



PUTNAM VILLAGER

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Friday, July 24, 2026

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Woodstock PREP Basketball Camp a huge success

WOODSTOCK — The inaugural Woodstock Academy PREP Basketball Drills and Skills Camp was a tremendous success, welcoming approximately 60 boys and girls, ages six to 16, during its five-day session held at the South Campus gymnasium.

Campers traveled from communities throughout the region, including Pomfret, Eastford, Putnam, Webster, Killingly, Brooklyn, and several surrounding towns, to take part in the week of instruction, competition, and fun.

The camp was directed by Woodstock Academy Prep Head Basketball Coach Tom Espinosa, who were thrilled with the enthusiasm and effort displayed by the campers.

“It was a huge success,” Espinosa said. “The kids had a blast, but they also got better. It was a great group that was very competitive and extremely well behaved throughout the week.”

Campers were divided into two age groups: the Big East Division for younger players and the NBA Division for older players. Each day, coaches presented a Hustle Award and Player of the Day award to outstanding campers from each team.

During Friday’s closing ceremonies, several major awards were presented. These awards were decided by the coaches in each league. The Coaches award went to Levi



Roy (Big East) and Sydney Anderson (NBA). The Hustle award was presented to Kellan Matulis (Big East) and Bishop Arnold (NBA). The biggest award was the leagues Players of the week. Bryce Proulx (Big East) and Bryce Espinosa (NBA) took home those awards.

Team competition was another highlight of the week. In the NBA Division, the Celtics, coached by Josh Scraba, captured the championship. In the Big East Division, Providence, coached by Martyn Polinchovic, claimed the title.

Campers also competed in several individual skill contests throughout the week:

- Free Throw Champion
 - o NBA: Jaiden Robidoux
 - o Big East: Bryce Proulx
- Elbow Shooting Champion
 - o NBA: Bryce Espinosa
 - o Big East: Bryce Proulx

- Hot Shot Champion
 - o NBA: Bryce Espinosa
 - o Big East: Kellan Matulis

- One-on-One Champion
 - o NBA: Bryce Espinosa
 - o Big East: Mason

Andrzejewski
The camp featured an experienced coaching staff

that provided high-level instruction throughout the week. Coaches included Courtney Stanger, a former NCAA Division I standout; Tommy Loynd, a former Boston College assistant coach; Max Shepel, who will be playing college basketball; Mike Schmidt, a former Division I assistant coach; and Aaron Lorenzo, a former college basketball player.

Following the success of the first camp, Woodstock Academy will host another Woodstock Drills and Skills Basketball Camp from Aug. 3-5, giving young players another opportunity to improve their skills before the upcoming basketball season.

Air Line State Park Trail receiving \$40 million for multi-year improvement project

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

REGION — Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont has announced a significant federal funding investment in the Air Line State Park Trail, also known to many as simply the Connecticut Air Line Trail, a treasured piece of outdoor recreation which stretches fifty miles across Eastern Connecticut, including throughout the Quiet Corner.

Earlier this month, Lamont’s office announced the first installment of what is expected to be a five-year, \$40 million federally funded investment that will work to increase the utilization of the trail which has long been a source of hiking, biking, horseback riding and other outdoor activities. The trail is

also historically significant, previously serving as part of a straight-line thoroughway for trains connecting New York and Boston.

Funding for the project is provided through a multi-year federal Rural Health Transformation Program which was included in President Donald Trump’s “One Big Beautiful Bill Act.” Lamont made the announcement in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEEP) and the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS), revealing the trail would receive \$7.1 million through the first year of the funding.

“Outdoor recreation opportunities are a big part of the high quality of life residents enjoy in Connecticut,”

Lamont said. “We know the strong connection between physical and mental health, and the Air Line Trail is a tremendous resource our residents can utilize to unlock the health benefits of outdoor exercise. We appreciate this funding, which will help our residents better access this amazing trail.”

Other lawmakers from Hartford have also shared praise for the investment. State Sen. Jeff Gordon, who represents several Air Line Trail communities, posted his gratitude on social media.

“As a practicing physician and Co-Chair of the legislature’s bipartisan Rural Caucus, I know how important access to safe, free outdoor recreation is for the health of our communities. This funding will improve

the trail with smoother surfaces, better drainage, improved signage, more accessible entry points, and more,” wrote Gordon. “Rural families deserve high-quality opportunities to stay active and healthy close to home, and this investment is a big step forward.”

As the Senator stated, the funds will prioritize making the trail more accessible as a source of outdoor recreation to help promote healthy activities outside the home. CT DEEP is leading the charge, including hiring contractors and performing site examinations and preparations. The initiative will prioritize trail use assessments, clearing of vegetation and hazardous trees, outreach campaigns, and more.

Killingly Town Council appoints Brong to fill vacancy

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

KILLINGLY — The Killingly Town Council appointed its newest member on June 14, filling a vacancy left by the passing of John Labelle in April.

Jared Brong, a Democrat, was interviewed by the Town Council on July 7, and the Council approved his appointment a week later, swearing him in immediately following the unanimous vote.

During his interview, Brong explained that he grew up in Putnam and attended school in Killingly. After graduating, he served in the Army National Guard and attended Quinebaug Valley Community College, today known as Connecticut State Community College: Quinebaug Valley. Since moving his family to Killingly, Brong has shown a growing interest in local issues becoming a consistent presence at town meetings.

“I’ve been paying a lot more attention to everything that’s been happening this year,” Brong told the Council on July 7. “There’s been a lot of things making the local news, so I started coming to more meetings and just paying more attention. I’ve always considered public service in a way to utilize my skill set to help people and make the place

that I live better.” Brong said he believes the point of public service is to “do right by the people” which was reflected in his answers to interview questions, especially regarding his willingness to listen to the citizens on town issues.

Those responses impressed members of both parties on the Council. During the Town Council’s July 14 meeting where Brong’s appointment was confirmed, Republican Ulla Tiik-Barclay said she felt Brong would be a good fit for the Council.

“I thought Jared answered my questions very well, especially being on the spot,” she said. “They were very thoughtful and well-articulated. I think he did a good job. I think he’ll be an asset to the Council.”

Democrat Tony Giambattista also complimented Brong on his interview performance and commitment to local issues.

“He’s put in a lot of effort and has been to a lot of meetings. To take that step and be so dedicated, it’s a no-brainer for me,” he said.

Brong will fill the at-large seat until the next town election in November of 2027. It’s the second vacancy filled this year following the resignation of Jim Rivers, who was eventually succeeded by Adam Reynolds.

Interact Club helping TEEG



Interact co-presidents, Calleigh Levesque, left, and Mabel Perreault.

PUTNAM — The Putnam Rotary Club’s Interact Club is once again collecting backpack and school supplies for TEEG. Donations can be dropped off the YMCA in Putnam until Aug. 13 or you can

drop off the supplies directly to TEEG at 15 Thatcher St., N. Grosvenordale.

