



# THOMPSON VILLAGER

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## Little Theater on Broadstreet receives BroadwayWorld nominations



Courtesy

The Little Theater on Broad Street's production of "Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory" is just one of several shows that received nominations from BroadwayWorld.

BY JASON BLEAU  
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

**KILLINGLY** — The Little Theater on Broad Street in Killingly has joined a prestigious group earning nominations by BroadwayWorld for their annual theater honors.

BroadwayWorld showcases the best in theater on- and off-Broadway

across the country and presents awards for the best productions in each state as voted by their readers. The Little Theater on Broad Street, nestled within the Killingly Community Center, is the only Quiet Corner theater to be nominated with several productions recognized on the site's Connecticut Awards for 2024.

Killingly Town Manager Mary Calorio made the announcement during the Town Council's meeting on Dec. 10 following an official press release on the

town website earlier that morning.

"The Little Theater on Broad Street is being nominated for multiple awards by BroadwayWorld. This is

really cool. They're the largest theater site on the internet and they cover professional Broadway and well as community. We have a number of nominations," said

Calorio. "This is a really great honor just in getting the nominations, to see our cast members being nominated as well as our productions

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## Thompson officials reveal Main Street intersection plans

BY JASON BLEAU  
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

**THOMPSON** — The town of Thompson's Mill Sites Redevelopment Advisory Committee, better known as MSRAC, held a special meeting and presentation on Dec. 11, providing insight into projects covered through a Community Reinvestment Fund (CIF) Grant that will continue the revitalization and transformation of the town center.

The presentation gave locals a peak at improvements planned at Duhamel Pond, the Thompson Public Library, Swanson Park and 65 Main St.; however, a street reconfiguration near the library on Main Street was the most prominent discussion of the evening. The initiatives will be funded by a \$4 million CIF Grant through Connecticut's Department of Economic and Community Development.

Town officials touted the proposals as the next step in Thompson's evolution and economic growth following years of progress on initiatives like the 65 Main project, the Main Street sidewalk project, and the reconfiguration of the intersection of Blain Road and Riverside Drive. First Selectwoman Amy St. Onge gave special credit to Tyra Penn-Gesek, Thompson's Director of Planning & Development, for helping procure the CIF Grant and expressed excitement for what's to come.

"This grant is really attributed to our foresight, the fact that in the last couple of years we've been able to see things that need to be fixed and plan for that. In the case of Main Street, I think it was in 2021 or 2022 that we appropriated funds for construction documents and engineering of Main Street, so we planned ahead which put us in the position to leverage it against grants," said St. Onge. "We have to continue to look ahead to the future, see what our needs are and plan ahead so that when grant opportunities come along we can take advantage of them. This is a great time for us."

The presentation was led by Yuyang Lin, a professional engineer and certified professional traffic operations engineer with Freeman Companies, LLC, who provided some of the first concrete visual representations of the various projects. The centerpiece of the discussion was the reconfiguration of the intersection of Main Street and Riverside Drive which currently includes a straight away and two curves with an island

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BY JASON BLEAU  
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

**THOMPSON** — This time of the year, organizations make it a priority to assist families in providing a wonderful holiday for local children. For the staff and volunteers at TEEG, the holidays are a special time of giving culminating in their annual Christmas distribution where families from Thompson, Pomfret, and Woodstock are given the chance to pick out gifts and food to help with their holiday needs.

The event has long been a staple of TEEG's annual calendar, drawing donations from across the

Quiet Corner and beyond to help preserve the magic of Christmas for more than 150 children. The program benefits from donations collected at gift tag sites, private toy drives, and individual donations to fill their needs.

TEEG Volunteer Coordinator Liz Perry explained how the distribution works.

"We help a lot of families in our area, specifically Pomfret, Thompson and Woodstock. We get these toys in from our tag sites and other donations, and they're sorted and organized for the clients to pick through. We have an abundance of cloths

this year. Our families can request one specific gift and shop for additional items off the tables," Perry said. "Many of our clients rely on this to be able to provide their kids with toys and gifts for Christmas."

In addition to the donations, Community Programs Manager Danielle Marrow-Rivera added that whether it's the toy drives that provide the donations or the distribution itself volunteers who give their time are essential to making the event a success.

"TEEG is the driver of the bus, but the bus is filled by volunteers, and we wouldn't be able to

do it without them," she said.

The 2024 Christmas gift distribution was held on Dec. 14 where clients were guided by personal shoppers who helped them pick items sorted by age and gift type. An outdoor area allowed clients to take from a large selection of cloths including sleepwear, casual wear, and winterwear. The estimated numbers for the 2024 distribution came in at 78 families and 156 kids while a series of food distributions for the holidays the following week provided resources for holiday feasts for even more families in the region.

## TEEG hosts annual Christmas distribution

## The Arc Eastern Connecticut achieves record milestones at Donation Station

WOODSTOCK —

For The Arc Eastern Connecticut's Donation Station in Woodstock, 2024 has been a record-breaking year. The bottle-and-can redemption center crushed a milestone in November by hitting the two million mark for processing returned containers. So far, the team has recycled 2,003,968 returnable items this year, which shatters the tally from last year (1,759,078). The record-breaking number has inspired team members. Anthony, a Donation Station employee, shouted, "Let's do 3 million next year!"

The Donation Station also set a new one-day processing record of 22,671 items, smashing the previous record of 12,000. To handle the increased volume of dona-



Courtesy

The Arc Eastern Connecticut's Donation Station team celebrates the 2-million mark for redeemable bottles and cans.

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# Christmas 50 years ago

**Holiday Hours:** The Killingly Historical & Genealogical Society will be closed New Year's Day, Wednesday, Jan. 1. It will be open as usual on Saturday, Dec. 28 and Saturday, Jan. 4.

**Inclement Weather:** If the day is snowy or icy, listen to WINY to see if the Center will be open. You may also call the Center at 860-779-7250 after 10:15 to see if someone is there.

Many of you were living here in Northeastern Connecticut 50 years ago, in December, 1974. Let's take a glimpse back in time and see what was going on in our community. On Sunday, Dec. 22, the Danielson Baptist Church was presenting "A Christmas Drama 'Those Three Fools--The Wise Men' by Marion Fairman at 7:30 p.m. In the cast are Susan Salmon of Brooklyn, Ruth and David Chandler of Danielson, Wilson Baxter of Killingly and Howard Curry of Moosup. Following the drama the Pageant of the Nativity will be presented..." The public is invited. (Windham County Transcript, Thursday, Dec. 19, 1974, p. 14; killinglypl.org).

The children of the Dayville Fire District enjoyed a Christmas party on Sunday, December 22 at St. Joseph Catholic Center. The children were shown Walt Disney movies. Then Santa Claus arrived on one of the fire trucks and distributed gifts. Refreshments were

served." (WCT Dec. 26, 1974, p. 5; in the Dayville column of Mrs. Arthur Tessier--perhaps you remember her).

"On Wednesday, December 18 Junior (Girl Scout) Troop 5240 held a meeting at St. Ignatius Church hall. The opening was saying the Girl Scout Promise and Laws, and singing 'She Wears a G for Generosity.' They went Christmas caroling at the Mary Cliff Rest Home and distributed candy bouquets to the patients..." (Ibid). "Junior troop 5128 held a meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 17, at St. Joseph Catholic Center. There were 16 girls present. They listened to Christmas carols while they finished the yarn angels..." (Ibid). "The Unwanted Eleven 4-H group held their Christmas Party on Friday, Dec. 20. Punch, cookies, candy and chips were served. Entertainment was provided by Margaret Gibeault, Althea Pappas, Vincent Baiocchetti, Leslie Baranski and Frances Preece. They played Christmas carols on their musical instruments..." (Ibid). Perhaps you belonged to one of these groups and can share additional memories.

The front page of that last Transcript for 1974 carried a photo honoring a retiring postal employee. Robert D. Nash "was presented a citation (at Hank's Restaurant) by Postmaster Julien Barrette and offered con-



**KILLINGLY AT 300**  
.....  
**MARGARET WEAVER**

gratulations by Stanley Orszulak, chairman of the event. Nash has been a rural route carrier for the past 12 years." (Ibid, p.1).

Boy Scout Troop 44 of Brooklyn honored its new Eagle Scout James Gallow on Dec. 16, 1974 at a Court of Honor. That Windham County Transcript showed a picture of him being pinned by his mother Luisa Gallow as his father James looked on. (p.1).

