We must roll with new technology or technology will roll over us.

PUTNAM VILLAGER

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John Rice

Notable Thompson volunteer John Rice passes away

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

THOMPSON — The Thompson community is mourning the loss of one if it's most fervent volunteers, John Rice, who passed away on Oct. 23 at the age of 90.

Rice was well known for his strong commitment to the town of Thompson, where he graduated from high school in the village of North Grosvenordale. The Army veteran spent most of his adult life-giving back to the community that helped raise him as a member of several commissions and committees and a contributor to numerous local organizations and projects.

According to his obituary, Rice was a life member of the Valley Springs Sportsman Club where he helped organize and run the annual fishing derby often taking pride in providing prizes and encouragement to local youth. He served with the Community Fire Department, and was a powerful force in helping enhance and maintain Thompson's infrastructure and history.

Rice served on the Town of Thompson's Building Committee and Planning Board and with the Thompson Historical Society. He was also a Past President and Sexton of the East Thompson Cemetery Association.

Following his passing, the Historical Society posted a tribute to Rice thanking him for his many years of commitment to preserving the story of Thompson.

"We're very saddened to learn of John's passing. Always with a smile and willing to lend a hand no matter the task. He helped us with so many things - for the betterment of the Society and our community. He will be missed dearly by many," the Society wrote.

One of Rice's most prominent contributions to the town was his role in establishing a new home for the Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group, better known as TEEG. Rice served as the chair of the agency's Building Committee as they worked to create a new campus adjacent to the Thompson Public Schools. Their Thatcher Road facility, which is still in use today, opened in 2012.

In 2018, the agency dedicated the building to Rice as the John Rice Community Center, forever acknowledging his role in bringing the facility to fruition. Rice continued to be a strong supporter of the agency until his passing.

Following his passing, TEEG posted a short tribute to their social media page.

"The TEEG family would like to send our thoughts to the family of John Rice. His heart and generosity were so appreciated by us all. You will be truly missed by all of us here. He was a true gift to us and will be missed daily," the agency stated.

Rice was Thompson's 2006 Volunteer of the Year, an annual town award presented to someone who contributes their own time and resources to making Thompson a better place.

In 2012, he was honored by SafeCo Insurance as one of 15 Community Heroes, voted on by the public, and earned the Northeastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce Civic Achievement Award in 2013.

John Rice leaves behind a legacy few could match in any community. Through his dedication and personal contributions, he helped preserve Thompson's history, resources, and facilities and played many roles in helping Thompson continue to be a strong, bonded community.

Rice's family asks that donations in his memory be made to TEEG at P.O. Box 664, N. Grosvenordale, CT 06255.

Killingly Memorial School earns School of Distinction recognition for third consecutive year

KILLINGLY — Killingly Public Schools is proud to announce that Killingly Memorial School (KMS) has been recognized by the Connecticut State Department of Education as a School of Distinction for the third consecutive year through Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability System. The recognition highlights the school's continued commitment to academic excellence, student growth, and success for all learners.

The designation places Killingly Memorial School among a select group of schools across Connecticut whose performance demonstrates exceptional outcomes and sustained progress. The achievement reflects the dedication of KMS educators, staff, students, families, and community partners who work together each day to support student learning and achievement.

"This recognition is a tribute to the remarkable commitment of our teachers, support staff, students, and families," said Tina Chahanovich, Principal of Killingly Memorial School. "Earning School of Distinction status for a third consecutive year speaks to the culture of high expectations, collaboration, and care that exists throughout our school community. I am incredibly proud of our staff and students for their unwavering focus on growth and achievement."

The recognition also underscores the broader commitment of Killingly Public Schools to continuous improvement and student success across the district.

"Our entire Killingly community should be proud of this accomplishment," said Paul Haughey, Superintendent of Schools for Killingly Public Schools. "Receiving this distinction for three consecutive years is a testament to the outstanding leadership at Killingly Memorial School and the dedication of every educator who works tirelessly to ensure students are challenged, supported, and prepared for future success. This achievement reflects the strong culture of teaching and learning that continues to grow throughout Killingly Public Schools."

Killingly Board of Education Chairperson Susan Lannon said, "As Chair of the Killingly Board of Education, I am filled with pride and gratitude as we celebrate this remarkable achievement. Earning School of Distinction

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Killingly makes security changes following string of Swatting incidents

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

KILLINGLY — The Killingly Board of Education has a renewed focus on security after the district fell victim to a series of false threats over the course of last school year.

While school security has always been a priority for the district, the past year has been challenging as the schools fell victim to a series of swatting calls – the act of making a false emergency report to law enforcement.

At least one individual, an unnamed 14-year-old, has been arrested in connection to the incidents which are designed to interrupt the school day or draw police to the school despite no actual threat being imminent. Swatting calls are often phoned in to either the school or the police, causing lockdowns and impacting students' peace of mind.

As a result, officials in the Killingly School District have taken measures to better prepare for how to identify and respond to swatting calls in the moment in order to reduce disruption to the school day while ensuring proper response to all credible threats.

District officials appeared before the Town Council in October where Assistant Superintendent Andrea Drake said there has been a large focus in the new school year on district safety and partnerships with town officials and law enforcement.

Part of that focus has included professional development specifically focused on swatting calls and responding to outside threats.

"All principals throughout the district and building secretaries were trained in swatting protocols. That was with FBI Boston. It was phenomenal. I had attended it, seen the value, then required that of the administrators," Drake told the Council on Oct. 13. "Since then, we have instituted what they call telephonic and electronic intake forms which essentially means our building secretaries know how to respond should a live call come through. There's a series of questions that they need to ask to better assess a situation to determine if it's truly a hoax or not."

The district worked closely with state and local police as well as the State Commissioner of Homeland Security on responding to and planning for future swatting incidents. They've also implemented a revised three-part communication strategy that allows them to get a basic message out to citizens first, then assess the

Turn To SECURITY *page* **A11**

NCEF Fall events raise more than $151,000

REGION — The Northeast Connecticut Education Foundation (NCEF) is pleased to announce that over $151,000 was raised this fall to support Windham County students pursuing higher education. Both events, the NCEF Golf Tournament and Tackle the Trail ™ , exceeded fundraising goals.

NCEF President Joseph Adiletta shared, "On behalf of the students we serve, I want to extend sincere appreciation to our community – the sponsors, volunteers, runners, golfers, partners and all NCEF members – whose amazing support helps us achieve our goals

Turn To NCEF *page* **A10**



Courtesy

NCEF Volunteers at the Golf Tournament held on September 16 - (L to R) Lynne Comtois, Sarah Wolfburg, Monique Wolanin, Peter Deary, Renee Suich, Carly Deluca, Jodi Clark, and Amanda Giles.

Senexet Grange preparing for Winter Boot Drive

WOODSTOCK — As the leaves begin to change and colder weather approaches, the Senexet Grange #40 is once again preparing to help ensure that members of our community have warm, dry feet this winter.

Located in Woodstock and serving the broader Quiet Corner community, the Grange is proud to announce its Third Annual Winter Boot Drive and is asking our neighbors for their support.

The Winter Boot Drive began under the leadership of the Woodstock Democratic Party. In 2024, they asked Senexet Grange to take over the event so that it could become a non-partisan effort focused on helping local families. During its first year under the Grange's leadership, the drive focused primarily on Woodstock. Thanks to the tremendous support from the community, we expanded our efforts in 2025 to include surrounding towns.