The Putnam Rotary Interact Club is a regional club for students 12 -18 from the towns of Eastford, Pomfret, Woodstock,

Putnam and Thompson. The focus is “Service Above Self.”

The Interact Club meets the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month from September through May. The first meeting for the

2026-2027 year is at 6:30 p.m. Sept. 8 at the Putnam Library at 200 School St.

For more information contact Rotarian Roberta Rocchetti - robertarocchetti4@gmail.com or text 860-933-8603.

Courtesy Photo

“Claws & Applause” launches call for performers and sponsors

PUTNAM — and now Claws & Applause: A Lip Sync Battle for Paws is officially calling on local performers, busi-

ness and community members to join the show! Taking place Friday, Aug. 28 at Montana Nights Axe Throwing in Putnam, this fundraising event will bring the community together for an unforgettable night of over-the-top lip sync performances, outrageous costumes, audience voting and friendly competition. And right now, organizers are looking for performers and sponsors ready to step into the spotlight! Individuals, groups, businesses, organizations and friends are invited to form a team, choose a song and put together a show-stopping lip sync performance. Whether performers go for hilarious, dramatic, glamorous or completely over-the-top, no actual singing talent is required, just creativity, enthusiasm and willingness to have fun for a great cause! No professional experience necessary. If you can commit to the bit, work a crowd and have fun, there is a place for you on the Claws & Applause stage! “We want people to come ready to laugh, cheer, compete and have an incredible night of fun, as we look to raise money to help shift our focus form constant crisis management to prevention and long-term care for the cats in and beyond our shelter” says event organizer Jennifer Lowell. With more than 400 cats currently in care, including those placed in foster homes, Paws Cat Shelter continues to face tremendous demand for rescue, rehabilitation and rehoming services. The event aims to raise critical funding for a spay and neuter initiative to help address the cycle

that contributes to overcrowded shelters in the first place. Local businesses and community partners are also invited to become part of the event through a variety of sponsorship opportunities. Sponsorships range from \$100 – \$2,000 and offer opportunities for recognition through event signage, promotional materials, VIP experiences, stage recognition and more. Sponsors can make a meaningful community impact while helping Paws Cat Shelter work toward a long-term solution. One Night. One Stage. All for the cats! Get involved today by forming a team, becoming a sponsor, purchasing tickets, voting for your favorite performers or making a donation. Paws Cat Shelter is dedicated to rescuing, rehabilitating and rehoming cats in need while promoting compassionate animal welfare throughout the community. Through the support of volunteers, donors and local advocates, the organization continues to provide lifesaving care and adoption opportunities for homeless cats.

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Egyptian bull god

5. Roman monetary unit

8. Santa's helper

11. Fictional Pink Floyd corporal

13. Sea eagle genus

14. Broad volcanic crater

15. Minneapolis suburb

16. Actual commercial worth (abbr.)

17. Exchange rate

18. Ethnic peoples in Guinea

20. Men's fashion accessory

21. Craft material

22. Offerings

25. Early

30. Large room

31. Soviet Socialist Republic

32. One who hauls

33. Shorthand for accepting

38. Promotional materials

41. Loss of memory

43. One who beheads

45. Photographers

48. Small, rich sponge cake

49. White clerical vestment

50. Partner to "oohed"

55. Abba __, Israeli politician

56. Zero

57. Owl monkey genus

59. Lace bug genus

60. Mild expression of surprise

61. Storage devices

62. Keyboard key

63. Make a mistake

64. One-time Korean president

CLUES DOWN

1. Bridge building degree

2. Expression of sorrow or pity

3. Large, stocky, lizard

4. Rumanian river

5. Missive

6. Stout-bodied moths

7. Brings out

8. Bird of prey

9. King of Thebes

10. Cleaving tool

12. African antelope

14. Three are particularly famous

19. Satisfy

23. C. European river

24. Dictator

25. Portion of (abbr.)

26. The 17th letter of the Greek alphabet

27. Consume food

28. Woman (French)

29. Scrape or wear away by friction

34. Popular vegetable

35. Pacific Standard Time

36. Brazilian state capital

37. Paddle

39. Cause to become insane

40. Drier and flakier

41. Mimic

42. ESPN host Kimes

44. One who moseys

45. Secret political clique

46. Behind the stern of a ship

47. Supernatural force

48. Sanctuary in Orthodox churches

51. Swiss river

52. Grayish white

53. Engrave

54. UNC's chief rival

58. Midway between south and southeast

PUZZLE SOLUTION

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Salve Regina University announces Dean's List

NEWPORT, R.I. — The following students were named to the Dean's List during the spring 2026 academic semester at Salve Regina University. To qualify for the Dean's List, students must earn a semester grade point average of 3.6 for full-time students completing at least 12 graded credits, or a semester grade point average of 3.8 for part-time students completing at least six credits. Ella Davis of Brooklyn Ella Mandeville of Dayville Kendall McCormack of Brooklyn Gianna Ormstead of Dayville Salve Regina University is a Catholic, coeducational institution of higher education founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1947. It offers rigorous, innovative academic programming in the liberal

arts tradition that prepares students to be global citizens and lifelong learners. More than 2,700 students from around the world are enrolled in Salve's 60+ academic programs, which include bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees along with graduate certificates and combined bachelor's/master's programs. Every undergraduate student engages in Salve Compass, a four-year experience that charts a personalized, values-based path connecting college to a successful, fulfilling career and life. The University is also home to the Pell Center for International Relations and Public Policy, a multi-disciplinary research center focused on the intersection of politics, policy and ideas. For more information visit salve.edu.

Vermont State congratulates Tommy Blevins on graduation

RANDOLPH CENTER, Vt. — Vermont State University is pleased to announce that Tommy Blevins, of Brooklyn, is a member of Vermont State University's Class of 2026. Blevins earned a Associate of Arts in Woodworking & Furniture Design. Congratulations to Tommy Blevins on this significant achievement!

Vermont State University provides a high-quality, flexible, and affordable education for students seeking associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees, certificates, and in-demand professional credentials. The university builds upon a history of public higher education in Vermont dating back to 1787. More information about Vermont State University can be found at: VermontState.edu.



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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.

Vermont State congratulates Isabel Porter for earning Dean's List honors!

RANDOLPH CENTER, Vt. — Vermont State University is pleased to recognize Isabel Porter, of Putnam, for earning Dean's List honors during the Spring 2026 semester. This distinction celebrates academic excellence and is awarded to students who maintain full-time enrollment while achieving a semester grade point average of 3.5 or higher. Vermont State University provides a high-quality, flexible, and affordable education for students seeking associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees, certificates, and in-demand professional credentials. The university builds upon a history of public higher education in Vermont dating back to 1787. More information about Vermont State University can be found at: VermontState.edu.

DMMA students earn promotion

DANIELSON — Thursday, June 16, six time Martial Arts Hall of Fame inductee and current US Martial Arts Team Member, 7th Dan Master Daryl Laperle announced the promotion of students in Danielson Martial Arts Academy’s most recent grading.