If you've been shopping in stores and not just online, perhaps you've seen a perennial Christmas decoration, the Nutcracker. Perhaps you even have one or more among your favorite decorations. I wondered how long they had been in existence and how they came to be so did a search on the internet. AI gave the following little story, "The nutcracker originated in 17th century Germany, particularly the Ore Mountains region. One legend says a farmer promised to reward his village if someone could invent a better nutcracker. A puppeteer from the village of Dzifa created a colorful wooden puppet with jaws that could crack nuts, and the village was awarded." "Nutcrackers come

in many shapes and sizes, including soldiers, kings, animals, and other characters." (AD)

"Nutcracker dolls, also known as Christmas nutcrackers, are decorative nutcracker figurines most commonly made to resemble a toy soldier. In German tradition, the dolls are symbols of good luck, frightening away malevolent spirits. While nearly all nutcrackers from before the first half of the 20th century are functional, a significant proportion of modern nutcrackers are primarily decorative, and not able to crack nuts." (Wikipedia).

"Standing wooden nutcrackers in the form of soldiers and kings were shown in the Sonneberg and Erzgebirge regions of Germany by 1800 and 1830, the term 'Nussknacker' appeared in the dictionary of the Brothers Grim, often in the form of a misshaped little man, in whose mouth the nut, by means of a lever or screw, is cracked open. In 1872 Wilhelm Fuchtnr, known as the father of the nutcracker, made the first commercial production of nutcrackers using the lathe to create many of the same design. The Leavenworth Nutcracker Museum shows an 1880 miner of Wilhelm Fuchtnr along with a miner presently made in the Fuchtnr family workshops. Today many wooden toy soldier nutcrackers are manufactured

in Germany to meet the demands of the many collectors in the United States. This interest is renewed each year by the many productions of the Nutcracker Ballet." (https://www.nutcrackermuseum.com/history.htm)

Each December brings reruns of classic movies. On a whim, my son and I watched Frosty the Snowman, which I hadn't seen in ages and The Sound of Music, which has to be one of my all-time favorites. I grew up playing the music from that so much for my littlest sister Susie that my mother said it was time to teach her some nursery rhymes. I'm sure you have favorites, too.

Do you recall Rudolph? "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer first appeared in a 1939 promotional booklet that the department store Montgomery Ward gave away to children at Christmas that year. A catalog writer by the name of Robert L. May came up with the story of Rudolph, inspired by his own childhood of being

Montgomery Ward gave May the rights to his story, and along with his songwriter brother-in-law, he turned the tale of the ridiculed reindeer into a beloved Christmas song. In the hands of famous cowboy Gene Autry, "Rudolph the Red Nosed-Reindeer" became a hit in 1949. The classic stop-motion television special debuted in 1964." (https://www.history.com/news/the-origins-of-6-classic-christmas-songs)

Margaret M. Weaver Killingly Municipal Historian, December 2024. For additional information email me at margaretmweaver@gmail.com or visit the Killingly Historical Center at 196 Main St., Danielson, Wednesday or Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. or call 860-779-7250. Like us at Facebook www.facebook.com/killinglyhistoricalsociety. Mail for the Killingly Historical & Genealogical Society, Inc. or the Killingly Historical and Genealogical Center should be sent to PO Box 265, Danielson, CT 06329.

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## The King and the Pauper

Readers may recognize the title, "The Prince and the Pauper." It is a novel, published by Mark Twain in 1881, in which a



**BEYOND THE PEWS**  
.....  
**JOHN HANSON**

prince and a pauper switch places and experience life, immersed in each other's worlds. But have you heard the story of the King and the Pauper? This is a story in which the King of the Universe becomes a pauper, so He can show His love to the world. We celebrate that story each Dec. 25. For many, it is "the most wonderful time of the year."

Christmas is not wonderful because of the presents or decorations; it is wonderful because it is a celebration of a birth like no other. Jesus' birth was not special like the birth of a famous celebrity; it was far more significant and consequential. We celebrate Christmas because it is when The King of Kings was born a Pauper, so He could redeem mankind. Jesus was God in a human body, "reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19).

Jesus' birth was so special that the stars and angels couldn't help but shout about it. But it was also special because God came to earth so humbly and unassumingly - without human fanfare. God lived among us so we could all see how a poor, uneducated person could be born to blue-collar parents, live among a repressed people whose religion had been hijacked, and still change the world. The story is unlike any other in all the religions of the world

Pastor Jonathan Dodson captures the heart of Christianity like this:

The truth is that God is Jesus. Christianity is the only religion where God is born as a man, and becomes fully human. This is the height of enlightenment. All other religions teach that humans must work their way toward divinity. The truth is Jesus. The truth is a person who dies in our place, for our crimes, and in turn gives us his life. The truth is that God works his way down to humanity and dies for us. That's grace. See, the truth isn't a special prayer or code word we say at the pearly gates. In Christianity, the truth is essentially revealed in a Person, Jesus, full of grace and humility. In all other religions God is impersonal,

but in Christianity we meet God in Jesus. The truth is a Person who dies for us. Wonderfully enlightened, moving.

Many world religions and philosophies focus on selfish and unappeasable gods, or on the self-righteous deeds performed by religious people. Christianity takes the pressure off. Jesus came to love, to give, and to save. His salvation is free and available to all. Ironically, many have trouble embracing the only love-based religion in the world, because Christian believers must take the same humble route Jesus took. In other words, many people are prepared to do hard things for religion, but are not comfortable with humbly admitting their need for a Savior, and then simply following that Savior, as He leads them to eternal life.

The King of Kings became a Pauper so see could all see how a human being could be humble and obedient in a world where pride and self-sufficiency are highly regarded. It is a unique, true story which will soon climax with the crowning of that Pauper, as King of Kings.

Bishop John W. Hanson oversees Acts II Ministries in Thompson. For more information, please visit www.ActsII.org.

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**Cheers to a new year!**

As the calendar turns the page, we wish you the very best in the year ahead.

**Dennis Antonopoulos**  
Financial Advisor  
5 Albert St  
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EDITOR

## Some trivia to help those New Year's resolutions

The new year is just around the corner, and with that come new year's resolutions.

Many people view Jan. 1 as a new slate, a new beginning. While there are several people who view September, the start of the school year as a new beginning, the bulk of individuals like to begin anew in the dead of winter. We hear the same resolutions every year — less screen time, work out more, eat healthy, kick smoking, kick sugar, reach out to friends and family more, and to write more handwritten notes, to name a few. Most resolutions, however, come back to health. We thought it would be fun to get to know how our bodies work with some interesting facts before the start of the new year, in hopes to give a new and different perspective to things you may want to change or keep the same. The largest bone in the human body is the femur, which can support 30 times the weight of a person's body. The femur is stronger than steel. Interesting to note a person's little finger contributes to 50 percent of the hand's strength. It would take an individual who types 60 words per minute, eight hours per day for 50 years to type the human genome. Messages from the brain travel along nerves at a speed of 200 miles per hour. If a person's DNA was uncoiled it would travel the distance of 10 billion miles, essentially from Earth to Pluto and back again. It takes roughly 200 muscles to take one step, and a human skeleton renews itself every ten years.

By the time we reach the age of 70, we will have consumed 12,000 gallons of water.

Time to break out the Scope — good or bad, there is more bacteria in the human mouth than there are people in the world. We can detect taste in .0015 seconds, faster than the time it takes to blink. Our taste buds rejuvenate new taste cells every two weeks.

Our brain consists of 86 billion nerve cells that are joined by 100 trillion connections. That's a lot of wiring. The brain uses as much energy as a 10-watt light bulb. The strongest muscle in the human body is the jaw muscle. The liver is the only organ in our bodies that can regenerate. If damaged enough though, the liver will refuse to function. The lining in our stomachs is replaced every four to five days so as not to digest itself. When someone sneezes, it could travel up to 100 mph.

Our fingernails grow faster on our dominant hand. An adult who weighs 150 pounds has a skeleton that weighs roughly 21 pounds.

The average human will walk roughly 100,000 miles in a lifetime, comparable to walking around the earth four times. On average, we have about five pounds of bacteria in our digestive systems.

