kicks off holiday fundraising for Interact



The Loomis team. From left: Max Gerum, Dick Loomis, Livia Gerum, Harper Smith, Maya Gerum, and Hudson Smith.

PUTNAM — Thanksgiving weekend truly proved to be a weekend of thanks for the Putnam Salvation Army. Kathi Peterson, director of the Salvation Army office in Putnam, and Roberta Rocchetti, Putnam Rotary Club Interact Club advisor, said they were so grateful for the “amazing donations kicking off the Christmas Kettle campaign.”

The kettles, at the Putnam Walmart, Putnam Stop & Shop, Putnam Price Chopper and Putnam Supermarket, pulled in more than \$4,000.

Bell ringing continues from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Dec. 13 and 20 at those four stores.

The Putnam Salvation Army office located with Daily Bread

in the Living Faith United Methodist Church, receives 90 percent of all donations in the kettles to be used for the needy in northeastern Connecticut. Rocchetti thanked Gabriell Cerasiello, Paige Perry, Kaylee Borders, Kaydence Morris, Leah Benzie, Cole Patterson, Bailey Champagne, Kadence Perez from Putnam High; and Calleigh Levesque, Estela Freitas, Anna

Bell, Bella Bonin, Caitlyn L’Heureux, Shyla Beckett, Matthew Rybacki, Joshua Tackson, Tyler Parkin from Tourtellotte Memorial; Anna Dicola-Keddy, Evony Jolie N’Chonon, Melanie Dipippo, Jackson Durand, Brayden Bottone, Kaylee Bundy, Isabelle Tedisky, Ivan Lin from Woodstock Academy. She also thanked: Devi Patel-Gandhi, Yashvi Swadia, Henrietta Hayes, Emma Martineau from Marianapolis. Alumni bell ringers from UConn included: Jordan Butler, Eric Levesque, Talia Tremblay, Livia Gerum, plus Maya Gerum from Northeastern, Kaelyn Tremblay from Wentworth, Max Gerum from Pomfret School; Hudson and Harper Smith from Woodstock Elementary. She thanked Rotaract members Matthew Gardiner, Larda Yottivong, John Spratt and Mariah Deyo. She also thanked Rotarians and parents who helped set up and manned the kettles: Jonathan and Keri Tremblay, Woody and Dottie Durst, Mike, Roberta and Leo Rocchetti, Kayla Morin, Joseph Adiletta, Jennifer Brytowski with Kasandra and Shyla Beckett and Amira Lee, Patty Gaffney with Ashley and Cody, Bryan Tedisky, Richard Loomis and Carl Durand.

New Al-Anon meeting in Pomfret

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

they would like to recommend attend the meetings.

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

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

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

Unique places for holiday shopping



Although the holiday season is a relatively brief period, it still can consume months of time in regard to preparation, shopping and hosting. According to a SWNS Digital survey of 2,000 adults in the United States, the average American spends six weeks preparing for the holiday season. Five weeks are devoted to planning presents, meals and other essen-

tials, while an entire week is just for decorating. Shopping for presents can consume a lot of time, especially for those who aren't quite sure what to get. Thinking outside of the typical retail box may help with inspiration, and shoppers may encounter smaller crowds and find better deals. Here are some unique places to shop to grab great holiday gifts.

- Pharmacies: While you're picking up your prescription or medicine cabinet essentials, take a spin around the store to see what else might be available. Typically, pharmacies have entire aisles dedicated to seasonal merchandise, so you might be able to find holiday decorations, gift wrap, candles, pampering items, and even food-related items and gift baskets.
- Farmer's market: Farmer's markets pop up in towns on set days of the week. Although plenty of farm-related produce and plants are available, these markets also attract many other small businesses. You can find craftsmen, jewelry makers, niche food sellers, and so much more.
- School (or church) bazaar: In an effort to raise funds for the PTA or other

organizations, schools and churches often host holiday fairs and bazaars right before the holidays. Area businesses rent table space and set up booths with an array of different products for sale. This is a great spot to grab interesting finds all under one roof. Plus, you're supporting the local community in the process.

- Home improvement retailer: Plenty of people

will appreciate practical gifts that they can use in and around the home. A visit to a hardware store or home improvement retailer offers up aisles of essentials for the do-it-yourselfer. While new shelving for the garage or a set of flashlights may not be the most glamorous gifts, these items can come in handy.

- Craft store: Cater to recipients' favorite hobbies by ensuring they'll be flush with plenty of supplies. Craft stores have a bevy of items for every interest imaginable. They're also surprisingly good places to grab deals on picture frames, housewares, food-making supplies, and decorative items.
- Specialty food store: Head to small specialty food stores to load up on unique items larger supermarkets might not carry. Ethnic markets may have flavorful and interesting ingredients to group together in a food basket that makes an ideal gift for transplants missing the flavors of home.