Hailey LaPorte - 3.5 Gup Green
Rebeca Castro-Sandoval - 3.5 Gup Green
Jeff Fugazzi Jr. - 3.5 Gup Green
Ziggy Fugazzi - 3.5 Gup Green
Clyde LaPorte - 4 Gup Green
Abby Napierata - 4.5 Gup Green
Madelyn Markley - 4.5 Gup Green
Chloe Markley - 5 Gup Purple
Christian Mello - 5.5 Gup Purple
Annabelle Mello - 6 Gup Purple
Avery Dietlin - 6 Gup Purple
Ainslee Gagne - 6 Gup Purple
Krisztian Toth - 6 Gup Purple
John Wisniewski Jr. - 6 Gup Purple
Linda Byrne - 6.5 Gup Blue
Noah Banda - 6.5 Gup Blue
Ella Dietlin - 6.5 Gup Blue
Dexter Gagner - 7 Gup Blue
Jaxton Burek - 7 Gup Blue
Jaiyden Randolph - 7 Gup Blue
Everett



Graff - 8 Gup Blue
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How new Fed Chair Warsh’s challenges and choices could shape markets

The new Chairman of the Federal Reserve Kevin Warsh faces a tough task. He oversees the Fed at a time when employment growth may be slowing, and President Trump would like to see lower interest rates. The problem: inflation remains elevated, boosted by tariffs, oil prices, and strong spending on artificial intelligence (AI). It’s quite a challenging position for the Fed’s new leader.

Let’s take a look at the tricky market environment he’s facing and the new leadership style he’s bringing to the job.

Employment’s solid, but may be slowing

The Federal Reserve has two separate but equal mandates: one is to ensure stable prices and the other is to maximize employment.

In June, the number of new jobs added to employers’ payrolls slowed markedly to 57,000, roughly half the 129,000 jobs added in May. Some analysts fear we’re starting to see companies use AI to replace employees.

The broad economy may also be slowing. In the first quarter, the economy, as measured by GDP, grew 2.1 percent, but the Atlanta Fed’s estimates second quarter GDP will dip to 1.3 percent.

Relatively high interest rates have restrained economic growth by making it expensive to buy a home or a car. The yield on the 10-year Treasury has risen from a low of 0.52 percent in July of 2020 to a recent 4.5 percent. The Treasury rate directly affects interest rates on all other loans, including the 30-year mortgage interest rate, which has more than doubled from roughly 3 percent in 2021 to 6.4 percent recently. As a result, the number of pre-existing homes purchased has fallen by half since the low-rate environment of 2020-2022.

Inflation remains elevated

With the economy decelerating, Federal Reserve officials might normally cut interest rates. But right now, their hands may be tied because of the Fed’s second mandate, to ensure stable prices. Inflation has remained well above the Federal Reserve’s 2 percent target and on the rise for the past year.

First, inflation accelerated because of President Trump’s tariffs. But analysts expected tariffs would have a one-time impact that would fade over time. Then oil prices rose due to the Iran conflict. The impact of higher oil prices was also expected to fade as both sides agreed to a truce and oil prices tumbled. Fighting recently reignited and, if it’s sustained, could lead to higher oil prices



FINANCIAL FOCUS
JIM ZAHANSKY
INVESTMENT ADVISER

once again.

Most recently, Fed officials have grown concerned that the AI boom has sparked inflation. Companies are spending billions of dollars to build data centers filled with computing equipment to run AI programs. The ripple effects have been widespread. AI-related spending has boosted demand for steel and electric generators, semiconductor chips and wiring, as well as the construction crews to build the facilities.

The Fed’s preferred inflation gauge has been running near 4 percent, twice its inflation target. Time may be up for those waiting to see if pricing pressures are transitory. At a recent conference, Chair Warsh said, “If there were people in households, the business sector, the financial markets, who thought that this central bank was gonna be comfortable with an inflation objective above 2 percent, I guess they’d be disappointed.”

His tough stance was welcomed by the markets after President Trump aggressively pushed the previous Fed Chair, Jerome Powell, to lower interest rates. Some feared that Warsh would do the

President’s bidding. But so far, it looks like he’ll be forging his own path.

Understanding a new communications style

At Chairman Warsh’s first Fed meeting in June, the Fed’s short-term interest rate target was left unchanged at 3.5 to 3.75 percent, and nine of 19 Fed officials indicated that they thought the Fed would increase rates at least one time before the end of the year. That was a sharp change from the prior meeting, when none of the Fed officials thought rates would increase by year-end.

In a departure from his predecessors, Chair Warsh did not opine on where interest rates would head over the course of the year, nor did the Fed provide any forward guidance. That too is the change from the Federal Reserve’s prior leadership.

The Warsh-led Fed also released a much briefer post-meeting statement than his predecessors and led a briefer post-meeting press conference. Some fear that if the Fed releases less information about its leaders’ thinking, future rate decisions will surprise the markets and lead

to more volatility. Uncertainty and volatility could, in turn, lead to higher interest rates. Time will tell.

Additional changes may also be afoot. Warsh set up five task forces to evaluate how the Fed communicates, uses its balance sheet, the quality of its data, the impact of technology on productivity and jobs, and the drivers of inflation. It’s an ambitious agenda for the economy’s new sheriff.

At WHZ, we’ll keep tabs on changes at the Federal Reserve as we continuously evaluate where markets are heading. Schedule a discovery session with us or call 860-928-2341 to see how we can help you and your family move forward with Absolute Confidence, Unwavering Partnership, For Life.

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Dean’s List honors announced at Tufts University

MEDFORD, Mass. — Tufts University recently announced the dean's list for the spring 2026 semester. Dean's list honors at Tufts University require a semester grade point average of 3.4 or greater. The following students were named to the dean's list:

Ben Gordon, Class of 2026, of Woodstock

Adam Tillinghast, Class of 2028, of Danielson

Zachary White, Class of 2026, of Pomfret Center

Tufts University, located on campuses in Boston, Medford/Somerville and Grafton, Mass., and in Talloires, France, is recognized among the premier research universities in the United States. Tufts enjoys a global reputation for academic excellence and for the preparation of students as leaders in a wide range of professions. A growing number of innovative teaching and research initiatives span all Tufts campuses, and collaboration among the faculty and students in the undergraduate, graduate, and profes-

sional programs across the university's schools is widely encouraged.

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BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

A new voice, earned through engagement

The passing of a public official creates more than an empty chair. It leaves behind unfinished work, interrupted relationships, and the difficult responsibility of choosing someone to continue serving the community. How a town fills that vacancy says a great deal about its values.

Killingly’s Town Council appears to have approached that responsibility thoughtfully.

When Jared Brong was appointed to fill the at-large seat left vacant by the death of John Labelle, the council did more than fill an opening. Members from both political parties publicly explained why they believed Brong deserved the opportunity. Their comments focused less on party affiliation and more on preparation, temperament, and commitment.