Blood circulates in our bodies roughly 12,000 miles per day and a human heart beats over three billion times over the course of our lives. Humans spend roughly 33 percent of their lives asleep; by comparison, a dog spends about 44 percent asleep.

A person takes about 23,000 breaths per day. The human eye can distinguish between approximately 10 million different colors.

Fingers do not have muscles that facilitate movement. The tendons in our fingers are moved by the muscles in our forearms. We hope our fun and interesting facts will instigate a shift to a healthier lifestyle in the new year.

### 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

### Joy to our world

To the Editor:

Are we getting excited yet little Trumpers? Not about Christmas a short week away. No, I'm talking about getting your popcorn and soda pop ready for the really great show you all had a hand in scripting. On Jan. 20, the Great Fraudster, President Palooka, will place his hand on the Bible ("Why is it burning?"), and once again desecrate the Oath of Office. Then proceed to take a sledge hammer to the Constitution, the same one past generations of your own families swore to defend.

He will then proceed to blither what should become the first inaugural address to be live fact-checked (Tariffs are good, very good). The Kremlin may just have decreed a national holiday.

George Washington first took that same Oath at the birth of our nation. Lincoln's second address spoke to a divided nation the words "With malice toward none, with charity for all."

Divder Trump will enter office with his long list of vengeance "With malice toward everyone, with charity for none." He says whoever spoke out against his malfeasance and lawlessness should be jailed (no mention of a trial). The new Trump, same as the old Trump.

Here are a few excerpts from FDR's 3rd address in 1941: "On each national day of Inauguration since 1789, the people have renewed their sense of dedication to the United States."

"In Washington's day the task of the people was to create and weld together a Nation."

"In Lincoln's day the task of the people was to preserve the Nation from disruption from within."

"Most vital to our present and to our future is this experience of a democracy which successfully survived crisis at home; put away many evil things."

"No, democracy is not dying."

Thanks to you, Trumpers, these sincere words of hope will dissolve and float away into the ether. They will be crushed underfoot by the most virulent and malevolent human to ever set foot into the White House, incredibly for the second time. Yes, democracy is now dying. All who voted for Trump may now take a bow. And insult the memory of those who died to defend it.

I would like to comment on two more scumbags Trump has picked to help lead our country over the edge. I do so only because I have my trusty vomit bag nearby.

Departing FBI Director Christopher Wray, in his resignation speech, said of the Bureau's loyal agents: "We're on the American people's side, the Constitution's side." He also brought up some facts about recent domestic terrorism no one knew about, thwarting attacks on: A busy pier in San Francisco; A crowded hospital outside Kansas City during Covid; A Fourth of July parade in downtown Cleveland; Disrupting a mass casualty plot

## There are two types of "Person of the Year" — which one does Trump belong to?

To the Editor:

Time Magazine's "Person of the Year" for 2024 — Donald Trump. Many people are outraged, and many are elated, but it needs to be put in perspective. The person, group, idea or object that "for better or for worse, has done the most to influence the events of the year" has been the criteria since its inception in 1928.

I think most of us assume that the title is awarded only for positive actions and good

### Merry Christmas

To the Editor:

I'm hoping this letter will be all by itself, as this is the last editorial cycle before Christmas next Wednesday.

However passionate as we can be about things, even things we like can burn us out. I'm hoping that folks are taking this holiday season to chill, relax, and break up the monotony of our various daily grinds.

This includes the people who would be upset that I named this "Merry Christmas." I could go into a big, long recap about how New England used to ban Christmas celebrations in its more Puritan days or mention the history of Christmas being rebranded into a happy fun Santa time at the end of the year that

in Oklahoma City set for Election Day, to just name a few. This is the work of the tireless agents of the FBI's Intelligence Division.

Which brings us to Trump's pick to take up the reins as head of the FBI, one Kash Patel, a dedicated Trump bootlicker. He has openly stated that on day one he will shut down the Hoover Building, eliminate the Intelligence Division and re-open it the next day as a museum to the deep state. If the wishes of the terrorist's new best friend comes to pass, get ready to see the results and say "Oh, that's terrible." You think you're safe living in this little corner. Just remember, we are still a part of a whole nation. Even if you might not care if someone else gets blown to hash.

Once again, we see Trump's instincts in full gear as he picks Arizona failed politician and sycophant Blake Masters as head of the ATF (Alcohol Tobacco Firearms). He has experience in firearms alright. He builds his own "Ghost Guns," an untraceable homemade 3D printer weapon. Even though they're illegal in nine states and restricted in seven more, 35 states give them legal status. Although in recent years tens of thousands have been recovered from the scenes of violent crimes across the country. Masters calls them "Very legal, very cool." And as an afterthought, he is an admirer of good ol' Ted Kaczinski, better known as the notorious Unabomber.

Just so you know.

One other thing I had forgotten to mention about Head of Homeland Security nominee Krist Noem. Following Trump's psychosis for loyalty, when her dog refused to obey to her liking, she shot it, then turned the gun on a goat. Uh oh, where's that bag of mine...

Hegseth, Patel, Gabbard, Masters, Noem. The only thing separating them from us is this: Will the Republican Senators, the final arbiters of this collection of crackpots, wilt under Trump's pressure of primary politics in their home states as they did during his two impeachments? This is coercion aimed at man's weakness to hold on to power, to make them decide against the public good. This is what Trump is all about.

If only they had stiffened their backbones and sent Orange P.T. Barnum packing, then would we never need worry about the days of authority abuse that lay ahead. And you're going to see it.

Keep in mind that 75 million of us supposedly sore losers said no to this bum. We cannot be afraid to continue to speak out. And if by some miracle the Republic has not fallen in four years, I will be the first to stand on Bugbee's Corner, in the rain, and shout I was wrong.

Congratulations to Jay Gerhart for the lovely compliment you recently received from north of your border.

RICK ROCHELEAU  
DANIELSON

deeds, but that's not the case. While it's true that many past recipients have been exemplary role models, there's another group that were the exact opposite. A few examples — Vladimir Putin (2007), Ayatollah Khomeini (1979), and Adolf Hitler (1938). It's obvious to me which group Trump belongs to.

TODD PATRIE  
POMFRET CENTER

takes Christmas beyond its religious roots, but darn it. It's Christmas.

Lastly, my condolences to the people that are freaking out that 2024 is only weeks away from being over. Yes, I'm wondering where the year went myself, and this year I got so wrapped up in things that the calendar next to my desk still says May.

As human beings, we're not wired to grind on forever. Take a break from the hustle culture every so often. You'll notice it.

Blessed Feast Of The Nativity, Merry Christmas, and Blessed Christmastide to all.

JAY GERHART  
PUTNAM

## How would the fight against polio have played out in RFK Jr.'s world?

To the Editor:

Back in the early 1950's, a highly infectious disease called poliomyelitis was rapidly spreading. By 1952, 350,000 cases were reported worldwide, with 58,000 of those in the U.S. During the mid-20th century, half a million people were killed or paralyzed by polio annually. After extensive testing Jonas Salk's vaccine was introduced and licensed in 1955, and by 1962, there were only 160 cases remaining in the U.S. Through international initiatives involving WHO, UNICEF, the Rotary Foundation and the Department of Health and Human services the number of cases were brought down by 99 percent within two decades.

The incoming administration has nomi-

nated Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. as Secretary of Health and Human services. This is a man who is a vaccine denier, who spreads disinformation regarding vaccines, who still believes, in spite of proof to the opposite, that vaccines cause autism. He has stated that "no vaccine is safe and effective." Where would our country, or the world, be if we had such an individual serving in that position in the 1950's? What will happen to us in the future when the next health disaster occurs? Someone who believes in conspiracy theories and ignores scientific facts is not a good candidate for a position that has the potential to jeopardize the health of millions of people.

JEAN McNALLY  
WOODSTOCK

Planning the new year

By Nancy Weiss

As 2024 comes to an end and the winter solstice brings us more slants of light, it is worth thinking about what happened in the 365 days behind us and what the next year will bring. Every year I write in my diary what I did, thought and want to recall from someone else's stories. When I reread the entries, I am disappointed. I didn't dig deeper, try harder have more fun and make changes. As the clock keeps ticking, I don't see reform on my horizon, but I recommend we all keep trying.