Before a person logs on to the internet for online shopping or heads to the nearest strip mall, he or she can explore various unique places to shop for holiday gifts.

Holiday shopping tips you can't afford to miss

The festive and fun nature of the holiday season can make it easy to forget the benefits of being frugal. Many people go overboard on holiday spending, making this time of year costly for consumers.

Sales between the beginning of November 2023 and Christmas Eve 2023 climbed 3.1 percent from the year earlier, according to the Mastercard SpendingPulse. The National Retail Federation

reported in November 2023 that holiday spending was expected to reach between \$957 and \$966 billion. Trading Economics, a financial market indicator and forecast provider, said personal spending in the United States only rose 0.2 percent in May 2024 from the previous month, which marked the lowest increase since January 2024.

Shoppers who want to spend less and stick to a budget for holiday enter-

taining and gifting can keep these budgeting tips in mind.

- Set a value to gift recipients. It may sound harsh, but certain people on holiday shopping lists may be assigned a higher value than others. For example, you wouldn't necessarily spend the same amount on a gift for a child's teacher as you would for a grandmother. Putting a dollar figure next to each name on the shopping list helps you identify

your expected spending and where you can cut back, if necessary.

- Establish your overall budget. Once you have an idea of your potential holiday expenditures, set a firm budget. Avoid the temptation of impulse buys, which can make it easy to go over budget.
- Begin shopping early. Start scouring ads and looking for deals prior to Thanksgiving or Black Friday. Keep a running



Why you should shop local for the holidays and beyond



Various components come together to make the holiday season a festive time of year. There is a lot to get done in a short amount of time during the holiday season, and part of that includes shopping for all of the family members and friends on your shopping list. Shopping can be a complicated process that involves identifying which stores will be the best places to shop. Local retailers make the perfect place to shop for holiday items.

According to the American Express Business Economic Impact Study, more than two-thirds of every dollar spent with a local business stays in the community. Indeed, shop-

ping local benefits consumer and community alike. The following are some of the many perks to shopping locally throughout the holiday season.

- Personalized attention: Small businesses are known for their personalized customer service and owners and staff are often lauded for taking the time to interact and learn about their customers, a dynamic that is impossible at larger retailers.
- Meet and interact with people: Shopping in-person at local stores, you'll see faces from your community and become better known in the local area.
- Shorter lines: Local stores are bound to have

smaller crowds and thus shorter lines. That translates to less stress and hassle when it comes to getting in and out with holiday gifts.

- Smaller carbon footprint: Pollution, traffic congestion, habitat loss, and resource depletion may not occur on the same levels when shopping locally compared to patronizing big box stores. That's because local retailers tend to create or source their products locally, whereas many big box stores secure their goods overseas.
- Easier parking: This goes hand-in-hand with smaller crowds, as shopping locally does not typically require driving up and down endless aisles at malls

or standalone retail stores in an effort to find a parking spot. Local retailers in town may have on-street parking or closed lots that are convenient to shoppers.

- Small batch shopping experience: Consumers can secure items in small businesses that are not carbon copies of those found across the country at major retail chains. When seeking a unique, thoughtful gift, shopping locally is the way to go.

Shopping locally this holiday season provides an array of benefits to consumers, and helps to solidify a strong Main Street in communities.

list of gift ideas and when the price is right, purchase those items.

- Price check "perfect gifts." If you've spotted the perfect gift for someone but it's beyond budget, see if you can find a better price elsewhere, says Better Money Habits. There are apps that allow users to scan barcodes and check items across various retailers. Many stores also have price-match policies that can save shoppers money.
- Look for deals all of the time. Many people get hung up on perceived deep discounts from Black Friday and Cyber Monday offers. However, industry experts say there often isn't a huge difference in markdowns between these promotions and those during other sales. Some retailers even increase prices on goods only to mark them down for Black Friday to make it appear that there is a discount. Only by knowing the

average price for items can you know if a sale is legitimate.

- Sign up for store rewards. If you don't want your regular email inbox inundated with offers, set up a separate email account for in-store and online shopping. Then you can sign up for the rewards programs at checkout. Utilize the coupon codes and advertisements for sales to save money without having your primary email data shared with other marketers.
- Track spending carefully. If you don't know how much you're spending, then you cannot possibly stick to a budget. After each purchase, keep a running tally of all holiday spending to see how far you are from the finish line.