That distinction matters.

Too often, local government receives attention only when controversy erupts. Budget disputes, zoning battles, or political disagreements dominate headlines, creating the impression that civic life revolves around conflict. In reality, effective local government depends on something much less dramatic: ordinary residents who decide they want to become involved.

Brong’s own explanation of why he sought the appointment reflects a path that many communities would like to see more often. He described paying closer attention to town affairs, attending meetings regularly, and gradually realizing he wanted to use his skills to serve the place where he and his family live. That kind of engagement doesn’t happen overnight. It develops through observation, participation, and a willingness to learn before seeking leadership.

Equally encouraging was the response from council members themselves. Republicans and Democrats alike highlighted the same qualities: thoughtful answers, careful listening, and demonstrated interest through attendance at public meetings. While elected officials will inevitably disagree on policy, recognizing merit across party lines is something worth celebrating.

Local government works best when appointments are based on readiness rather than rhetoric.

There is also an important lesson here for residents who sometimes wonder whether attending council meetings or following local government really makes a difference. It does. Communities benefit when future leaders first spend time understanding how government operates before asking to become part of it. Listening is an often-overlooked qualification, yet it may be one of the most valuable.

Of course, an appointment is only a beginning. Brong now faces the same challenge that confronts every public official: translating good intentions into effective service. Residents will judge him not by his interview or his résumé, but by how he approaches difficult decisions, communicates with constituents, and works alongside colleagues over the coming months. That is exactly as it should be.

Likewise, the council deserves credit for conducting an open interview process and publicly discussing its reasoning before making the appointment. Transparency builds confidence, particularly when filling a vacancy outside the normal election cycle.

The ultimate accountability, however, remains with the voters. Brong will serve until the next municipal election in November 2027, when residents will have the opportunity to decide whether he has earned a full term. That balance between appointment and electoral accountability ensures that continuity in government does not come at the expense of public choice.

Communities often ask how to encourage more people to become involved in local government. The answer may be simpler than it seems. It starts with citizens who show up, pay attention, ask questions, and demonstrate a genuine interest in their town before seeking office.

Whether Jared Brong’s service proves successful remains to be seen. But his appointment offers a reminder that healthy local democracy depends on more than elections. It depends on engaged citizens who are willing to move from the audience to the council table, and on elected leaders willing to recognize that commitment wherever they find it.

Letter submission policy

Letters to the Editor must include the author’s name, address, and a day-time 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

Policies and price tags

To the Editor:

For the past several months, Democratic leaders have been talking about making life more affordable for American families. They have promised to lower everyday costs and ease the financial burden on working people. The problem is that many voters remember what happened during the previous administration, when inflation reached levels not seen in decades and the cost of groceries, housing, fuel, and other necessities climbed dramatically. If affordability is truly the priority, it’s reasonable to ask why those concerns weren’t addressed more aggressively when their party controlled the White House and the Senate. Today, many of the places with the highest housing costs, taxes, and overall cost of living have been governed by Democrats for years.

A recent CNBC analysis of state business climates and living costs highlights this contrast. Many of the nation’s most expensive states, including California, New York, Illinois, Washington, Oregon, and Hawaii, and our home state of Connecticut, are led by Democratic governors and legislatures. On the other hand, many of the states ranked as the most affordable are governed by Republicans. While geography and population growth certainly influence prices, public policy also plays an important role.

Housing provides a clear example. Lengthy permitting processes, restrictive zoning regulations, and higher construction costs can make it more difficult and expensive to build new homes. Energy policy also affects household budgets. States with higher fuel taxes and more costly electricity often leave families paying significantly more just to drive to work or keep the lights on. No political party has a monopoly on good ideas, and every state faces unique challenges. However, it is difficult to ignore the relationship between long-term policy decisions and the rising cost of living in many Democrat-led states.

Campaign promises are easy to make, but governing has measurable results. Before accepting claims about which party will make life more affordable, voters should look beyond the slogans and examine the outcomes. Policies have consequences, and the numbers tell a story that deserves careful consideration before Election Day. The next time you hear a Democrat campaigning on affordability, remember who oversees the most expensive communities in the country. Facts matter, and so do policies.

Michael A. Douglas
Brooklyn

Earth — it’s yellow!

To the Editor:

On Wednesday, July 15, I was up by 6 a.m. and spent some time reading on my back deck, enjoying the early morning chorus of birds. Knowing the day would heat up quickly, I went for an early bike ride. By 8:30 a.m., I was showered, refreshed, and feeling good. The Air Quality Index (AQI) on my phone read 81—Moderate, about 50 points higher than Woodstock’s typical level.

By 11 a.m., I was outside with my son when he asked, “Do you smell that?” With that cue, I immediately noticed a faint but unpleasant odor in the air. Then he said, “Dad, our house is yellow.”

I looked back, and he was right. Our house is actually cream-colored, but at that moment it had taken on a strange yellow glow. In fact, everything around us was tinted an eerie yellow. I checked my phone again. The AQI had climbed to 137—Unhealthy (for sensitive groups).

I hadn’t even realized eastern Canada was burning again, as it had two years ago—the first time I had ever heard of wildfire smoke reaching us in this way.

After about ten minutes outside, Ben said the smell was giving him a headache, so he went inside. Later, I worked in my garden wearing a COVID face mask. As I write this at 10:21 a.m. the following day, the AQI is at 238—Very Unhealthy (for everyone). These conditions are forecasted to last for several weeks.

Since yesterday, I’ve been thinking about the things today’s children are growing up to accept as normal—things that are anything but normal.

We should be deeply concerned.

The warnings are no longer abstract. They are real, visible, and increasingly impossible to ignore. Our natural world is showing unmistakable signs of distress. Yet many people continue to dismiss environmental protection or remain indifferent despite the growing evidence of our planet’s declining health.

If you’re still skeptical about climate change, are you also unconcerned that eastern Canada now experiences massive wildfire seasons year after year? That used to be something associated mainly with the western U.S. and Canada.

Are you unconcerned that most children today are born with PFAS—often called “forever chemicals”—already in their blood?

Are you unconcerned that microplastics now fall from the sky, circulate through our bloodstream, and accumulate in our brain tissue?

Let’s do permanent standard time instead

To the Editor:

Permanent daylight savings time has picked up some traction in Washington, and I remember when the idea of the whole year being more like summer sounded like a cool idea, but nowadays I’m not so sure. We also tried this in the 70s and stopped it rather quickly due to mornings being too dark. I think I’d rather have us retire our clock changes via permanent standard time instead.

Permanent daylight savings time comes with the baggage of late sunrises in the winter. Depending on where you are in the time zone you might be looking at not seeing any sunlight at all until after 8 in the morning. As someone who’s grumbled driving to work in the dark thinking “it’s still dark out - I should still be sleeping” I think I’d rather flip to the other extreme and see it light at 4:30. I’ve worked enough night shift to have light blocker curtains year round, but it would feel nice to head out and feel like

Democracy works best when we show up to vote

To the Editor:

Connecticut voters will decide 18 primary races that will shape the November ballot — from governor down to probate judge. Yet primaries like this one often draw only a fraction of eligible voters, meaning a small, motivated group can determine who represents each political party in the fall.