Last year, we moved the collection site to the Putnam Town Hall parking lot and reached out to local schools and community organizations to help spread the word. The response was remarkable. With the generosity of our neighbors, we collected 67 pairs of winter boots, one pair of gloves, 39 packs containing 142 pairs of socks, and $307.42 in monetary donations. Every donation was given to TEEG, which distributed these items and funds to individuals and families in our area who needed them most.

This year, we hope to build on that success.

The Third Annual Winter Boot Drive will take place Saturday, Nov. 7 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the parking lot of Putnam Town Hall. We invite community members to donate gently used winter boots or consider purchasing new winter boots or socks to donate. Donations of all sizes are welcome, including men's, women's, and children's sizes.

Every pair of boots and socks can make a difference to someone facing the challenges of a Connecticut winter. Whether you donate a pair of boots, a package of socks, or make a monetary contribution, your generosity will directly benefit members of our local community through TEEG.

Our goal this year is simple: to collect more than we did last year and help even more of our neighbors stay warm this winter. We hope the Quiet Corner community will once again come together to make this year's drive our most successful yet.

Please mark your calendar for Nov. 7 and join us at Putnam Town Hall. Together, we can make a difference—one pair of warm boots at a time.

Social Security's 2027 COLA announced: Six things to know for retirees and pre-retirees

FINANCIAL FOCUS

LOGAN D. LUM
ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT, WEALTH ADVISOR

Every October, the Social Security Administration releases one number that gets more attention than almost any other piece of financial news: the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). On Oct. 14, the SSA announced a 3.6 percent COLA for 2027. For the average retired worker, who collected roughly $2,071 a month during 2026, that comes out to about $74.56 more per month, starting in January.

The natural reaction is to file that away as good news and move on. I'd suggest doing something else with it.

The COLA announcement is the one moment each year when almost everyone looks at their Social Security statement, which makes it the right time to ask a bigger question: is your claiming strategy something you built, or something that just happened? For most households, decisions about when to claim and how Social Security fits into a retirement income strategy are worth far more over a lifetime than any single year's adjustment.

1. Subtract Medicare premiums and taxes from the COLA increase.

The headline COLA is a gross figure. For most retirees, the Medicare Part B premium comes off the top before the check goes out. That premium rose to $202.90 in 2026, an increase of nearly 10 percent, and it consumed a meaningful share of last year's 2.8 percent adjustment. A larger benefit can also push more of your Social Security into taxable territory and, at higher incomes, affect your Medicare premium surcharges. The practical question is not "how big is the COLA" but "what is my net raise?"

2. Know the gap between your Social Security benefit and your expenses.

The COLA is calculated from the CPI-W, an index that reflects the spending patterns of working-age wage earners. Retirees spend differently: health care, prescriptions, and housing take up a much larger share of the budget. The Senior Citizens League's 2026 Loss of Buying Power study estimates that benefits have lost about 13.7 percent of their purchasing power since 2016.

The COLA is designed to help you stay even, not get ahead. Closing the gap is a job for the rest of the portfolio, which is why we build inflation exposure into retirement income plans.

3. Don't let a COLA drive your Social Security claiming strategy.

Every year, people who have not yet claimed ask whether they should file now to lock in a generous adjustment. The answer is no. COLAs are applied to your primary insurance amount beginning the year you turn 62, whether or not you have filed, so you do not forfeit a single one by waiting. Those adjustments stack on top of delayed retirement credits of roughly 8 percent a year past full retirement age, compounding on a larger base the longer you wait.

The 2026 Trustees Report projects reserves will be depleted in 2033, at which point incoming payroll taxes would cover about 77 percent of scheduled benefits absent action from Congress. But claiming years early to hedge against a possible future reduction is an expensive form of insurance, and for most households the math does not favor it.

4. If you're married, treat the higher earner's claiming age as a joint decision.

Couples tend to evaluate Social Security separately, which misses the most consequential variable: the survivor benefit. A spousal benefit tops out at 50 percent of the higher earner's primary insurance amount and earns no delayed retirement credits. A survivor benefit can be worth up to 100% of what the deceased spouse was receiving, including delayed credits. When one spouse dies, the household keeps the larger check and loses the smaller one. If the higher earner claimed at 62, that permanently reduced amount becomes the survivor's income, potentially for decades.

That is why the higher earner often delays while the lower earner claims earlier for cash flow. But the right answer depends on the age gap, health and longevity, portfolio withdrawals, and more.

5. If you're divorced or widowed, find out what you're eligible for before you file.

If you were married at least ten years, are currently unmarried, and are at least 62, you may be able to claim on a former spouse's record. It does not reduce their benefit or require their cooperation. Widows and widowers have added flexibility: survivor benefits are exempt from deemed filing, so you can take one benefit first and switch to the other later.

6. Consider how your state treats Social Security income.

Here in our home state of Connecticut, the state exempts 100 percent of federally taxable Social Security benefits for filers with federal AGI below $75,000 (single, married filing separately, or head of household) or $100,000 (married filing jointly). Cross that line and up to 25 percent of your benefits becomes subject to state income tax. That threshold is a cliff, not a slope, and a COLA raises your AGI, as does a required minimum distribution, Roth conversion, or capital gain. Near those limits, the order in which you draw from your accounts matters.

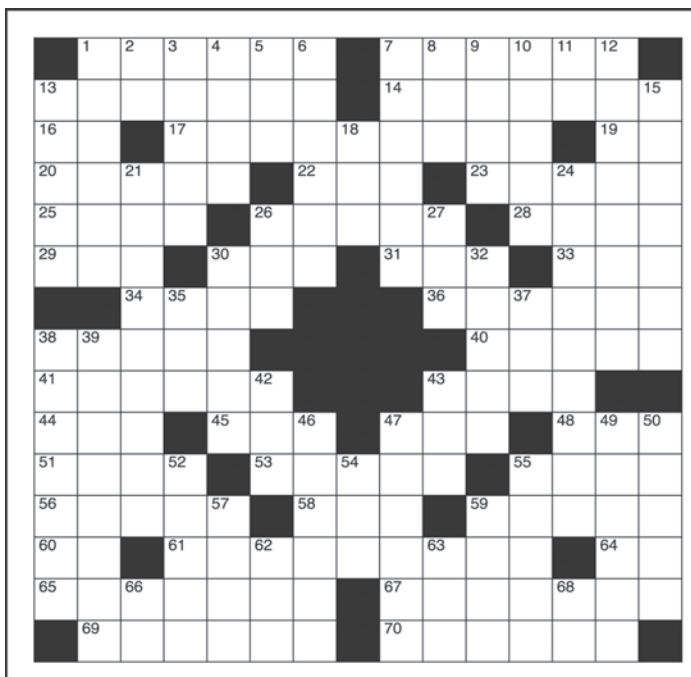
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Authored by WHZ Associate Vice President, Wealth Advisor Logan Lum. AI may have been used in the research and initial drafting of this piece. These materials are general in nature and do not address your specific situation. For your specific investment needs, please discuss your individual circumstances with your financial advisor. WHZ Strategic Wealth Advisors does not provide tax or legal advice, and nothing in the accompanying pages should be construed as specific tax or legal advice. Securities and advisory services offered through LPL Financial, Member FINRA/SIPC, a Registered Investment Adviser. 697 Pomfret St., Pomfret Center, CT 06259 and 392-A Merrow Rd., Tolland, CT 06084, 860-928-2341. http://www.whzwealth.com.