Often now, I am one of the older people in a group. As the youngest child in my family, it is not a familiar place. Those of us in the Boomer generation dominated the culture, the school systems and music. Oh, the music! What fun to dance the night away or sing at the top of our lungs in a convertible on a hot summer night. In the year that's past, I snuggled with my oldest granddaughter and listened to an entire Taylor Swift album. My granddaughter was worried about my reaction to the "swears," which were mild. I liked the music more than I thought I would. Best of all was the cozy time with her.

In the new year, I'll find an app and listen to something new every week. To be fair, I'll add remakes of the recordings I loved long ago, including the classics.

Food is not of special interest to me, but my husband loves it. He can throw himself into making a Japanese breakfast like one he remembers from a trip years ago. The chocolate business he shares with our older daughter brims with interesting combinations of tastes that he creates, insisting that I at least try the gooey product he offers me from a dripping spoon. I helped out in the commercial kitchen where they rent space and a fellow gave me a smash burger with pimento cheese sauce. Delicious!

In the new year, I'll try new food, or at least food prepared in new ways. I've cooked thousands of meals, some rather good, most quite average. Perhaps I'll dust off the wok or try to make kimchi. Going out for a smash burger sounds good too.

Our area is brimming with creative people. I spend time with a group of poets, walk with a co-poet laureate, listened to the new poet laureate of Woodstock, and read poems at the Vanilla Bean. My book club has been around for 40 years. I'm delighted every time we meet and enjoy lively conversation. My writing group talks on zoom. I attended a handful of art gallery shows. I participated in a birthday celebration that focused on making "joy bowls" at a nearby pottery studio. But time is passing and all of us need to complete projects, write it down, paint it, or let it go. Even creativity has an expiration date.

In the new year, I'll collect my poems from random office hideouts and encourage others to do the same. I'll cherish groups that fosters expression and conversation. I'll attend even more musical performances, theatre and dance. It's easy — just look around. The parking is free. The tickets are inexpensive and you probably know someone in the show. Just go.

As the years pile up, minor bits of wisdom become clear. Turn up the radio, make new friends, treasure the old ones, eat something different and stay creative. Time will pass but we can bend it a bit to our will.



# 2024: A year of change for the markets and economy

2024 will go into the history books as the year the recession never arrived. After the Federal Reserve raised interest rates sharply in 2023 to fight a post-pandemic spike in inflation, concerns grew early this year that economic growth would stall. Instead, the Fed preemptively switched gears. It began cutting interest rates in September and—so far—a recession has been averted.

The economic soft landing is one of two major developments this year that pleasantly surprised investors and helped the S&P 500 climb roughly

25% through the start of December. The other was the resounding election victories of President-elect Donald Trump and the Republican party.

Trump won the popular vote by a wide enough margin that recounts and delays in declaring the winner were unnecessary. Likewise, the Republican party captured control of both houses of Congress, which should help the future president push through his agenda.

Here's a look at how the two major events of 2024 have affected the market in ways both expected and not.

Rate cutting cycle begins. The US economy has proved amazingly resilient this year, defying expectations that high interest rates would choke off economic growth and send the economy into recession. Economic data has consistently come in stronger than



**FINANCIAL FOCUS**  
• • • • •  
**LAURENCE HALE**  
INVESTMENT ADVISER

expected, reflecting continued consumer spending and solid corporate earnings growth. Third quarter GDP grew 2.8 percent, the unemployment rate remains near historic lows at 4.2 percent, and corporate earnings are forecast to grow about 9 percent this year.

So far, the Fed has lowered interest rates twice by a total of 0.75 percentage point and it may not need to do much more. Thanks to the improved economic outlook and Trump policies that may boost economic growth and inflation, investors are only forecasting two to three additional interest rate cuts over the next year, which would bring the federal funds rate down to around 3.75 to 4.00 percent.

Trump shakes things up. President-elect Trump has hit the ground running, announcing who will fill the many leadership rolls in the

next administration. He continues to talk about placing tariffs on imported goods even though tariffs could spark at trade war or inflation. He has also promised to cut taxes on corporate earnings, Social Security payments, tips among other things. And he has promised to deport illegal immigrants, which could spark wage inflation.

Optimists are hopeful that many of Trump's campaign promises are just opening salvos in negotiations with foreign countries and Congress. But the bond market may be worried about ever larger deficits and sticky inflation. Even though inflation has decelerated this year and the Federal Reserve has cut short-term interest rates, the yield on the 10-year Treasury bond yield has risen slightly from the start of the year to 4.3 percent.

Because long-term rates have stayed high, borrowing to buy a home or a car has remained expensive. The bounce in home sales that was expected in January never materialized. Likewise, the amount of interest the federal government pays on its debt has surged. On the flip

side, high interest rates mean consumers can generate decent income by investing in bonds for the first time in many years.

Optimism abounds. With the economy growing, the Federal Reserve cutting interest rates, and President-elect Trump expected to enact business-friendly policies, investors have reason to be optimistic. Wall Street analysts are calling for S&P 500 earnings to rise 15 percent in 2025.

After the market's strong run this year, the S&P 500's forward P/E is at 22.3 as of mid-December, well above the 30-year average of 16.8. The index's forward P/E has only been higher during two other periods since 1985. In both bull and bear markets, we rebalance portfolios to ensure they continue to reflect investors' risk tolerance levels.

We're happy to discuss how the market changes of the past year have affected your personal finances or your business, and share how we can help you to create a financial strategy aligned with your specific goals. Contact us for a complimentary consultation on our website at [whzwealth.com](http://whzwealth.com), or

give us a call at (860) 928-2341.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

March to autocracy

To the Editor:

The Editor's Note in the Dec. 13 Villager completely misses the point of journalism, and indeed, ignores the urgent need for reasoned political debate. Newspapers such as yours, and other media, have no obligation to publish anything. That you choose to hide under the "opinion" shield and print easily provable lies is the problem. Most media consumers don't have the time or inclination to fact check the information they're inundated with. Poll after poll indicates that Americans are woefully misinformed about the most basic facts of history and current issues as a result.

Consider the social medium Twitter; now known as X. At one time, Twitter decided it was against their policy to post blatantly false information without a note of correction. That was a responsible policy. Then Elon Musk bought it and reversed policy by censoring liberal opinion and featuring provably false right-wing lies.

In the Villager, exhibit number one is the letters regularly written by Ed DeLuca. Expressing one's opinion is fine and essential in a functioning democracy. But stating easily disproven falsehoods to support one's opinion is not. There are plenty of examples in Mr. DeLuca's letters. One egregious example is his repeated lie about an immigrant crime wave. Readers will note that he rarely, if ever, owns up to a false assertion, just like his hero, Trump.

The flood of lies influences elections and contributes to our inability to solve the considerable problems facing the country. It, along with the distrust it creates in our traditional institutions, is also an essential step in the march toward autocracy. Trump's constant demonization of media he doesn't like is all part of the formula. He has successfully intimidated critical voices in the media and the Republican Party with his threats of retribution, jailing, prosecution and revoking broadcast licenses.

Speech the criminal autocrat doesn't like has already been suppressed. The mammoth list of GOP senators who bowed down to Trump is well known. More recently, tech plutocrats like Musk, Bezos, and Zuckerberg have kissed the ring when formerly they were highly critical. They even contributed hundreds of millions of dollars to his campaign and transition. Editors of newspapers owned by the super-rich were forbidden from endorsing Kamala Harris for President and even required to temper negative stories about Trump. Now, Trump is suing an Iowa newspaper and pollster over a poll that was wrong by a few percentage points.

The purpose of the intimidation is to eliminate a free press and suppress free speech. See the Hungarian example. And it's working. The oligarchs are swooping in to purchase the media (e.g. Twitter, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Times) or already own many of them (e.g. Facebook, Fox News). Their interests are now fully aligned with Trump's. How many Trump nominees aren't either billionaires, convicted criminals, election deniers, relatives, or friends of relatives? Not many.

Media such as ABC, a \$200 billion company, can afford small payoffs to settle Trump's frivolous lawsuits, but can't afford to lose their broadcast licenses. Will smaller fry such as local newspapers be able to survive under the threat of prosecution and imprisonment of owners and editors? Or will they simply capitulate? History teaches that average citizens, like many of your readers, will. They will be silenced one way or another if Trump's authoritarian project is not thwarted.