This year’s slate is significant. Democrats have primaries for governor, one congressional seat, nine state legislative seats, and two probate judge seats. Republicans have primaries for two congressional seats and three state legislative seats. At the top of the ticket, incumbent Governor Ned Lamont faces a challenge from State Representative Josh Elliott for the Democratic nomination — a race that has big consequences in the November election.

If you’re a registered Democrat or Republican, you’re eligible to vote in your party’s primary. Here’s how to make sure your voice counts:

- Check your registration and district online via the Secretary of the State’s Voter Registration Lookup: portal.dir.ct.gov/sots/LookUp.aspx
- Vote during Early Voting: Aug. 3, 5, 7, 8, and 9 (10 a.m.–6 p.m.) and Aug. 4 and 6 (8 a.m.–8 p.m.)
- Vote on Primary day: Tuesday, Aug. 11, 6 a.m.–8 p.m.
- Request an Absentee Ballot to Vote: Available

The Putnams in the press



KILLINGLY
AT
300
MARGARET
WEAVER

America 250 Killingly, Saturday, Aug. 8, 1 p.m. Musick of the Revolution in New England with Richard Franklin Donahue. Killingly Historical Center. 196 Main St. Richard will perform a collection of “New Songs” & Hymns that were published during the American Revolution from the Stamp Act through the British Surrender at Yorktown. Free. All are welcome. Sponsored by the Killingly Historical Society.

Putnam Public Library. 200 School St. Baseball’s Own Civil War: 1848-1865. Wednesday, Aug. 12. 6-7:30 p.m. “An exploration of the early days of ‘base ball’ and the conflict between the 1848 ‘Knickerbocker’ (New York) game rules, and the 1858 ‘Town Ball’ (Massachusetts) style of play. Learn how the American Civil War helped to settle the debate as to which variant would become our national pastime. Co-sponsored by the Aspinock Historical Society.

I’ve been busy writing about signers of the Declaration of Independence and this area in 1776. I thought I’d catch up on what was happening conflict-wise between the colonists, now independent Americans, and the British troops, especially in terms of what was probably affecting Connecticut. A Google search (AI) provided a summary of July, 1776. While reading this, keep in mind that at the time of the Revolution, transportation by water was by far easier than by land. Major rivers served as “main highways.” “In July 1776, New York Harbor became the staging ground for the largest British overseas military expedition in history up to that point. This massive buildup aimed to seize New York City, control the Hudson River, and cut off New England from the rest of the rebellious colonies. On July 2, General William Howe arrived from Halifax with a fleet of 130 ships and landed 10,000 troops on Staten Island, completely unopposed. By mid-July, his brother, Admiral Lord Richard Howe, arrived with a massive fleet from Britain. Over the coming weeks, thousands of additional British regulars and Hessian mercenaries poured into Staten Island. “During the American Revolution, a Hessian was a German auxiliary soldier hired by the British Crown to fight the Continental Army. While strictly classified as auxiliaries or leased troops rather than traditional mercenaries, they made up roughly a quarter of British land forces in North America.” Approximately 30,000 were hired to fight during the American Revolution. (George Washington’s Mount Vernon). General George Washington watched this buildup from Manhattan and Brooklyn, scrambling to fortify the city with roughly 19,000 poorly trained continental troops.” Troops from our area would be sent to the defense of New York within a few months.

I have subscriptions to several newspaper databases, so thought it would be interesting to see if I could find any references to Israel Putnam and/or his family during July, 1776. The first I found was from The Constitutional Gazette from New York, N.Y., of July 31, 1776, “Found between this city and Elizabeth Town, a parchment, containing some continental bills, and accounts: Any person owning and describing, may have them, by applying to me (at General Putnam’s quarters) and paying charges.” I. Putnam, jun. Did you know that Israel Putnam’s son accompanied his father during the early years of the

Lisa Arends
Brooklyn

LETTERS CONTINUED page A5

Turn To WEAVER page A5

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR CONTINUED

A presidential address should unite, not further divide

To the Editor:

Presidential prime time addresses ordinarily have been reserved for events of monumental national importance, such as wars, disasters and tragedies. It is a unique opportunity for the head of state to calm and educate fellow citizens. It is a way to bring people together.

Last week, there was much to report including the resumption of a war, another wave of ICE killings, a new cycle of rising gasoline prices, and the assault on communities by giant data centers. There was a chance to explain an apparent closure of the Epstein investigations and to defend his AG nominee who spurns the victims. He could have taken a stab defending himself against accusations of financial misbehavior. He could have clarified his decision to place a 25 percent tariff on Brazil or withdrawing from the trade agreements with our two biggest partners, Mexico and Canada. He could have even given an update on his reflection pool project and cleared up why photographs show no cuts in the paint.

Mr. Trump, however, veered off on another tangent, yet again trying to litigate the fabricated pretense that he was swindled out of a 2020 victory. He offered what amounted to be a series of half-truths, rehearsed hearsay, and blatant lies. He also emphasized that the system is vulnerable. True. But this was not a sudden discovery. Foreign and domestic groups certainly would love to hack into not only our

election machines, but also our banking system, the energy grid, and healthcare data. That is why we have multiple barriers to prevent this. His idea of making the act of voting exceedingly cumbersome does nothing to protect the information. There is also not a shred of evidence that illegal immigrants routinely vote. But taking Trump at his word, one would have several pressing questions.

First of course would be that he has actually won the Presidential contest not once but twice. Were his wins manufactured by an agency wanting to see Trump in office? He of course was in charge of overseeing the 2020 election. Is he upset that he goofed on that one?

And if elections were so easy to manipulate, why is he griping over just the presidential competition? Doesn't that infer that the Republican victories in the Senate and the House were equally invalid? Why would a scheme to elect a Democratic leader fail to allow for a Democratic legislature to support their policies?

That, of course, is because his claims are total rubbish. Nary an investigation has uncovered significant maleficence. It is also why likeminded parties such as FOX news and Mike (My pillow guy) Lindell are out hundreds of millions of dollars because of similar malicious slander.

Trump pointed out that inflation was dropping at a record rate. Yes. Last month, because

of falling energy prices, inflation did dive as the President backed off and signed an agreement with Iran. But as we can all see, prices are back up as the war is back on. Expect next month's inflation to follow suit.

The President noted that the stock market is at a record high. Also true. But as the top 1 percent of rich households account for 50 percent of all investments, it does little for the majority, especially since 40 percent of Americans own no stocks. It's also sobering to know that the 1 percent of the wealthiest hold more stock value than the bottom 90 percent combined. This includes the Trump family and friends. So yes, hurray for the stock market but it is a vast minority that is actually benefitting.