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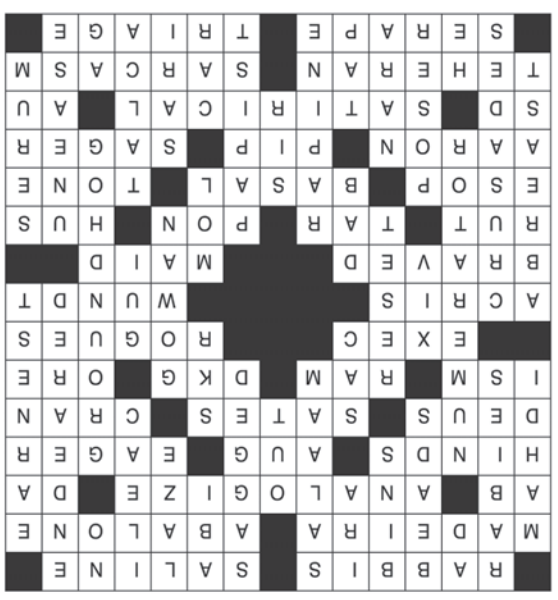
CLUES ACROSS

1. Spiritual leaders
7. Containing salt
13. Fortified wine
14. Edible mollusk
16. Blood type
17. Make a comparison
19. Government lawyer
20. "Game of Thrones" actor Ciaran
22. 8th month of the year (abbr.)
23. Very willing
25. __ ex machina
26. Satisfies
28. New Zealand mountain
29. A doctrine
30. Popular Dodge truck model
31. Dekagram
33. Naturally occurring solid material
34. Company higher-up
36. Villains
38. Cricket frog genus
40. Influential early psychologist
41. Endured
43. Servant
44. You can get stuck in one
45. __ and feather
47. Passive optical network
48. French ballet dynasty
51. Employee stock ownership plan
53. Forming a bottom layer
55. Sound
56. Yankees slugger Judge
58. Dickens character
59. Beloved late sportscaster Craig
60. "The Mount Rushmore State"
61. Sarcastic and critical
64. Atomic #79
65. Longtime Atlanta Braves pitcher
67. Humor
69. Shawl
70. Preliminary assessment of patients

CLUES DOWN

1. Animal disease
2. Commercial
3. Craft supplies
4. Containers
5. A way to save for your golden years
6. Common Arabic greeting
7. Bulged downward
8. Acquired brain injury
9. Lay about
10. Intestinal
11. Not yes
12. In a way, pleased
13. Messianic figure in Islam
15. Resulting from intense conviction
18. Not in
21. Number above the line in a fraction
24. Lawn pest
26. Pouch
27. Ancient language (abbr.)
30. Start anew
32. Wild flower
35. Fourteen
37. Graphical user interface
38. Facing the same way
39. Campaigns
42. Touch lightly
43. "Boardwalk Empire" actress Gretchen
46. Violent seizure of property
47. One who supports the Pope
49. Malaise
50. Body fluid
52. Inauthentic person
54. Title of respect
55. Moth genus
57. Central Japan city
59. Silk garment
62. Draw from
63. Automobile
66. A male
68. Powerful government lawyer

PUZZLE SOLUTION



Quinebaug Valley Senior Citizens Council hosting annual Christmas Bazaar

BROOKLYN — Quinebaug Valley Senior Citizens Center will host their annual Christmas Bazaar on Saturday, Nov. 14 from 8 a.m. to noon being held at 69 South Main Street, Brooklyn. This is a once-a-year fundraising event that helps the center continue to offer programs and activities for seniors in our communities.

We offer lots of Christmas items, holiday décor, jewelry, and much more. As always, we we have an array of raffle baskets donated by members and staff. This year our raffle baskets are exceptional! We will have breakfast sandwiches and muffins available for purchase with a free cup of coffee. Santa will be here with the elves for pictures. Letters will be sent to Santa at the North Pole…so bring the children.

We will be collecting unwrapped toys for children. If you would like to donate a non-perishable food item, we will have a drop box available at the entrance.

We look forward to seeing you.

Happy Holidays to all!

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Day Kimball Health names Brian Blackmar Employee of the Month


Brian Blackmar

PPUTNAM — Day Kimball Health (DKH) has named Brian Blackmar, facilities groundskeeper, as its September Employee of the Month in recognition of his dedication, strong work ethic and 20 years of service to the organization.

Blackmar joined Day Kimball Health in October 2006 and is responsible for maintaining the exterior grounds of the organization's campus. With 28 years of experience in groundskeeping and horticulture, he brings extensive knowledge and a strong commitment to creating a clean, welcoming environment for patients, visitors and staff.

Known for his reliability and dedication, Blackmar consistently goes above and beyond in his role. Much of his work takes place behind the scenes, but its impact is visible throughout the campus and appreciated by those who visit. His efforts help create a positive first impression and contribute to an environment that reflects the values and pride of Day Kimball Health.

"Brian's dedication to keeping our grounds beautiful is evident in everything he does. When we hired him 20 years ago, we thought we would need a backup plan for days when the weather made working outside difficult, but Brian will don his foul-weather gear and move forward to get the job done; he is unstoppable," said Bob Andrews, Director, Facilities Management. "He takes great pride in his work and the results speak for themselves. Our grounds are often one of the first things patients and visitors notice when they arrive, and Brian helps make that first impression a positive one. We're fortunate to have someone so dedicated to our team and our hospital."

"Every member of our team plays an important role in the experience we provide for our patients and families," said Kyle Kramer, CEO of Day Kimball Health. "The care and attention Brian brings to our grounds help create a welcoming environment for everyone who walks through our doors. We recognize that the patient experience begins long before someone enters an exam room, and Brian's work is an important part of that experience. We're proud to recognize his contributions and his 20 years of service to Day Kimball Health."

When asked about being selected as Employee of the Month, Blackmar said he was both surprised and honored by the recognition. One of the aspects he enjoys most about his role is the opportunity to spend each day working outdoors.

A graduate of the University of Connecticut, Blackmar earned an associate's degree in horticulture. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated a commitment to excellence and service.

Born and raised in Putnam, Blackmar now lives in Pomfret with his wife and their daughter. Outside of work, he enjoys spending time with his family and pursuing his passion for the outdoors and landscaping.

About Day Kimball Health

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

A perfectly good reason to keep it

Corner of Kindness

By CHIP

I have a cord in a drawer that belongs to something I no longer own. I can't tell you what that something was. Apparently, it played an important enough role in my life that I decided to preserve its cord indefinitely.

Every so often, I take the cord out, examine both ends and put it back. This is how I maintain the collection.

My wife believes we could throw it away. I believe we could, too, in the same way I believe we could drive somewhere without checking whether we have enough gas. It might work out fine. I'd prefer not to take the chance.

There is a certain satisfaction in being able to produce something when it's needed. A screw that fits. An envelope of the right size. A piece of string long enough to do whatever suddenly requires string. The trouble is that I have extended this principle to objects for which no need has been identified.

Somewhere in our house is a small bag of hardware marked "extra parts." Extra parts for what would be useful information, but apparently, I felt the label covered the situation.