The holidays can be expensive, but with smart budgeting and dedication to savvy shopping, it's possible to stay out of financial trouble.

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OBITUARIES

William “Bill” Arthur Larson



On December 4, 2025, surrounded by the love he built throughout a lifetime, William “Bill” Arthur Larson passed peacefully from this world. Bill was born on October 16, 1943, in Providence, Rhode Island, to Carl Clifton Larson and May Lena Shaw. He married the love of his life for more than 54 years, Dale A. Espinosa on May 8, 1971.

After serving his country in the Army during the Vietnam War, Bill returned home and dedicated himself to providing for his family. He worked many years at ACME Cotton and later at the Staples Facility Center, where he retired in 2008.

Bill’s life was stitched together by simple joys. Well known as “Diamond Bill”, he loved a good card game (especially when he was winning), and he never missed the chance to cheer on the Patriots, the Yankees, or Notre Dame. He cherished trips to Maine, camping adventures with family, and every day spent in the company of people he loved. He never passed up scallops for supper and couldn’t help himself around a platter of deviled eggs. And if you heard The Beach Boys or Tammy Wynette playing, you knew Bill wasn’t far away.

In his younger years, Bill enjoyed hunting trips, “PI-ing” with his brother-in-law Bruce, and cruising the roads in his beloved 1969 Chevy Nova. The dogs who followed him through many chapters of his life: Buster, Onyx, Shadow, and Champ, were never just pets, but true companions whose loyalty matched his own.

His greatest pride and purpose, though, were his grandchildren. He loved them in a way that left no room for doubt. They were, unequivocally, the best part of his

life story. To his grandchildren, he wasn’t just a grandfather; he was their greatest supporter, their soft place to land, and the greatest blessing of their life.

To know Bill was to know a man of loyalty, laughter, and steadfast love. His legacy isn’t just found in dates or milestones, it’s in the stories shared at family gatherings, the nicknames he gave so lovingly, the inside jokes, and the countless moments he made brighter simply by being there.

Bill was preceded in death by his brothers, Carl Larson Jr. and John Larson, whose memories he carried with him always.

He is survived by a family whose lives were shaped by his unconditional love and goofy humor: his soulmate, Dale “Mother” Larson (Espinosa); his sister Carolyn “Mooch” Starkey and her husband Bob; his children Tammy “Pumpkin” Day and her partner Robert Lee, Brian “Wazzle” Larson and his partner Wanda Sands, and Paul “Wizzle” Larson and his wife Kerry; his grandchildren Kimberly “Kimmie Cakes” Day, Jasmine “Jasmine Marie” Larson, Brenden “Big Bad Bren” Larson, Johnathon “Johnnie Cakes” Day, Corey “Cor Cakes” Larson, Konnor “Kon Man” Larson, and Bradley “Buddy” Larson. He also leaves behind his lifelong best friend Danny Houle of Scituate, Rhode Island, and his sister in law Sandra and her husband Bruce “Peanuts” Simmons, whose bond with Bill brought decades of laughter and stories.

Calling hours were held in Tillinghast Funeral Home 433 Main St. Danielson, CT 06239 on Wednesday December 10, 2025 from 10-12pm with a full military honors presentation at 11:45am. Burial will be private for his family. tillinghastfh.com



Linda “Michelle” Bryce, 76



Linda “Michelle” Bryce, 76, of Dayville, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, November 19, 2025. She was born in Putnam, August 17, 1949. She attended the St. James Parochial School, graduated in the Killingly High School Class of 1963, then studied at Bryant College. Michelle worked in the medical field for many years at The William H. Backus Hospital and later joined the Department of Children and Families in Norwich. Michelle loved music and old cars, and she

adored her many pets. She was funny and loved making people laugh. Her cooking was so-so, but her carrot cake was exceptional. Michelle was the daughter of the late Jeanne (Ballard) and Joseph Brennan, and sister to the late Paul Brennan and Barbara (Brennan) Heath. She was the beloved wife of Alexander “Scotty” Bryce, her first and always love, who survives her. Besides her husband she leaves behind her daughter, Rhonda Smith Spevak, and her 2 granddaughters, Piper and Romy Spevak. Funeral services will be private and at the convenience of her family. tillinghastfh.com

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

VICTORIAN

continued from page A1

a different family member. The memoir is full of humor which may cause more groans than chuckles,” according to Roseland Cottage Site Manager Laurie Masciandaro.

In addition to free first floor tours, tea will be served

in the carriage room at 1:00 p.m. on both days. Tea, hot cider, cookies, other holiday treats, and every Victorian’s favorite teatime snack, cucumber sandwiches, will be served. Reservations for tea are required. Tickets can be purchased on the Historic New England website. For more information, call Roseland Cottage at 860-928-4074.