The fact is that between 49-70 percent of Americans are struggling financially. Home ownership is rapidly becoming a pipe dream. What's more Social Security will soon be running on fumes. Yet despite these challenges, Trump chooses to make election integrity his signature issue while bleeding taxpayer money on an unneeded war.

Trump's portrayal of Socialism as

Communism, echoing the Red Scare strategy that is mentor, Roy Cohn along with Senator McCarthy, foisted on the country in the 1950s is another effort to mislead. Social Security, along with Medicare and Medicaid are the largest social programs in the world. They are not scams. Guaranteeing food and housing security, healthcare for all, childcare, and higher education are good things. Redistributing a small percentage of our nation's massive wealth will not even inconvenience Trump's rich backers but will help guarantee that no American suffers.

Perhaps the most inflammatory and un-leaderlike accusation was to suggest that the only way to win under our current election system is to cheat. Why anyone would believe a convicted felon and sexual predator is painfully perplexing. He has made billions bilking our country through the insider knowledge and influence of his office.

America can do better. America must do better.

Lee Wesler
Woodstock

Why is anyone still listening to Trump?

To the Editor:

After suffering through Trump's latest address to the nation, the same old question came to mind — why would anyone vote for this clown? As usual, most of what he said was either a gross exaggeration or a blatant lie and defied logic. If our election system is as corrupt and rigged as he stated, then I guess the two elections he won were also corrupt and rigged? It seems he believes elections are rigged only when he loses. That's the thought process of a whiny ten-year-old.

The timing of the speech was also interest-

ing. His approval ratings are "tanking," and Republican candidates nation-wide fear he'll drag them down in the midterms. The senseless war he started is a global fiasco, and as more U.S. troops are dying, Americans at home struggle to keep their heads above water. All that (and plenty more) while the Trumps use the presidency to increase their net worth by billions.

"Making America Great Again" — for who?

Todd Patrie
Pomfret Center

Stay in touch

To the Editor:

In our small towns in the Green Valley, it's easy for colorful local characters who don't fit into our everyday hustle and bustle to fall off our screens from time to time. The ones who choose their own road. Who we lose track of occasionally. The ones we assume are in someone else's sphere.

Then, for whatever reason, they reappear. Usually after a life event - birth, marriage, death. And we realize how much we have missed.

As I head into my 70s, that has been happening more and more.

Recently, my cousin Joe Norton checked out. My dad, Joe Jackson, and his mom, Florence, were brother and sister. They grew up in

Goodyear (Rogers), as did Joe and I. Our paths diverged then merged at his end. After his passing, one of Joe's life long friends, Steve Cosgrove, now of New Hampshire, shared his memories of Joe in the Villager.

Steve was kind enough to fill me in on much of Joe's life through high school and beyond. I could give him the family history and local background that made Joe who he was. A wonderful shared experience.

As great as these discussions were, they just made me realize how much I had missed. Stay in touch as much as you can whenever you can.

Turns out you were a hell of a guy, Joe!

Dan Jackson
Killingly

WEAVER
continued from page A4
(Issue 105, p.4; genealogybank.com). That little ad made me curious about Israel, Jr.

Israel Putnam, Junior was born Jan. 28, 1739-40 in Salem Village, Massachusetts but soon resided in Pomfret when his parents moved here. "When his father hastened to Cambridge in 1775, Israel (junior) raised a company of volunteers and joined the army shortly, where he remained under his father's orders until the arrival of Washington. Upon the appointment of (his father) Col. Israel Putnam as Major-General, Capt. Israel Putnam was appointed as an aide (22 July). In this capacity he (also) served on the Hudson, but after three years' service he retired to his farm. During the time he was in the army he acquitted himself with distinction." Israel Putnam, Jr.'s son, who was born in 1777, was named George Washington Putnam. The biographical sketch gives no particulars but refers to Israel Junior as Col. Israel Putnam. It continues, "When the Ohio company was formed, Col. Israel Putnam joined the company, and with two of his sons, crossed the mountains with a wagon load of farming utensils. Mrs. Putnam remained on the farm in Pomfret..." He settled in the new town of Belpre, Ohio and in 1790 returned to Pomfret to take his family there. (North American Family Histories; A History of the Putnam Family in England & America...) p. 180.; Ancestry.com).

Despite the serious conditions of the War, the papers of the time contained a few ads for a brief respite with levity. The New York Gazette and the Weekly Mercury of Monday, July 15, 1776 contained an ad for copies of "A Tragi-Comedy of Five Acts, containing twenty-six scenes... The Fall of British Tyranny, or American Liberty Triumphant, the First Campaign. A few of the scenes included "A very moving scene on the death of Doctor Warren, etc. in a chamber near Boston, the morning of the battle of Bunker Hill"; A patriotic scene in the camp at Cambridge, between the Generals Washington, Lee and Putnam, etc.; two very laughable scenes between the Boatswain, two Sailors, and the Cook...; A much-admired performance, truly dramatic, interspersed with wit, humour, (sic) burlesque, and serious matter which cannot fail of affording abundant entertainment to readers of every disposition... For sale by John Anderson at Beekman's Slip (price 2 shillings and Six-pence)."

My guess is that many of you have been enjoying backyard barbecues with plenty of hot dogs and hamburgers. I

thought it would be fun to look up the origin of the hot dog (frankfurter). The National Hot Dog and Sausage Council had this to say, "Sausage is one of the oldest forms of processed food, having been mentioned in Homer's Odyssey as far back as the 9th Century B.C. Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany, is traditionally credited with originating the frankfurter. However, this claim is disputed by those who assert that the popular sausage - known as a 'dachshund' or 'little-dog' sausage - was created in the late 1600's by Johann Georghehner, a butcher, living in Coburg, Germany. According to this report, Georghehner later traveled to Frankfurt to promote his new product. In 1987 the city of Frankfurt, Germany celebrated the 500th birthday of the hot dog in that city. It's said that the frankfurter was developed there in 1487, five years before Christopher Columbus set sail for the new world. The people of Vienna (Wien), Austria, point to the term 'wiener' to prove their claim as the birthplace of the hot dog. As it turns out, it is likely that the North American hot dog comes from a widespread common European sausage brought here by butchers of several nationalities. Also in doubt is who first served the dachshund sausage with a roll. One report says a German immigrant sold them, along with milk rolls and sauerkraut, from a push cart in New York City's Bowery during the 1860's. In 1871, Charles Feltman, a German baker opened up the first Coney Island hot dog stand selling 3,684 dachshund sausages in a milk roll during his first year in business. The 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago brought hordes of visitors who consumed large quantities of sausages sold by vendors. People liked this food that was easy to eat, convenient and inexpensive. Hot dog historian Bruce Kraig, Ph.D., retired professor emeritus at Roosevelt University, says the Germans always ate the dachshund sausages with bread. Since the sausage culture is German, it is likely that Germans introduced the practice of eating the dachshund sausages, which we today know as the hot dog, nestled in a bun." (https://www.hot-dog.org/culture/hot-dog-history). Do check the link if you're interested in more. It's a fun read.