I also keep short pieces of good rope. I distinguish these from short pieces of bad rope, which I also keep, but with less enthusiasm.

Around this corner of Connecticut, being called wasteful still has a little sting to it. I don't like throwing away something that might have another use, especially when I can remember paying for it. The purchase price becomes less relevant after a couple of decades, but I prefer to consider the full history.

The adult kids don't always share this approach. They can look at something, decide it no longer serves a purpose and remove it from their lives. No hearing. No opportunity for the object to present evidence. I admire the efficiency, although I have been known to retrieve something after they've left.

Then, of course, somebody needs a cable or a bracket, and suddenly the department of miscellaneous possessions is open for business. Those are good days. I try not to make too much of them. Nobody enjoys standing through a speech about foresight while waiting for an extension cord.

Still, I'm beginning to admit there's a difference between keeping useful things and assigning myself permanent responsibility for everything that crosses the threshold. An old shower curtain does make a good drop cloth. We probably don't need enough drop cloths to repaint northeastern Connecticut. And saving an unfamiliar piece of metal because it looks important hasn't helped me discover what it does. Time has made it dustier without making it any more informative.

I don't want to spend a Saturday sorting these things. That's part of the problem. Opening the drawer, dropping something in and closing it takes seconds. Deciding what belongs there requires an afternoon I had hoped to use for something else. But I would like to open it without having to lift the front and push down on the contents. So I've started small. A few things out. A few things kept where I can actually find them. Anything I recognize gets a label while the information is still available.

There's been some progress. I found the tape measure I thought I'd lost, which should reduce the household tape measure budget considerably. I also found a perfectly good cord. I've left that one on the kitchen table for further study. My wife hasn't said anything yet, but she's moved the wastebasket closer.

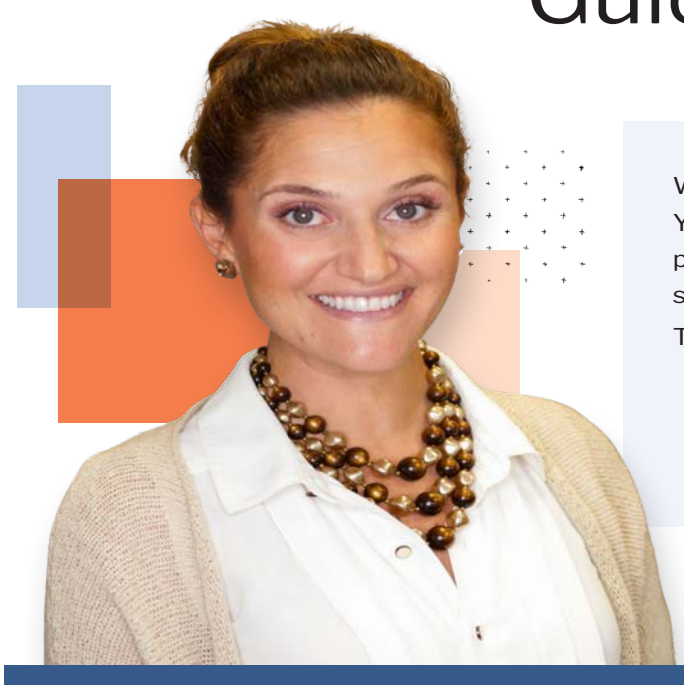
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Screenings are held on Friday mornings.
Please call the Woodstock Elementary School office to schedule an appointment at 860-928-0471. Preregistration is required.

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A life of service, a legacy that will endure

There are people in every community whose contributions cannot be measured by the number of awards they receive, the positions they hold or the recognition they earn. Their true impact is found in the places they help build, the lives they touch and the improvements they leave behind for future generations.

Thompson lost one of those remarkable individuals with the passing of John Rice on Oct. 23 at the age of 90.

For decades, Rice represented the very best of small-town dedication. He was someone who understood that a community does not become a better place on its own. It takes people willing to devote their time, energy and talents to making things happen, often without expecting anything in return.

Rice certainly understood that responsibility.

His involvement in Thompson touched nearly every aspect of community life. From serving on municipal boards and committees to supporting the fire department, preserving local history and helping children enjoy an annual fishing derby, Rice demonstrated that there are countless ways to make a difference.

Perhaps his most enduring contribution can be found on Thatcher Road, where the John Rice Community Center stands as a testament to his commitment to helping others.

As chairman of the building committee for the Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group, Rice played an instrumental role in creating a permanent home for an organization that provides essential assistance to individuals and families throughout the area.

When the building opened in 2012, it represented years of planning, determination and cooperation. When TEEG dedicated the facility in Rice's honor six years later, it was a fitting acknowledgment of someone whose work had helped turn an ambitious vision into reality.

Today, that building continues to serve the community. Every person who walks through its doors seeking assistance, encouragement or an opportunity to improve their circumstances benefits, in some measure, from Rice's efforts.

Few tributes could be more meaningful. Yet it would be a mistake to define Rice's legacy by a single accomplishment, however significant.

His years with the Thompson Historical Society reflected an appreciation for the town's past and the importance of preserving it. His work with the East Thompson Cemetery Association demonstrated respect for those who came before. His involvement with the Community Fire Department and local government reflected a willingness to take responsibility for the practical needs of his neighbors.

And his contributions to the Valley Springs Sportsman Club's annual fishing derby showed that community service can be as simple as helping a child experience the excitement of catching a fish.

There is something especially admirable about that range of involvement. Rice did not limit his efforts to one organization or one particular cause. When there was work to be done, he was willing to help. The awards he received over the years, including Thompson's Volunteer of the Year recognition in 2006, were certainly deserved. But the most meaningful recognition may be found in the affection expressed by the organizations and people who knew him.

The Thompson Historical Society remembered his smile and willingness to lend a hand. TEEG remembered his generosity and the kindness he extended to others. Those are qualities that cannot be captured on a plaque or certificate.

As communities throughout Northeast Connecticut confront the challenges of maintaining public facilities, supporting nonprofit organizations and preserving their history, Rice's example offers an important reminder of what one dedicated individual can accomplish over a lifetime.

Not everyone has the time or ability to serve on multiple committees or lead major building projects. But everyone has something to contribute, whether that means

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OPINION

Opinion and commentary from the Quiet Corner



Courtesy

Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) students from Killingly High School attended the Emerging Leaders' Summit on Oct. 28 at Bryant University. Students heard from inspiring university professors and alumni, explored personal branding strategies, and networked with other emerging student leaders from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I echo Mr. Cotnoir's concerns

To the Editor:

In the Oct. 2 issue of the Villager, Paul Cotnoir very respectfully expressed concern over safety at West Thompson Dam during hunting season.

I fully support the conversation he suggests. As a person who walks her dogs there regularly, I feel unsafe during hunting season, orange garb or not. I avoid the beautiful trails that are in the hunting zone and have long believed this is a very odd, if not downright dangerous policy for the Army Corps of Engineers to employ.

Many years ago, I started a petition to the rangers there asking for help addressing this concern, but my petition was stolen with about 120 signatures on it. Frustrated, I gave up.

Not everyone who takes a walk there in the fall is aware of the inherent danger. In my opinion, the hunting land either should be eliminated, or closed to passive recreation during the hunting season.

NATALIE LANGLOIS
WOODSTOCK

No Debate? No vote, Part Two.