BILLY G. TAYLOR  
KILLINGLY

Let your imagination take you back a few centuries. Looking out your window, you might find a Native American neighbor digging up some roots in your yard. Why, you might ask? He may be a Healer, gathering supplies for those who are ill in his tribe. The land we are referring to is presently the area between the Quinebaug River in the city of Putnam and the Five Mile ("Assawaga") River in East Putnam. Early Native Americans had agreed that there would be no bloodshed in this area. Medicine Men and Healers from the various tribes in our area could harvest what they needed here without fear of attack. This place was also designated as a safe meeting place where disputes were discussed and decisions agreed upon. This area has been a special place in the past, and remains so today.  
(Researched by Sandra Cutler Ames,

## Did You Know

BY SANDRA AMES AND FAB CUTLER  
ASPINOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2024)

College Farm/ Yale University

Northwestern, western, and southern lines of College Farm. This is a tract of at least 600 acres that in 1701 was given by Major James Fitch to the trustees of the College School. ( present day Yale University) It was hoped that it would become the school's permanent home. It later became the Torrey Farm on the 5 Mile River Road, East Putnam.

In 1711, John Fisk and James Leavens obtained the land from the trustees of what was then Yale College. When they surveyed and divided the tract in 1742, it contained about 826 acres.

Researched by Fab Cutler

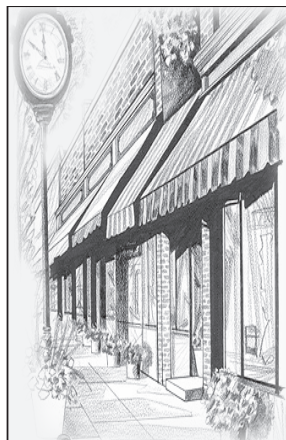
Memories from the late Willie Zamagni

A surprise visitor to Putnam Babe Ruth was in Putnam with his wife on Sunday, Oct. 15, 1919. Manager McDermott of the Putnam Team said he had agreed to pay Babe Ruth \$300. Ruth said he had agreed to play for \$500 not \$300. So—Babe Ruth did not play!  
Researched by Willie Zamagni

Added notes on Babe Ruth Babe Ruth was a pitcher for The Red Sox and Yankees baseball teams.

Babe Ruth barnstormed in Connecticut. Barnstorming was what Major League players did in the off season. They traveled around the country when their team wasn't playing. They would play against small local teams.

These were called exhibition games. The players did this to make more money. Babe Ruth spent many off seasons barnstorming. From 1918 to 1920 Ruth played many exhibition games in Connecticut.



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- Jeff S., Mystic, CT

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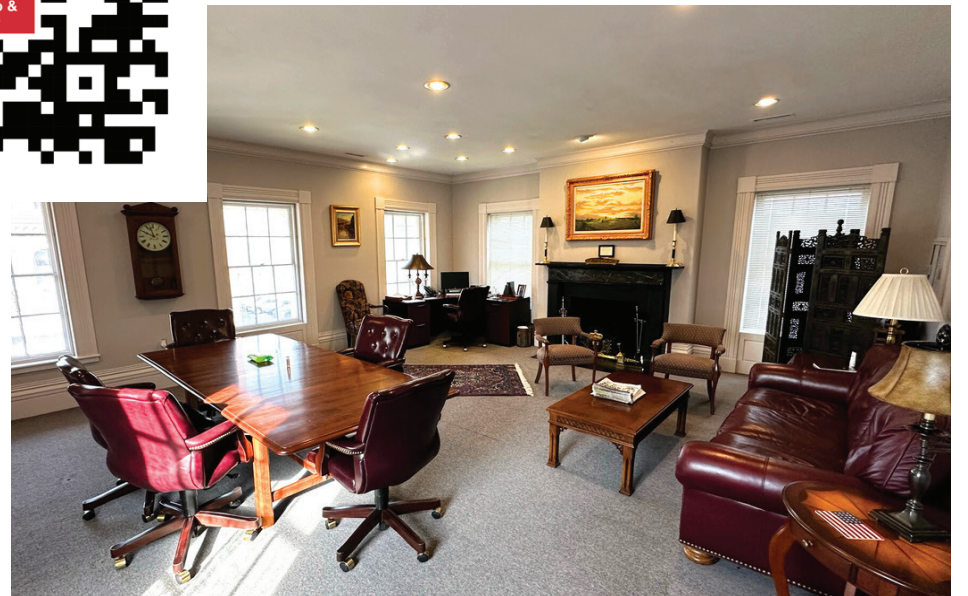


- Historical building, also known as Tiffany-Leonard House, built in 1832
- Large Executive Offices with Elegant Finishes and High Ceilings
- Large Open Concept Cubicle Areas

- Listing price: \$550,000
- Building size: 9,536 SF
- Lot size: 13,939 SF
- Loading docks: (1) tailgate height
- Basement: partial | Unfinished



MORE INFO:



**JAMES GLICKMAN**  
Principal

508-769-5007

[jglickman@glickmankovago.com](mailto:jglickman@glickmankovago.com)



**JONAH D. GLICKMAN**  
Vice President

508-868-3765

[jdglickman@glickmankovago.com](mailto:jdglickman@glickmankovago.com)







# Updated top 10 antique and collectibles list

**H a p p y** Holidays! I've been writing columns for this newspaper for over a decade. I've always enjoyed hearing from regular readers and it's especially nice when I can meet them in person. Thank you to those of you who have been following for years, to those reading for the first time, and everyone in between.



ANTIQUES, COLLECTIBLES & ESTATES  
WAYNE TUISKULA

Nearly 10 years ago, in 2015, I listed the top 10 antiques and collectibles that had been selling well for us. The antique and collectibles market is always evolving, so I've updated the list to keep up with the times. When I first started attending auctions regularly and selling antiques as a hobby around 35 years ago, old antiques like Period Furniture from the 1700s and early 1800s, EAPG (early American pattern glass), china like Staffordshire, and slipware pottery were

in high demand. Slipware is made when clay becomes leather hard, and a wet mixture of clay and other minerals is applied to create designs when the piece is fired. We sold some Period pieces like a chest from a New Hampshire craftsman and a New York-made game table for over \$20,000 several years ago.

However, overall prices have been trending down for pieces like these. When I started our auction business in 2002, we had regular bidders who competed for items like Hummel figurines and Lladro figures. We had bidders who attended regularly to bid on Limoges and other fine china dinnerware sets. Some bidders were there to buy Depression glass and carnival glass. Sadly, these categories aren't as popular with collectors anymore and many of the bidders

who used to buy them switched to dealing in other items or quit selling completely. Conversely, there are some items, like a large collection of modern gold jewelry, that we declined taking on consignment years ago, but I wish were still available now. We are open to valuable antique and vintage consignments of all kinds, but I chose the ones listed below because they are commonly found. We often find gold jewelry, sterling silver flatware, and coins in the estates that we handle. Other items were chosen because of their value. Some baseball cards, comic books, and art can sell for millions. Here is my updated top 10 list:

1. Art
2. Estate jewelry, gold, and diamonds, gold watches
3. Gold and Silver Coins and Sterling Silver
4. Baseball cards and sports memorabilia
5. Comic books
6. Historical memorabilia
7. Vintage and antique cars

8. Vintage and antique posters and advertising signs

9. Old Chinese antiques

10. Transportation memorabilia

I'll be writing individual columns about each of the top 10 categories listed in the coming weeks. In the meantime, add looking for these items to your New Year's resolutions.

We are working on an upcoming Civil War memorabilia auction, an online auction of antiques in a Beacon Hill estate, and a comic book and sports memorabilia auction. We are also accepting consignments of items in the top 10 list for future auctions. Please visit our Web site, <https://centralmassauctions.com> for links to upcoming events.