Margaret M. Weaver Killingly Municipal Historian, July 2026. 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 www.facebook.com/killinglyhistoricalsociety. For Windham County Transcripts, visit https://killingly.historyarchives.online.



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Courtesy Photos

Members of Hampton, Connecticut, Cub Scout Pack 93 and Pack 21 of Putnam went bowling at the Norwich Bowling and Entertainment Center in Norwich on Sunday, July 19. Field trips like this are just some of the fun and active things Cub Scouts in northeastern Connecticut do all year long, guided by trained and experienced adults. The Cub Scout program welcomes boys and girls ages five through ten. To join, call John Ryan at (860) 928-5873 and leave a message.



Courtesy Photos

Putnam Cub Scout Pack 21 beat the heat by making their own ice cream when they held the regular weekly pack meeting on Wednesday, July 15 at their chartered organization, the Albert J. Breault VFW Post 1523. Making ice cream is just one of the fun and active things that Pack 21's Cub Scouts do all year long, guided by trained and experienced adults. Pack 21 welcomes boys and girls ages five through ten. To join, call John Ryan, at (860) 928-5873.



American Martial Arts Center students earn spots on U.S. Martial Arts New England Team

FOSTER, R.I. — American Martial Arts Center, Foster, R.I., is proud to announce that four of its dedicated students have been selected as new members of the U.S. Martial Arts New England Team, marking a significant achievement for both the athletes and the school.

The students — Master Matt Yaskovic, Master Sarah Carlson, Lexi Carlson, and Noah Lombardy — earned their places on the regional team through their outstanding performances, dedication to training, and commitment to excellence in martial arts. Their selection recognizes years of hard work, discipline, and perseverance.

Representing the New England Team gives these martial artists the opportunity to compete against some of the nation's top athletes while continuing to develop their skills and sportsmanship. Their achievement reflects not only individual determination but also the high standards of instruction



and mentorship provided at American Martial Arts Center.

"We are incredibly proud of these students," said Grandmaster Ken Saucier. "Their commitment, respect, and work ethic have earned them this opportunity, and we look forward to watching them represent our school and New England with pride."

American Martial Arts Center has long emphasized character development alongside technical excellence, teaching students the values of confidence, respect, perseverance, and leadership. The selection of four team members is a testament to the school's dedication to developing exceptional martial artists both on and off the mat.

As they prepare for upcoming competitions and training events, the entire American Martial Arts Center community congratulates these outstanding students and wishes them continued success as members of the U.S. Martial Arts New England Team.



Courtesy Photos

On Monday, July 20, Cub Scout Pack 21 of Putnam joined with dozens of other Cub Scouts when they started a week of Cub Country Day Camp at the June Norcross Webster Scout Reservation in Ashford. The Cubs did many fun and educational things on their first day, including learning how to properly fold and display the American flag and how to hit their targets safely on the BB gun range. They'll be there through this Friday. Going to summer camp is something Pack 21 Cub Scouts look forward all year long. Certainly, summer camp is important, but it's just one of the fun and exciting things Pack 21 does throughout the year, guided by trained and experienced adults. Pack 21 welcomes boys and girls ages five through ten. To join, call John Ryan at (860) 928-5873 and leave a message.

Pomfret Historical Society hosts program on “Witnessing Hidden Patriots”

POMFRET — On Aug. 1, the Pomfret Historical Society (PHS) will host a program about the military legacy of one Connecticut family from the Revolutionary War to World War II. The program will take place at Pomfret’s historic Old Town House, 11 Town House Dr., at 3 p.m.

Pat Wilson Pheanious of Ashford will share the journey of her family from an enslaved couple in Guilford to her father, Lt. Col. Bertram Wadsworth Wilson, a Tuskegee Airman who served in WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. The family military legacy and their commitment to education and Civil Rights is an American story deserving a place in the 250th celebration of the Declaration of Independence.

A Connecticut native and E.O. Smith graduate, Pat Wilson Pheanious holds degrees in English Literature, Social Work, and Law from the University of Connecticut. A lawyer since 1981, her career has spanned academia, social service administration, and public policy. She served as Connecticut’s Commissioner of Social Services (1999–2007) and represented Ashford, Tolland, and Willington in the Connecticut House of Representatives (2018–2022).

Pheanious’ commitment to education about Black History is deeply personal. She had long cherished her father’s legacy as a Tuskegee Airman but had no idea that her history reached far into America’s past in pre-revolutionary Connecticut. However, in 2017, research by The Witness Stones Project founder Dennis Culliton revealed five generations of her family history that had been lost to time. That discovery reshaped



Tuskegee Airmen briefing before a mission.

her life and inspired a new direction in public service. Pat became Chair of the Witness Stones Project Board in 2019 and its Executive Director in 2024. In September 2025, she led the Project’s transition to Historic New England, where she became Director of the Stopping

Stones Program. The Program now includes the Witness Stones Project as its educational arm. As Director of the Stopping Stones Program, Pheanious works with communities across the country to research, acknowledge, and commemorate the

lives of enslaved people through permanent memorials that restore their names, honor their humanity, and recognize the essential role their labor played in building towns, institutions, and prosperity throughout the North and across the nation.

“Witnessing Hidden

Patriots from the Revolution to the Tuskegee Airmen” is a personal testimony about finding one’s place in American history and a lesson for all of us about what it means to be an American. The program is free and was funded by an America 250 grant from

The Last Green Valley. Donations to support the renovations in The Old Town House are always welcome. Arrive early for parking and refreshments. For more information contact Donna Dufresne windsong@snet.net

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University of Wisconsin announces spring graduates

MADISON, Wisc. — More than 9,100 students, including Tatum Fisher of Pomfret (who earned a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism) and Will Pollard of Pomfret Center (who earned a Doctor of Law), earned degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in May 2026. The university held its Spring 2026 Commencement ceremony for doctoral, MFA, and medical professional candidates at the Kohl Center on Friday, May 8 and its ceremony for undergraduate, law, and other Master's degree candidates at Camp Randall Stadium on Saturday, May 9.

Local students named to University of Wisconsin Dean's List

MADISON, Wisc. — The University of Wisconsin-Madison has recognized students named to the Dean's List for the spring semester of the 2025-2026 academic year, including Tatum Fisher of Pomfret.

Students who achieve at a high level academically are recognized by the dean of their school or college at the close of each semester. To be eligible for the Dean's List, students must complete a minimum of 12 graded degree credits in that semester. Each university school or college sets its own GPA requirements for students to be eligible to receive the distinction.

To view an online listing, visit <https://registrar.wisc.edu/deanslist/>.

Here are the students from your circulation area who have received this honor.