To the Editor:

I wasn't out to be harsh and negative with not voting for candidates who blow off debates. I was merely being practical and realistic.

To use sports as an easy metaphor, when your job is to stand up for your convictions in the face of opposition locally or in Hartford, a debate, no matter the venue, is an exhibition game.

Sure, around here, it may be two people in WINY's studio with a host, some folks listening to the Talk Show, and other folks later catching the replay on the internet, but let's see what you can do when it's just folks recreationally listening to politics before you have to take a stand against people who do this stuff professionally.

Choosing to be a public figure ultimately means dealing with the public. If you don't like that and just want to smile for handshake pictures and on pretty flyers when it's election time, we don't need a person for that in the age of AI.

Sheltered public servants can't handle their jobs.

JAY GERHART
PUTNAM

A small correction

To the Editor:

There was an error in the printing of my last letter to the Editor. The paragraph about Republican and Democrats contributions to the elections should have read "In the current election cycle the total contributions from billionaires to Republicans amount to $1.54 billion, while Democrats have received only $590 million. For clarification a billion has 3 more zeros than a million. $154,000,000,000 for Republicans, $590,000,000 for democrats."

In the version that was printed, three zeros were left off the $154 billion Republican contribution.

Thank you

DAVE CLARK
THOMPSON

The Twilight Zone is still with us

To the Editor:

I certainly wasn't surprised to see a response from Mr. David Clark, and as usual, it took him two weeks to do it. Included in his reply was "where was it reported," he assumed "hearsay" information, and asked for "actual proof." As for me not mentioning a reporting source, I'll try to do better in the future just because he asked.

Mr. Clark questioned what taxes in California has to do with any of us in the Quiet Corner, but then he goes on to belabor happenings in California for half of his rant. In my last letter, I spoke about taxes in Connecticut, which he basically brushed off with "we're getting something for our money." As for his Musk/Soros consumption of more letter space, I'll brush that off and file it under whomever donates their wealth to the likes of Chris Murphy and the democrats has to be doing the right thing.

In addition to including a dose of TDS, Mr. Clark went on to comment on my wealth. Really, now, and why is that a concern to anyone in the Quiet Corner? And for your information, Dave, my wealth came from years of working, by saving money, by paying a little extra in taxes so I can get a yearly return, and from contributing to 401k plans. Additionally, when I moved into a bigger house, I worked at a part-time job for 17 years to help pay that mortgage off. Aren't those the same opportunities that are available to every American citizen?

Does anybody remember the (1963) "Twilight Zone" episode "The Old Man in the Cave," where a town's survival depended on a man getting information from a computer? Fast forward to Mr. Clark's response that heavily depended on an entity called "artificial intelligence," which is fed by a supply chain of public and human-generated sources for his "actual proof." What could go wrong? Yes, the Twilight Zone is still with us.

ED DELUCA
NORTH GROSVENORDALE

Thank you, election workers!

To the Editor:

I want to thank all of the election workers who make our elections possible.

Roughly one in five of Brooklyn's registered voters cast a ballot during early voting: 1,123 of our 5,446 neighbors. That turnout was made possible by the dedicated election workers who set up our elections and polling locations. They helped veteran voters and first-time voters feel welcome, guided voters who needed assistance and answered questions with kindness, patience and a smile.

Poll workers put in long shifts. Many are our neighbors, retirees, parents and people who took time off from their regular jobs to play a vital role in ensuring our elections are accessible, accurate and fair.

So to every election worker, whether you served in Brooklyn or elsewhere, thank you! Thank you for your time, care and commitment to democracy. Elections could not happen without you.

With sincere appreciation,

LISA ARENDS
BROOKLYN

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.

Honoring our veterans

Killingly Historical Society Fall Meeting. Saturday, Nov. 14 from 1:30-2:30 p.m. The Dirty Blue Shirts will present a program on Federal fashions (the Dolley Madison era). You will be able to see and feel clothing of the New Republic, the ways in which we stayed on top of European styles, and the ways in which we made our own sartorial marks on the international scene. You may remember the wonderful program they presented last year on women's fashions of the Revolutionary era. All are welcome. Refreshments will be served. A short business meeting will take place at 1 p.m. prior to the program.



KILLINGLY AT 300

MARGARET WEAVER

Killingly Grange #112 Craft Fair: 801 Hartford Turnpike, Dayville. Display and market your crafts to the public. Saturday, November 14th and Sunday, Nov. 15, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. each day. Rain or shine. Rent space inside or outside for $20. Tables available for $5. Contact Terry Barton to reserve a space/table at tmbartonkillinglygrange@gmail.com or text 860-884-1813 or for additional information. You do not have to be a member of the Grange to participate.

Order your Thanksgiving Pies. Killingly Grange #112 is again selling apple and pumpkin pies for Thanksgiving. $16 per pie. To reserve a pie call Terry at 860-884-1813 or Penny at 860-230-7367. Last day to order Saturday, Nov. 21 at 5 p.m. Pick-up Wednesday, Nov. 25.

Since Veterans Day is almost upon us, I thought I would devote part of the column to remembering and honoring our veterans. Are you old enough to remember when the day was called Armistice Day? Do you know how the holiday came into existence? History.com provided the following synopsis, "Veterans Day is a federal holiday dedicated to American veterans of all wars and held annually on Nov. 11. Veterans Day 2026 occurs on Wednesday, Nov. 11. The holiday dates to November 1918 during World War I. At the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of that year, an armistice, or temporary cessation of hostilities, was declared between the Allied nations and Germany. Commemorated the following year as Armistice Day in many countries, November 11 became a federal holiday in the United States in 1938. In the aftermath of World War II and the Korean War, Armistice Day became known as Veterans Day."

I have one known close relative who served in World War I--- my grandmother Margaret Campbell (Lyter's) brother Hugh Campbell. I talked with my sister Ann Markunas Fitts to confirm the interesting story that goes with Hugh---the discovery of unknown cousins. During the War, Hugh was in Europe in a train station or large military gathering place. He heard, "Hugh Campbell" being paged so went to see what that was for. Here, a second Hugh Campbell also answered the page. The two men then discovered they were cousins. (My great-grandfather Hugh Campbell was born in Scotland). Several of Hugh's sisters (my great-aunts) began corresponding with the Scottish cousins and several eventually went to visit them. So, this Veterans Day I will think of Hugh Campbell and give thanks for his service.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Woodstock Public Schools celebrate historic year of achievement

To the Editor:

Woodstock Public Schools is celebrating a year of significant academic progress

and statewide recognition, reflecting the work of students, educators, staff, families and the community.

Across the district, proficiency increased by 13 percentage points in math, 8 points in English language arts and 9 points in science. Woodstock Elementary School (WES) earned its first-ever School of Distinction recognition. It was one of only 16 schools in Connecticut to receive all five distinction designations, including recognition for performance in the state's top 10 percent. For context, there are well over 1,000 schools in the state of Connecticut.

The statewide results included 136 School of Distinction designations, with only two awarded to middle schools.

Woodstock Middle School (WMS) achieved its highest accountability index to date, rising from 68 to 78.9, an increase of 10.9 points. Its math growth indicator reached 81.3 percent, just 0.53 points below the 81.83 percent distinction threshold.

WMS was not eligible for a distinction this cycle because assessment participation in the prior year fell below the state's 95 percent requirement. The school met the participation threshold this year, addressing that eligibility barrier for future consideration, subject to all other state criteria. I have no doubt WMS will be there! They have exceptional staff at all levels.