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



## The Christmas Truce

During the first Christmas of World War I, something extraordinary happened. Amid the mud, barbed wire, and endless gunfire of the Western Front, a moment of humanity broke through the darkness. This event, now known as the Christmas Truce of 1914, stands as one of the most remarkable stories in military history. The war had begun just months earlier, with soldiers on all sides marching confidently into what many believed would be a short conflict. By December, however, it had devolved into brutal trench warfare, with men enduring freezing temperatures, disease, and unrelenting artillery fire. Between the trenches lay No-Man's Land—a barren, treacherous expanse littered with barbed wire, deep craters, and the remnants of battle. Constantly patrolled by sharpshooters and swept by artillery, it was a place where survival was nearly impossible, and venturing out meant almost certain death. Christmas seemed destined to pass like any other day—another battle

for survival. But then, along stretches of the front lines, something inexplicable occurred. Reports from soldiers describe a spontaneous ceasefire that began on Christmas Eve. German troops were said to have lit candles in their trenches and placed makeshift Christmas trees in view of the enemy. Carols like "Silent Night" drifted across no-man's land, and British soldiers joined in with their hymns in response. No-Man's Land was a space where survival was unlikely. Incredibly, some soldiers climbed out of their trenches, unarmed and vulnerable. Walking through the craters, tangled barbed wire, and under the shadow of enemy gunfire, soldiers ventured into no-man's land to shake hands and exchange gifts. Cigarettes and chocolates were shared between men who, just hours earlier, had been trying to kill each other. Impromptu soccer matches began, with soldiers from both sides kicking a ball across the frozen ground.

One British soldier wrote: "There they were, right before us...we shook hands, wished each other a Merry Christmas...as if we had known each other for years." For just a moment, bitter enemies forgot the horrors of war and instead discovered their humanity. Was it the sheer power of the Christmas spirit or a rare alignment of circumstances that allowed these enemies to set aside their weapons? How this ever occurred is truly a mystery. To cross No-Man's Land was to risk death and rely entirely on an enemy's mercy—a profound act of faith in shared humanity. It was reportedly a spontaneous act, not planned, not ordered by high command, not negotiated through official channels. The Christmas truce only occurred in 1914 and not in subsequent years of the war. Was it the fresh memory of peacetime before the bitterness of prolonged conflict had fully taken hold? Or was it a divine intervention, a Christmas miracle? Soldiers on both sides reported feeling an overwhelming sense of peace and calm that night, unlike anything they had

experienced. Was it simply relief from the relentless fear and exhaustion of battle, or something more? Others described how the truce seemed to weaken their will to fight, as if an invisible force were holding them back from resuming violence. The soccer matches have become part of the legend, but the details remain unclear. Some skeptics argue these games were symbolic, with soldiers kicking makeshift balls rather than playing formal matches. Yet the act—choosing to play instead of fight—resonates deeply, regardless of its exact form. Sadly, the truce didn't last. By the end of Christmas Day, most soldiers returned to their trenches, and the bloody reality of war resumed. Higher commands forbade further fraternization in some sectors, issuing harsh penalties for soldiers who attempted to repeat the truce. Remarkably, some soldiers who met during the truce kept in contact after the war, writing letters and maintaining bonds formed in no-man's land. Amid the chaos of war, a simple act of bravery reshaped the narrative

of the trenches. Stories of exchanging gifts and laughter in the midst of war reflect something profound. During this holiday season, may the story

of the Christmas Truce inspire us to set aside our conflicts, however small, and embrace the spirit of understanding, unity, and hope.

## Washburn re-elected VP of Society for Soil Scientists

POMFRET — Margaret Washburn, Registered Professional Soil Scientist, was re-elected to the office of Vice President of the Society of Soil Scientists of Southern New England at the Society's 2024 annual meeting on Dec. 4. Washburn, owner of Washburn Wetland Consulting LLC, holds B.S. and M.S. degrees from the University of Connecticut in Agronomy, Practicing in Massachusetts and Connecticut, Ms. Washburn specializes in wetlands delineation and wetlands permitting. Washburn Wetland Consulting LLC celebrated 28 years in business this year. As Vice President of the Society, Washburn assists with organizing events aimed at the advancement of soil science as it relates promoting of the professional interests of soil scientists in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Washburn also presently serves the Town of Thompson in her capacity as Wetlands and Conservation Enforcement Officer.

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**100 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH**

## 100 Years Ago This Month: Historical events from December 1924

The month of December has been home to many historical events over the years. Here's a look at some that helped to shape the world in December 1924.

- Boston Arena hosts the first National Hockey League game ever played in the United States on December 1. The league's two newest franchises, the Boston Bruins and the Montreal Maroons, lock horns in a 2-1 game eventually won by the home team.

- On December 1, Richard L. Cowan of Toronto and C. Lewis Fowler of New York sign an agreement to start the first chapter of the Ku Klux Klan in Canada.

- More than 700 people perish when a devastating earthquake strikes present-day Indonesia on December 2.

- The SS Belgenland departs New York City on December 4. The ocean liner begins a cruise around the world that would last for more than months. Though at least 350 passengers are on board when the ship departs the Big Apple, just 235 remain for the duration of the trip.

- Decree No. 2980 creates the State of Syria on December 5, uniting the State of Aleppo and the State of Damascus under a common native assembly and administration.

- The Chicago Bears defeat the Cleveland Bulldogs 22-0 on December 7. National Football League rules at the time made no provision for a postseason championship, so the Bulldogs, in spite of the loss, are deemed the league champion because their winning percentage (.875) was better than the Bears' (.857).

- The Book-Cadillac Hotel, at the time the tallest hotel in the world, opens in Detroit on December 9. The luxury hotel includes 1,136 rooms and 31 stories.

- Gold is discovered near the Swedish village of Boliden on December 10, revealing what would become the largest and richest gold mine in Europe. The mine would not be exhausted of its gold supply until 1967.

- American Tobacco Company founder James B. Duke gives \$40 million to The Duke Endowment on December 11. The trust fund, directed to support four colleges, awards the largest share of the gift to Trinity College in Durham, North Carolina, provided the school change its name to honor James Duke's father, Washington Duke.

- Exiled former Albanian Prime Minister Ahmet Zogu leads an invasion of the country with guerillas backed by Yugoslavia on December 13. Zogu enters the capital city of Tirana on December 24 and declares the country a republic.

- On December 14, the temperature in Fairfield, Montana, drops from 63 F at noon to -21 F at midnight. The 84-degree change sets a record for the greatest drop in temperature in a 12-hour period.

- Masked and armed vigilantes seize 15-year-old African American Samuel Smith from his hospital room in Nashville, Tennessee, on December 15. Smith, who had been arrested for shooting and wounding a white grocer, is hanged from a tree near the grocer's home. No one is ever charged with the crime.

- Fritz Haarmann is sentenced to death in Germany on December 19. Known as the "Butcher of Hanover," the "Vampire of Hanover" and the "Wolf Man," Haarmann had been found guilty of murdering 24 men, and is ultimately executed by guillotine in April 1925.

- After serving just 13 months of a five-year prison sentence, Adolf Hitler is released from Landsberg Prison on December 20. Hitler's release is part of a wider policy of general amnesty for political prisoners.

- A Christmas Eve party in a one-room schoolhouse in Babbs Switch, Oklahoma ends in tragedy on December 24. A student handing out presents accidentally brushes a wrapped gift against a candle flame near a dry Christmas tree, igniting a fire that ultimately kills 36 people.

- The Broadway Theatre in Manhattan opens on Christmas Day. The theatre remains open today, and is one of just a handful of theaters that is physically located on Broadway.

- Singing "Jingle Bells" at her parents' theater in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, two-year-old Judy Garland makes her show business debut on December 26.

# Brunch begins the New Year right



The first official meal of 2025 should be memorable and flavorful. Chances are late night New Year's Eve revelry will make breakfast a nonstarter, but a New Year's Day brunch can hit the spot on January 1. When family members or guests rouse from their post-countdown slumbers, these brunch ideas and tips can kick off the new year with flavor.

### Skip the mimosas

While it may be tempting to employ a little "hair of the dog" therapy to combat the ramifications of overindulgence from the evening prior, it is a better bet to skip any extra alcohol come the morning.

Rather, serve plenty of hydrating refreshments, with water at the top of the list. For those who desire something with a little more zip, create a mocktail with fruit juice and sparkling water.

### Make-ahead meals

Serving foods that can be made in advance cuts back on the amount of work that needs to be done in the late morning of New Year's Day. Breakfast casseroles can be the way to go, as they pair many ingredients together and can be reheated. Fruit salads as well as homemade granola parfaits can be made in advance and then served during the brunch.

Consider bagels and breads

A platter of bagels, croissants and cinnamon rolls are easy to serve and might be a welcome way to fill the stomach. Paired with lox, cheeses and cold cuts, these carbohydrates can help complete the meal.