UW-Madison was ranked the #2 public university in the United States by Time magazine in 2026. With public service as its guiding principle, UW-Madison's

Tufts University announces spring graduates

MEDFORD, Mass. — More than 3,600 students across all schools graduated from Tufts University on May 17 during a university-wide commencement ceremony that featured the awarding of honorary degrees to a number of academic, business, and civic leaders making a positive impact on the world. The following students were among those who graduated:

Ben Gordon of Woodstock
Zachary White of Pomfret Center
Tufts University, located on campuses in Boston, Medford/Somerville and Grafton, Mass., and in

students, staff, and faculty engage in a world-class education while solving real-world problems. For more information, visit <http://www.wisc.edu>.

Talioires, France, is recognized among the premier research universities in the United States. Tufts enjoys a global reputation for academic excellence and for the preparation of students as leaders in a wide range of professions. A growing number of innovative teaching and research initiatives span all Tufts campuses, and collaboration among the faculty and students in the undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs across the university's schools is widely encouraged.

Vermont State students earn Dean's List honors

RANDOLPH CENTER, Vt. — Vermont State University is pleased to recognize Wyatt Robbie of Woodstock and Tommy Blevins of Brooklyn for earning Dean's List honors during the Spring 2026 semester.

This distinction celebrates academic excellence and is awarded to students who maintain full-time enrollment while achieving a semester grade point average of 3.5 or higher.

Vermont State University provides a high-quality, flexible, and affordable education for students seeking associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees, certificates, and in-demand professional credentials. The university builds upon a history of public higher education in Vermont dating back to 1787. More information about Vermont State University can be found at: VermontState.edu.



Courtesy Photo

NEWEST ROTARIANS

The Putnam Rotary Club recently welcomed two new members. From left: Putnam Rotary Club President Martha Parquette, new Rotarian Rebecca Theriaque, new Rotarian Kristine Tartaro, and Past President Kathy Kirk.

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Dunn Marketing’s brand refresh for Prue Law Group earns 2026 Communicator Award of Distinction

KILLINGLY — Dunn Marketing has been honored with a 2026 Communicator Award of Distinction in the Campaign – Brand Redesign or Refresh category for its work with The Prue Law Group, P.C. Dunn Marketing’s work for the Windham County law firm helped to reposition it from a respected regional practice into a modern, full-service firm with expanded reach across eastern and central Connecticut. The honor is one of three Communicator Awards earned this year by Dunn Marketing and its clients.

The Communicator Awards is one of the largest and most competitive recognition programs honoring excellence, effectiveness, and innovation in marketing and communications. The 32nd Annual Communicator Awards drew more than 3,000 entries from ad agencies, in-house creative teams, design firms, and public relations professionals around the world, with winners selected by The Academy of Interactive & Visual Arts (AIVA), an invitation-only body of



Laura Dunn, CEO & Chief Brand Strategist, Dunn Marketing, with Marci Seney, Vice President, Client Services, Dunn Marketing.

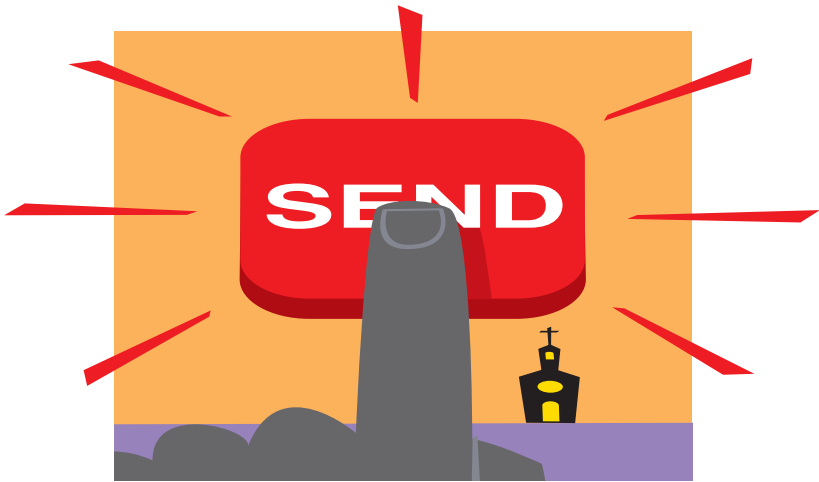
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We’d Love To Hear From You!

more than 1,100 industry leaders from organizations including JPMorgan Chase & Co., FedEx, Netflix, National Geographic Society, and others.

A brand built to grow with its region

Dunn Marketing partnered with The Prue Law Group beginning in late 2024, when the more than 45-year-old firm was preparing for a new chapter: growing the estate and business law arms of its practice and expanding its presence beyond its core base in Windham County into the surrounding region, all while protecting the trusted, person-centered reputation it had built since 1980.

The resulting work included a refreshed logo and visual identity, a new brand color palette and voice, a rebuilt website, updated social media presence, refreshed print and digital advertising, and a brand video, along with the strategic research, audience personas, and content planning needed to guide it all. The rollout launched in April 2025.

“The Prue Law Group has spent more than four decades earning their clients’ trust, and our job was to make sure that trust came through in every new brand interaction, even as we positioned the firm for growth in new markets,” said Laura Dunn, CEO and

Chief Brand Strategist at Dunn Marketing. “Seeing that work recognized by the Communicator Awards is meaningful, but what we’re really proud of is what it did for our client and the families and business owners they serve,” Dunn said.

In the first full year following the rebrand, The Prue Law Group saw a 13 percent increase in new case files compared to the prior year, including a 93 percent increase in business law cases and a 13 percent increase in estate law cases. The firm also saw an approximate 22 percent increase in revenue, a 57 percent increase in digital ad clicks, and more than double the social media engagement, year over year.

“This recognition validates exactly what we set out to do with Dunn Marketing, and that is to build a brand that reflects more than four decades of history while opening the door for the next generation of clients,” said Attorney Patrick Prue, founder of The Prue Law Group. “We’re very proud of what this brand represents and grateful to the Dunn Marketing team for helping us tell our story in a way that resonates with both the families who have trusted us for decades and the ones who are just getting to know us.”

A strong showing across the agency’s client roster

The Prue Law Group honor comes alongside two additional 2026 Communicator Awards of Distinction earned by Dunn Marketing in partnership with client WHZ Strategic Wealth Advisors: one in the Advertising Campaigns – Financial Services category for WHZ’s television campaign, “Absolute Confidence. Unwavering Partnership. For Life.,” and a second in the Publications – White Paper category for the consumer guide Smart Strategies to Maximize Generational Wealth. WHZ and Dunn Marketing announced those honors separately.

“Three wins across two very different client partners, in three different categories, speaks to the range of work our team takes on every day,” Dunn said. “Whether it’s a law firm building a modern, regional identity or a wealth management firm connecting with clients on some of the most personal decisions they’ll make, our approach is the same: start with empathy and build a brand people trust.”

For more information about Dunn Marketing and its Empathy-Driven Brand Building™ approach to marketing for clients across healthcare, education, finance, law, and the nonprofit sector, visit dunnmarketing.com.





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