This past year we adopted a mindset of growth for all students in our schools. We don't expect perfection; we expect at least one year's growth in an academic year. I believe the numbers speak for themselves:

In just one year, Woodstock Public Schools made extraordinary gains in student growth across every measure. In 2024–2025, WPS ranked 170th in Connecticut for ELA growth among all students; by 2025–2026, it had risen to 10th. For high-needs students, (those who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, receive special education services, and/or are multilingual learners,) WPS rose from 146th to 7th in ELA growth. In math, the district climbed from 115th to 5th for all students and from 89th to 5th for high-needs students. These results reflect a remarkable transformation in a single year and show what focused, sustained work can accomplish for every learner.

It was an honor to be invited by the CT State Commissioner of Education and the Chief Performance Officer to present on what is working in the Woodstock Public Schools. Participating in four events on school and district improvement was tremendous. The Chief Performance Officer noted, "Woodstock has now exceeded pre-pandemic academic achievement levels on the district performance index."

I am a person of my word, and I believe that when we create a budget, it must be tied to measurable gains in student outcomes. Too often in education, more is asked for and less is accomplished. When we ask our community to invest in our schools, we owe them evidence that those investments are improving results for students.

What I provided is not survey data, one's feelings, perception data, or data from focus groups. This is quantifiable data corroborating what we are doing in the Woodstock Public Schools is working.

I believe that suggesting test scores do not matter is like saying batting averages do not matter in baseball or that lab results are not important to a physician. Without assessments, we have no consistent measure against which to compare outcomes, identify needs or determine whether our work is having the intended effect.

I believe that students deserve to read at grade level by the end of third grade and to know their math facts with automaticity, so they have a strong foundation for more complex mathematics. Early intervention andhigh expectations are essential. When students receive timely support and are challenged to reach ambitious goals, they almost always rise to meet those expectations.

Students also need a rich and balanced school experience, including opportunities to participate in sports, clubs, music, band, art, theater and other activities, along with less time on electronic devices. Even incremental academic growth can give students a sense of accomplishment, confidence and self-efficacy. That confidence can encourage continued academic progress and carry into athletics, the arts and other parts of school and in life.

It is my belief that challenges build grit, determination and resilience, qualities students need in school, at work and throughout life. Woodstock's results mark an important milestone and a foundation for continued growth, with high expectations, early support and measurable goals guiding the work ahead.

These accomplishments belong to all of Woodstock. To our students: your hard work, curiosity, and perseverance inspire us. To our teachers, our leaders, and staff: your belief in every student and your daily dedication make this progress possible. To our families and community: your partnership, encouragement, and confidence in our schools make a lasting difference. To our Board of Education, your support and countless hours of volunteerism make leadership and high-quality classroom instruction possible. Special thanks as well to our town leaders for the support they provide to our schools.

Thanks to all departments, our nurses, our paraeducators, our front office staff, and our cafeteria staff. Also, thanks to WEF, our PTO, parent volunteers, our retired teachers who always give back at Quasset School, and for all who gave up time to coach and support our students because it makes a difference. Thanks to our first responders for always keeping our schools safe and looking out for us. Also, a special thanks to WINY for always allowing us a platform to tell our story every fourth Friday of the month at 9am. And thanks to the Woodstock Villager for always printing our stories. We appreciate everyone!

This is a moment to celebrate, and a springboard for even greater things. We have proven what we can accomplish when we come together with a shared purpose. With our students' potential, our staff's commitment, and our community's support, the sky is truly the limit for Woodstock Public Schools!

And just like every high performing organization, I had a teacher and administrator stop me to tell me there is no reason why we can't add another 10 percent! I agree completely.

Christopher Roche
Superintendent
Woodstock Public Schools

Killingly High School Weekly Sports Wrap-Up

Field Hockey

Killingly fell to Stonington, 7-0, in a hard-fought matchup on Oct. 27. Jaynie Macquarrie made 13 saves in goal, while Trinity Eldridge provided strong defensive play throughout the game. Killingly continued to compete and work hard through all four quarters.

Girls Soccer

Last Tuesday night under the lights, the Killingly Girls Soccer Team hosted Woodstock and celebrated Senior Night, honoring captains Gracie West and McKenna Mulvey for their dedication and leadership.

The Trailblazers wasted no time getting on the board as Adalyn Malarkey found the back of the net less than five minutes into the match off an assist from Nina Purcell. Just two minutes later, Woodstock answered to even the score at 1-1.

The teams headed into halftime tied, but Killingly's defense stood strong throughout the second half. Led by Lylah Connetti, along with Kate Crowley, Lianna Hutchinson, and Layla Raymond. Killingly finishes the regular season with a 10-4-2 record.

On Oct. 31, Killingly hosted Montville in the ECC Tournament Division 2 Semifinal. Montville got on the board first. A little over 6 minutes into the game. Killingly immediately answered just 10 seconds later with a goal by Kezlee Morrarty and the assist from Oliva Cabral. Kezlee Morrarty scored her second goal of the game on an assist from Nina Purcell 4 minutes later to give Killingly a 2-1 lead. Madison San Souci added a goal with an assist from Kezlee Morrarty for Killingly with 16:18 left in the 1st half. Five minutes later Killingly extended it's lead to 4-1 on a goal from Gracie West with the assist from Kezlee Morrarty. Montville added a goal with 1:05 left in the 1st half. Both teams went scoreless in the 2nd half and Killingly came away with a 4-2 win and a trip to the ECC Tournament Division 2 finals on Monday at Bacon Academy to take on Windham. Season Record: 11-4-2.

On Monday afternoon, Nov. 2, the girls captured the ECC Division II Championship with a dominant 5-1 victory over Windham.

The scoring started less than five minutes into the match when Kezlee Morrarty finished a through ball from Kate Crowley to give the Trailblazers an early 1-0 lead. Shortly after, Gracie West found the back of the net off an assist from Adalyn Malarkey. Just two minutes later, Gracie struck again, finishing a cross from Adalyn to put Killingly ahead 3-0 heading into halftime.

The Trailblazers continued their strong play in the second half. Adalyn Malarkey added a goal of her own off an assist from Kezlee Morrarty, and Kezlee capped off the championship performance with her second goal of the match. Windham's lone goal came on a penalty kick. With the win, the ECC Division II Champions improve their record to 12-4-2.

Day Kimball launches Project ASSERT to expand substance use support services in Emergency department

PUTNAM — Day Kimball Hospital has launched Project ASSERT, a new emergency department program that connects patients experiencing substance use concerns with education, treatment options, recovery resources and community-based support services beginning the moment they seek emergency care.

Funded through the Connecticut Opioid Settlement Fund, and administered by the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), the program is designed to reach patients affected by opioid use disorders during a critical window when they may be most open to seeking help.

In its first five weeks, the program completed 43 consults with 38 patients, resulting in three inpatient treatment placements, six outpatient treatment placements, four detox placements and two medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) interventions.

The initial results demonstrate both the need for these services in the community and the value of meeting patients where they are. Every connection represents an opportunity to help someone take the next step toward recovery and improved health.