Sheet-pan options are easy

Brunch hosts and hostesses who choose to whip up foods during the brunch itself can employ some tactics to make the work easier. Crack eggs onto cheese-coated slices of thick bread and put under the broiler for perfectly cooked batch results.

Don't forget the

sweets

Muffins and sweet rolls can blur the lines between meal and dessert; otherwise, serve alternative make-ahead desserts that are relatively easy, such as pound cakes or cookies.

### Set up the coffee bar

Chances are a little caffeine might be necessary to jump-start the day. Make coffee, tea, hot chocolate, and other warm beverages readily available with the accompanying creamers and flavorings so that brunch guests can customize their drinks.

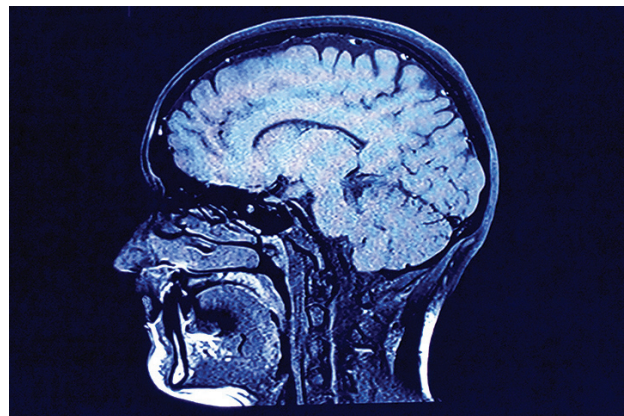
New Year's Day brunch kicks off the new year with food, family and friends.

## 5 New Year's resolutions to benefit the brain

Resolutions made at the start of a new year often focus on personal improvement. Giving up poor habits like smoking or drinking too much alcohol and losing weight through diet and exercise are some popular resolutions.

Health and wellness certainly dominates the resolution landscape. Improvement-minded individuals interested in gaining long-term benefits from their resolutions this year may want to consider ways to improve brain health and function. Here are five ideas to consider:

1. Get moving: Exercise does the body good and even positively affects the brain. The American Academy of Neurology has found aerobic exercise may play a significant role in reversing and preventing cognitive decline. Researchers have found that even a little exercise each day can result in improved brain function in less than six months. Andrew E.



Budson, M.D., a professor of neurology at Boston University, also says aerobic exercise releases growth factors in the brain, which can help grow new brain cells.

2. Start a new hobby. When doing the same activities over and over, you eventually learn how to do those activities better. But doctors can't confirm this is actually helping the brain in a meaningful way. Rather, there is evidence that doing new things can be beneficial to the brain. So learning a new hobby, taking

a class, or even learning to play a musical instrument can push the brain to improve from a cognitive standpoint, indicates The Healthy, a Reader's Digest brand.

3. Make more time for fun. Repeated stress can have detrimental effects on the body and mind. Harvard Health says stress has been linked to cognitive problems and a higher risk for Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Taking time to relax and enjoy oneself can tame stress, and in turn, alleviate

issues affecting memory and cognition.

4. Practice mindfulness more often. Mindfulness is an exercise in paying attention to one's surroundings, senses and more. Too often people are multi-tasking and never fully devoting their attention to one thing. Mindfulness gives the brain a break and brings a person into the present.

5. Eat a better diet. The benefit of eating healthy foods extends beyond the waistline. Many of the foods that are good for the heart are important for preventing cognitive decline and dementias. A 2015 systemic review found strong evidence for a protective effect of the Mediterranean diet, according to researchers at Deakin University School of Medicine in Australia.

By making brain health a priority when coming up with New Year's resolutions this year, individuals can benefit for years to come.





**THEATRE**

continued from page A1

as a whole at the Little Theater on Broad Street is fantastic.”

This year has been a particularly busy one for the Little Theater hosting productions like “Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory,” “Steel Magnolias,” “The Decedents,” “A Night at the Fenton,” and, most recently, “A Sussified Christmas Carol.” Many of these shows were represented in the Broadway World nominations as well as the theater’s pro-

duction of “Carrie” from the fall of 2023.

The Little Theater on Broad Street’s nominations are as follows: Best Play – “Steel Magnolias,” Best Musical – “Carrie,” Best Ensemble – “Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory,” Best Performer in a Play – April Olmstead for “Steel Magnolias” and Libbey Stearns for “Steel Magnolias,” Best Performer in a Musical – Libbey Stearns for “Steel Magnolias,” Best Supporting Performer in a Musical – Angela Foley, Criag Blake, Liz Wilcox, and Zachary Horn all receiving individual nom-

inations for “Carrie,” Best Director of a Musical – Holly Blade for “Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory,” and Best Choreography of a Play/Musical – Keri Danner for “Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory.” The Little Theater on Broad Street has also been nominated for Favorite Local Theater.

Fans can vote for The Little Theater on Broad Street’s productions by visiting [broadwayworld.com](http://broadwayworld.com) and visiting the site’s Connecticut page. Voting is open until the end of the calendar year.

# OBITUARIES

## Joan DeVries Molleur, 85



MESA, ARIZONA—Joan DeVries Molleur, 85, formerly of Webster, MA and Cocoa Beach, FL, passed away peacefully at her daughter, Laura’s home on August 29, 2024.

She was predeceased by her parents, Wilfred and Agnes (Lukowski) Grimley, her 1st husband, Charles O. DeVries, her granddaughter, Renee Regis MacGregor; her former husband, Ronald L. Molleur, Sr. and her son, Ronald L. Molleur, Jr.

She was a stay-at-home mom for many years. She was also an Administrative Assistant at Bartlett High School, Webster, MA, Clark University, Worcester, MA and Patrick Air Force Base, Brevard County, FL.

She received an Associate’s Degree in Business from Clark University.

She is survived by her daughters, Rachel and Dan Bolte, Thompson, CT, Colleen Molleur, Virginia Beach, VA,

Jacqueline and Raymond Regis, Webster, MA and Laura Barnardo, Mesa, AZ.

Her grandchildren, Jason Regis, Dudley, MA, Geoffrey and Jessica Bolte, No. Gros., CT, Anthony Barnardo, Webster, MA, Marc and Chrysty Bolte, Kingston, NH, Raymond and Natalie Regis, No. Gros., CT and Alisha Regis, Boston, MA.

Her greatgrandchildren, Makenzie MacGregor, Marlborough, MA, Shane MacGregor, Woodstock, CT, Justin Regis, Stafford Springs, CT, Kaylee Regis, Southbridge, MA, Jasmyn, Cameron, Micah and Jonah Bolte, Kingston, NH, Payton and Callan Bolte, No. Gros, CT, Isabella Barnardo, Webster, MA, Laila, Raymond and Aspen Regis, No. Gros., CT,

She loved reading romance novels, going to the ocean, Hallmark romance movies; her animals, her ferrets and parrots and especially her cat, Bootsie, also, Laura’s doggies: Dora, Dyna and Harley.

A Celebration of Life Mass will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Alzheimer’s Association MA/NH Chapter, 320 Nevada St.

Suite 201, Newton, MA 02460.

## Ruth Herindeen Stevenson

Ruth Herindeen Stevenson died Thursday, December 12, 2024 following a lifetime of illness, her eyes have closed now while traveling to an imaginary land.

Ruth was born in Putnam on December 16, 1944 to Robert Dewey Herindeen and Ruth Cady Herindeen. She lived her entire life in the Harrisville section of Woodstock in the Harris-Herindeen homestead and attended Woodstock schools and Annhurst College. Ruth married

Tod Stevenson, who survives her, on October 10, 1964. Ruth, the dynamo, known as the “Cookie Lady” was active in many civic activities in the area. She enjoyed cooking and gardening and was loved by her many friends. Her medical history was extensive, and she often referred to herself as a “Perdue chicken, just pieces and parts”. She is survived by nieces and nephews.

There are no calling hours and services are private.

**INTERSECTION**

continued from page A1

at its center containing a veterans memorial. The plans presented by Lin would see the intersection converted into a curved T-junction eliminating the straightaway and forcing a stop coming off Main Street onto Riverside Drive. The project would also include sidewalk work and drainage improvements.