Roseland Cottage, located at 556 Route 169 in Woodstock, is one of 38 historic sites owned and operated by Historic New England. For more information, visit www.HistoricNewEngland.org or call Roseland Cottage at 860-928-4074.

KITCHEN

continued from page A1

“It was a privilege and honor to represent the Central Village Congregational Church’s

board of officers and congregation in presenting this check of \$50,000 to Community Kitchen of Northeastern Connecticut,” DiLeo said. “In giving this check I am sad because it marks the end of 178

years of ministry in Central Village. But I am also pleased that this money will enable Community Kitchen to continue its mission of providing free hot nutritional meals for years to come.”



A Hoop Shoot participant makes a shot, adding a point to their score.

HOOP SHOOT

continued from page A1

formers come and try to beat out their score from past years and their engaging with new and old friends to try and get a personal record and grow on different levels. It’s just a good competition,” said Golden.

The Hoops Shoot also serves as one of the Elks Lodge’s longest running and most publicly known events. The free contest showcases local talent while

allowing the Elks to continue their mission of giving back to their local communities.

“Some of these kids, right from Putnam, go to a national level so they meet people from different parts of the country. The Putnam Elks pays for that, too. It’s great for the Elks to be a part of this. It’s doing it for the kids and the community, and it shows that the Elks care,” said Golden.

The winners from this year’s Hoop Shoot were:

Madden Ploof for boys eight to nine years old and Parker Perron for girls eight to nine years old, William Gustavsen for boys age 10-11 and Tegan Espinosa for girls age 10-11, and Bryce Espinosa for boys 12-13 years old and Joyce Mentor for girls age 12-13. All winners were given the opportunity to compete at the district level the following weekend at UConn’s Avery Point campus.

It is the third week that Monahan has received this award.

She registered 13 points and 10 rebounds in a 71-70 win vs. UMass Dartmouth on Dec. 3. Monahan posted seven points and six rebounds in a 72-52 win at Plymouth State on Dec. 6.

Monahan has played in nine games, starting all of them. She is averaging 8.4 ppg and 8.1 rpg.

Head Coach Jenna Cosgrove’s team is 7-2 overall and 2-0 in the Little East.

In upcoming action, Rhode Island College will continue Little East play at home vs. VTSU Castleton on Saturday, Dec. 13 (noon).

Eva Monahan named Little East Women’s Basketball co-Rookie of the Week

PROVIDENCE, R.I.—Rhode Island College freshman forward Eva Monahan (Woodstock) was named the Little East Women’s Basketball Co-Rookie of the Week for her performance in a 2-0 week for the Anchorwomen.

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LEGALS

Town of Woodstock IWWA
On December 1, 2025, the Town of Woodstock Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Agency made the following decisions:

- Approved permit #10-25-01 - 27 Loyola Road (MBL 6393/65/96) - John Napolitano - Proposed repair of lake-front wall
- Approved permit #10-25-07 - 0 Hiawatha Heights (MBL 7272/34/0D1) - Raymond Preece - Shoreline block wall
- Approved permit #10-25-09 83 Crooked Trail Extension (MBL 7272/34/195W)- Robert & Lisa Andrews - Regrading along shoreline
- Approved, permit #11-25-01 – 305 Crystal Pond Road (MBL 6385/39/13) - Town of Woodstock – Manual Phragmites Removal
- Approved, permit # 11-25-02 – 103 Rawson Road (MBL 5705/12/14) - Christopher Cremers/Chelsea Garcia – NSFH via Free Split
- Approved, permit # 11-25-05 Center Road (MBL 5126/17/10) - George Tonevski – NSFH

Details of these approvals may be obtained by contacting the Woodstock Land Use Department at landuse@woodstockct.gov
December 12, 2025

NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF Victor Paul Beausoleil (25-00462)
The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated December 3, 2025, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Brenda Duquette, Chief Clerk
The fiduciary is:
Victor P Beausoleil, Jr.,
51 Dyer Street, Apt B,
Danielson, CT 06239
December 12, 2025

NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF Florence A Dupre (25-00457)
The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated December 2, 2025, 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.

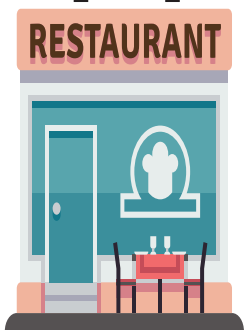
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December 12, 2025



VFW Post 4908 East Killingly Auxiliary held a successful collection for Toys For Tots on Dec. 6.

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