"Project ASSERT allows us to meet patients where they are, at a moment when they may be most open to considering treatment," said Kyle Kramer, DKH CEO. "These early numbers tell us there is a real need in our community, and they tell us this approach works. Every one of these connections is a chance to change someone's path, and that's exactly the kind of care we want to provide. Our goal is to reduce the barriers, provide education, and help patients take the next step toward recovery and improved health."

How it works

Health promotion advocates (HPAs) work alongside emergency department staff to screen patients for substance misuse and connect them with resources tailored to their needs, including:

Treatment programs

Access to primary care, counseling and community-based recovery support

MOUD, including FDA-approved medications such as Suboxone, buprenorphine and methadone

Education on safer choices, overdose prevention and harm reduction

"Substance use disorders are treatable medical conditions, and recovery looks different for every person," said Steven Wexler, MD, FAAEM, DKH HPA Site Champion and medical director of the Day Kimball Hospital Emergency Department. "By connecting patients with resources during an emergency department visit, we can help bridge the gap between immediate care and long-term recovery."

The team

In addition to Dr. Wexler, the DKH Project ASSERT team includes:

Vanessa Brown, MD, JD, FACEP, FAAEM, Chief Medical Officer and Vice President, Medical Affairs and Quality

Christine Collins, LPC, ED Grant Supervisor

Crystal Lanning, MSOL, RN, HPA Supervisor

Emily Laprade, Health Promotion Advocate

Courtney Peltier, Health Promotion Advocate

Getting help

Patients can speak with a member of the DKH Project ASSERT team during an emergency department visit to learn more about treatment options and recovery resources.

Anyone who uses drugs alone and is seeking immediate overdose prevention support can call SafeSpot's free, confidential, 24/7 Overdose Spotting Hotline at 1-800-972-0590.

About Day Kimball Health

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

Paws Cat Shelter hosting can and bottle drive

PUTNAM — Paws Cat Shelter is holding a Can and Bottle Drive on Saturday, Nov. 7 from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. at the shelter located at 74 School St. in Putnam. Please separate two-liter bottles. Pet food and donations are always welcome and greatly appreciated.

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



Courtesy

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities hosted more than 1,150 attendees for a two-day event featuring informative workshops, interactive discussions, and networking opportunities. Local government leaders from across the state gathered to explore municipal products and services, as well as attend sessions on effective municipal governance. Additionally, Economic Development Director Mary Ann Chinatti achieved certification as a Municipal Policy Leader during the conference. Pictured are Selectman Mike Bogdanski of Putnam, District Clerk Stefani Bellavance, Deputy Mayor Scott Pempek, Town Administrator Elaine Sistare, Economic Development Director Mary Ann Chinatti, HR Director Mariah Clifford, and Economic Development Coordinator Sue Ramos.



Light Beyond the Shadows brings Quiet Corner together for domestic violence awareness

PUTNAM — More than 130 community members gathered at Montana Nights Axe Throwing in Putnam on Thursday, Oct. 29, for Light Beyond the Shadows, a community fundraiser organized by Laura Jones, Owner of Smoke & Mirrors, Beauty Loft to benefit United Services of Connecticut's Domestic Violence Program and Shelters.

The event raised $9,500, with the final fundraising total expected to be confirmed Monday, Nov. 2. While the financial contributions were significant, the event's primary goal extended beyond fundraising. To raise awareness about domestic violence, challenge its stigma, begin conversations, and remind individuals that resources and support are available.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the Halloween-themed evening welcomed guests of all ages, allowing for a family-friendly atmosphere featuring a children's costume contest, complimentary axe throwing, pizza, entertainment, interactive games, raffles, and opportunities to connect with local organizations and community leaders.

More than 35 raffle prizes were generously donated by local businesses and individuals. Among the evening's highlights were two weekend getaway prizes to Mohegan Sun and Foxwoods, valued at more than $2,100 combined and generously donated by Woodfella's Pizza. The prizes were featured in interactive challenges coordinated by CrossFit Underdog Union, adding excitement and friendly competition to the evening.

A central feature of the fundraiser was its guest bartending lineup, intentionally bringing together individuals representing different areas of the community. Teams included United Services of CT, members of the CT Women & Girls Foundation, local government leaders, first responders, healthcare professionals, community advocates, and representatives of the Putnam Business Association.

Each team volunteered their time to support the cause, demonstrating the importance of community involvement across professions, organizations, and backgrounds.

"From the beginning, I wanted this event to be about more than raising money," said Laura Jones, owner of Smoke & Mirrors, Beauty Loft and organizer of Light Beyond the Shadows. "Domestic violence affects people in every community, economic class, gender, and might come across differently on the outside than what's behind closed doors. My hope was to bring people together, raise awareness, and create something that would have an impact beyond just one evening. As photos and videos from the event continue to circulate, I hope they serve as a reminder to anyone who may be struggling that there are people in this community and beyond, who genuinely care, that support exists, and that there is hope. You never know who may need to see that message."

The evening also featured performances by Shimmy Mob Team Willimantic, with Destination Event Co. providing event hosting and a complimentary photo booth. Generous contributions from sponsors, local businesses, volunteers, and community members helped make the event possible.

Beyond the financial contributions, Light Beyond the Shadows demonstrated the power of community collaboration in bringing visibility to an issue that remains unspoken. Through continued sharing of the event's coverage, organizers hope the message of compassion, awareness, and available support will reach well beyond those who attended.

Proceeds from the event will benefit United Services of CT's Domestic Violence Program to support survivors by providing services and resources to families affected by domestic violence.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped show there is light beyond the shadows.















Courtesy

This year's annual sold-out Harvest Dinner at the Church of the Good Shepherd in West Woodstock fell right on Halloween evening, but instead of spooky ghosts and ghouls, guests were treated to a delightful step back in time as the servers dressed in stunning 1800s pioneer costumes. From beautiful long dresses to elegant aprons and bonnets, their historical attire brought a warm nostalgic charm to the Fellowship Hall, proving that Halloween at the church is all about history, community, and delicious food. Thank you to all of those who cooked, served, cleaned up, and supported the dinner - and to the 19th century hosts for making this dinner one for the history books!











Courtesy



On Wednesday, Oct. 28, Putnam Cub Scout Pack 21 celebrated Halloween a little early, with games, snacks and fun. Pack 21 is guided by trained and experienced adults and is chartered to the Albert J. Breault VFW Post 1523, 207 Providence St. in Putnam. Pack 21 is actively looking for boys and girls aged five through ten to have fun with us, so please join us by calling Pack 21's John Ryan today at (860) 928-5873 and leaving a message.













KILLINGLY

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My parents Maud (Lyter) Markunas and Dr. Francis B. Markunas served in World War II as an Army nurse and doctor. I will remember them also and other relatives who served in that war. My recently deceased brother-in-law William G. Wright served in the Vietnam War so I will remember him also. May you take the time to remember all your departed family members and friends who served in the military and say, "Thank you for your service" to those who are still with us. Our world is a better place because of their sacrifices.