“We’re replacing 18 inches of pavement and on top of that we’re going to replace the sidewalk along the street. The main thing is we’re not widening the road, so the current width of the road is going to stay. You’re going to have a brand new roadway which is good for 20 years of service life,” said Lin. “The main part is

we’re going to reconfigure the intersection, so it no longer has the island at the intersections. Everything is going to be T-ed up together, so you only have one entrance in and out. With this configuration we actually tested the turning limits for both the school buses and the fire trucks so they can maneuver.”

Another element of the project is improvements at Swanson Park along Riverside Drive, the home of Thompson War Memorial and a potential relocation site for the memorial on the island at the Main Street and Riverside Drive intersection. A third part of the project is the Directly Connected Impervious Area (DCIA) which will assist with drainage in the center of town.

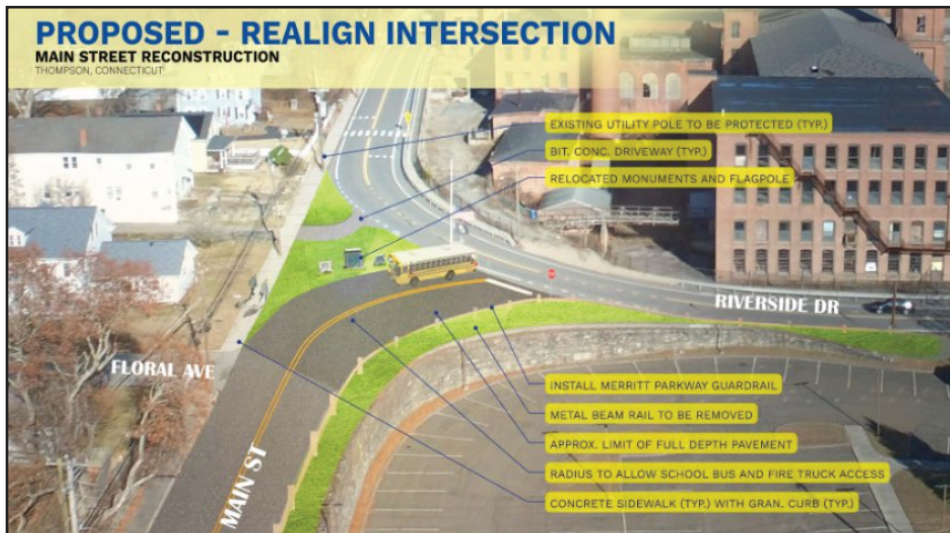
The Main Street reconfiguration will cost an estimated \$3.5 million while the DCIA improvement come with a price tag of \$200,000 and the Swanson Park improvements would cost around \$150,000. With these prices in mind, all three initiatives should be covered by the CIF grant pending the results of a bidding process.

The design phase is expected to run through the rest of the winter with bidding to commence in May and construction to begin as early as June and complete around November 2025. The full presentation from the Freeman Companies, LLC has been included with the minutes of the Thompson MSRAC dated Dec. 11, 2024.



Courtesy

A mockup of the planned reconfiguration of the intersection of Main Street and Riverside Drive in Thompson.



A detailed plan of the reconfiguration of Main Street as presented by representatives of Freeman Companies, LLC.

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

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# LEGALS

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

**ESTATE OF**

**Adam H Agnello (24-00507)**

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated December 11, 2024, 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:

Evonne H Agnello  
c/o THOMAS A BORNER,  
BORNER SMITH ALEMAN HERZOG & CERRONE, LLC, 155 PROVIDENCE STREET, PO BOX 166,  
PUTNAM, CT 06260  
December 27, 2024

December 13, 2024, 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:

Michael C Lamoureux Sr.  
c/o EDWIN C HIGGINS, BACHAND, LONGO & HIGGINS,  
168 MAIN STREET, P.O. BOX 528,  
PUTNAM, CT 06260  
December 27, 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, 2025. Supplemental Motor Vehicle taxes are also due January 1, 2025. Taxes and Sewer Use will become delinquent on February 3, 2025. 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 27, 2024  
January 10, 2025  
January 24, 2025

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

**ESTATE OF**

**Dennis D Dancause, Sr. (24-00439)**

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated October 29, 2024, 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:

Dennis D Dancause, Jr.  
c/o STEPHEN J ADAMS, STEPHEN J ADAMS, ESQ,  
158 MAIN STREET, P.O. BOX 682,  
PUTNAM, CT 06260  
December 27, 2024

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

**ESTATE OF**

**Linda R Lamoureux (24-00497)**

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated

**ARC**

continued from page A1

tions, Executive General Manager Barry Shead added a second shift in November. The move has eliminated backlogs and kept operations running smoothly.

“This was a total team effort,” says Shead. “I couldn’t be prouder of our staff and participants for their dedication and hard work.”

The Donation Station—located at 22 CT-171, Woodstock—is one

of The Arc Eastern Connecticut’s micro-enterprises, which provide paid employment and job-training opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and help fund critical programs.

“This is great news for The Donation Station, and for those of us committed to a cleaner Connecticut” says Kathleen Stauffer, CEO of The Arc ECT. “I’m overjoyed by the hard work by our team—and even more so by the results.”

About The Arc Eastern Connecticut

The Arc Eastern Connecticut is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advocating for and supporting people with IDD in the communities of eastern Connecticut. Since its founding in 1952, the Agency has been committed to promoting inclusion, independence, and quality of life for people with IDD through advocacy, education, and community-based services. To learn more, please visit [TheArcECT.org](http://TheArcECT.org).

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# Winter celebrations and coldest temperatures

The winter solstice marks the Northern Hemisphere's first day of winter and the day with the fewest hours of sunlight. It usually occurs around Dec. 21, like this year, and has been celebrated worldwide since ancient times. A variety of plants have been used to celebrate this change of seasons.

The Yule log may be the most well-known plant-related tradition. An entire tree or the largest available log was burned during the twelve

days of Yule beginning on the winter solstice. Pine logs symbolizing prosperity were often used, but oak was also used for strength and wisdom, and poplar for understanding. Pieces of the yule log were collected and saved to start next year's fire, and the ashes were often sprinkled around the house to protect it from evil spirits.

The Saxons and Celts often used the entire trunk of an oak tree representing strength, protection, and endurance, for their winter solstice

bonfires. They kept it burning for 12 hours on the eve of the solstice. If the fire stayed lit during this period, they believed the household would be protected and have an abundant harvest and good health.

Yews symbolizing death and the last day of the solar year, as well as the silver fir, symbolizing winter solstice and rebirth, and the birch representing new beginnings were also part of solstice celebrations of the past.

Several cultures

believed evergreens symbolized immortality, protection, and future prosperity. They made wreaths and decorated their homes with boughs of fir, cedar, and pine. Small gifts for the gods of the sun, earth, and harvest were hung in pine trees. Some believe this evolved into the tradition of decorating evergreen trees for Christmas.

As you welcome the lengthening of daylight, you may contemplate the old proverb "As the days lengthen, the cold strengthens." Many places in the Northern Hemisphere experience the coldest average temperatures in January and February even though the days are getting longer.

There is science behind this proverb. Despite the lengthening amount of daylight, the earth is losing more heat than it gains resulting in the colder temperatures occurring after the winter solstice. The ground, large bodies of water and other objects slowly warm throughout the summer and slowly lose this heat as the days shorten. The release of this stored heat continues



GARDEN MOMENTS  
MELINDA MYERS

peratures. Although the temperatures may drop, enjoy the longer days with a walk in the woods, at a nearby park, or through your neighborhood.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including *Midwest Gardener's Handbook, Revised 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).

after the winter solstice delaying the onset of the coldest winter temperatures. Although the days begin to lengthen, the earth's angle to the sun and relatively long dark periods result in less heat gain and more heat loss during this time.

This temperature lag is often longer in areas near large bodies of water like the Great Lakes and oceans. So, your proximity to these prevailing winds and snow cover also impacts winter tem-

**Share New Year wishes, not the flu!**

Tips to prevent the spread of the flu:

- Avoid close contact when you or others are sick
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth
- Clean frequently touched surfaces regularly
- Be sure to get your flu vaccine. Find a local vaccine clinic at [vaccines.gov](http://vaccines.gov)

This ad is grant-funded by the CT DPH. This publication does not express the views of the Department of Public Health or the State of CT. The views and opinions expressed are those of the authors.



Melinda Myers

Some cultures believed evergreens symbolized immortality, protection, and future prosperity which resulted in decorating their homes with boughs of fir and wreaths.



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