I promised more memories from the 1938 Hurricane so here are some from Jeanne Benoit of Putnam. She sent the following about her parents. "George Benoit-16 years old-living in Putnam. He had poor eyesight and the Doctor he needed was in Worcester, Mass. He and his father left Putnam around noontime, and drove to Worcester on the only road available, Route 12. They had a 2 p.m. appointment and when it was over they started the return trip. By that time, the wind was so strong and the rain so heavy that George had his head out of the car window giving directions to his father. Trees were also a problem and they often had to drive off of the road to pass them. They made it to Webster, to the four corners where Price Choppers is today and had to stop as the roads to Putnam was completely blocked. (Both 193 and 12). There were no other options to get home and no way to let their family know they were OK. All power lines were down too. They spent two days in Webster before they could make it home. At their summer cottage, which is a fifty-foot lot, George remembered taking out 12 full grown pines that had been toppled. One was left and it grew to look like a chair 30 feet into the air. It grew sideways and then began to grow straight again. It lasted another 70 years and was a constant reminder of the power of the wind. At 231 School St. in Putnam, the Bianchi family had a very large wooden grape arbor. It had an arched top and eight columns holding it in place. At the end of the storm, nothing was left, just broken wooden pieces. Also in that yard was a fence from School Street to Walnut Street and it too was just pieces of wood. Many of the neighbors found pieces in their yards a good distance away. Vivian Catella-14 years old-living in Milford, MA. She was a freshman at Milford high school. There was no cafeteria so the students went home for lunch. On the way home it was just a mild wind. On the way back, just as the storm was hitting the coast the wind began to pick up. The students stayed in school for the rest of the day. When dismissal came, walking out of the school door became a challenge as the hurricane was starting. She often spoke about fearing she would not be able to reach home. She was fighting the power of the wind and she continually felt she would be knocked over and not be able to get up again. She often said there were absolutely no warnings and even if there were no one had experienced anything like that before. As far as she knew, all students got home, but school was out for the next couple of days." (email 10-20-26).

Please, if you have family members who shared stories with you about the 1938 hurricane, please share them with me and this column's readers. Thank you in advance. (Memories from towns other than Killingly and Putnam are also welcomed).

Margaret M. Weaver Killingly Municipal Historian, October 2026. Thanks to Ann Markunas Fitts and Jeanne Benoit for help with this column. 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. For Windham County Transcripts visit killingly.historyarchives.online courtesy of the Killingly Public Library. For Putnam Patriots and Windham County Observers visit the home page of the Putnam Public Library and look on the right hand column for links. If you are out of this area, check to see what papers your public library has available. For Online Land Records go to Search IQS.

EDITORIAL

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helping with a fundraiser, assisting a neighbor or offering a few hours to a worthwhile local effort.

Rice's life demonstrated how those contributions, sustained over many years, can become something extraordinary.

Thompson has lost a devoted friend and advocate. His family and loved ones have lost someone whose presence cannot be replaced. But the community he cared for so deeply will continue to benefit from his work for generations to come.

The most fitting way to honor John Rice is not simply to remember everything he accomplished, but to recognize that the responsibility for caring for Thompson now rests with those who follow him.

He spent a lifetime showing what that responsibility looks like. And he leaves behind a town that is better because he was part of it.

Antonio Marcuccio named Saint Joseph School's 2026 Volunteer of the Year

WEBSTER — During the Family Mass celebrated at Saint Joseph Basilica on Sunday, Oct. 4, Saint Joseph School recognized Antonio "Tony" Marcuccio as the recipient of the 2026 Saint Joseph the Worker Volunteer of the Year Award.

Presented annually, the award honors an individual whose generosity, talents, and commitment have made a meaningful difference in students' lives. Recipients embody the qualities of Saint Joseph through humility, service, faithfulness, and dedication to hard work.

Born and raised in Southington, Conn., Marcuccio moved to Killingly in 1992 and graduated from Killingly High School in 1996. He and his wife, Katie, now live in Thompson with their sons. Jacob graduated from Saint Joseph School in 2026 and now attends Marianapolis Preparatory School, while Johnny is currently in seventh grade at Saint Joseph School.

Marcuccio rarely misses a field trip, school play, athletic event, or opportunity to help. He began coaching intramural basketball in 2022 and continued for three seasons before becoming an assistant coach for the JV boys' basketball team. He has also coached fall cross-country. When spring cross-country needed coaches, Tony and Katie stepped forward immediately. This year, Tony will serve as the varsity boys' basketball coach.

"If you see Mr. Marcuccio at a Saint Joseph athletic event, he is usually wearing a hat," said Athletic Director John Kottori. "As a volunteer in the athletic program, Mr. Marcuccio has worn many hats. Each hat is a sign of his dedication to supporting all of the students in our community."

Kottori described Marcuccio as a "champion volunteer" and a role model whose selfless service strengthens the athletic program and demonstrates the school's mission through his actions.

Marcuccio's contributions extend well beyond coaching. He regularly helps set up and break down intramural games. Drawing on his 28 years of construction experience, he repaired large openings in the school's exterior brickwork when ventilation ducts were removed during the conversion of the former kitchen into a STEM lab. He also repaired the school's front steps after vandals damaged them.

During the winter, Marcuccio could often be found at school late at night or as early as 4 or 5 a.m., shoveling and blowing snow from the entrance and sidewalks so students and staff could enter safely. These are only the acts of service known to school administrators; he has undoubtedly helped the athletic program, teachers, and school community in many other ways.

Marcuccio has never asked for reimbursement or recognition. He simply keeps asking what more he can do.



Courtesy

Pictured on the altar of Saint Joseph Basilica following the award presentation are, from left, Father Richard Polek, pastor and headmaster; Antonio Marcuccio, recipient of the 2026 Saint Joseph the Worker Volunteer of the Year Award; and Principal Beth Boudreau.

During the presentation, Principal Beth Boudreau recalled the time Bishop Robert J. McManus drew Marcuccio's winning raffle ticket during a recent Open House. When Marcuccio was called to the office over the intercom, he arrived apprehensively, believing he was in trouble with the principal. This time, Boudreau assured him he was being called forward again for a very good reason.

The presentation also included a lighthearted reference to Marcuccio's devotion to the Buffalo Bills, who were playing the New England Patriots that day. Boudreau joked that honoring a Bills fan in Patriots country proved that "Christian charity truly has no limits."

"But all football rivalries aside, there is no question that Tony has always been on Saint Joseph School's team," Boudreau said. "We are incredibly fortunate to have him."

"I love the Saint Joseph School community," Marcuccio said. "I think, as a whole, we really stand out compared to other schools. That is special, and I am proud to be a part of it."

Saint Joseph School is deeply grateful for Marcuccio's humble and generous service and is blessed to honor him as the 2026 Saint Joseph the Worker Volunteer of the Year.



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Woodstock Women's Golf League celebrates 33 years with second annual tournament



1st Place Winners: Left to right Ann Rathbone, Bill Rathbone, Shirley Mancini, Brian Lynch (not pictured).



2nd Place Winners: Left to right, Drew Aitkin, Connor Liebscher, Clara Siegmund, and John Aitkin



Margaret Young — Courtesy

3rd Place Winners: Left to right, Brian Bardier, John Rhea, Marc Cotnoir , Richard Beaudry.

the League is building on that tradition by giving back to the course it calls home.

Originally scheduled for Sept. 27, the League's Second Annual Golf Tournament was postponed to its rain date of Oct. 4 due to strong winds and severe weather. Fortunately, the extra week's wait brought golfers together at Woodstock Golf Course at Roseland Park for a day of great golf, plenty of laughs, and a few memorable shots along the way.

Played in a scramble format, the tournament celebrated not only golf, but also the friendships and community spirit that have kept the League going strong for 33 years. The competition was close! Taking First Place with a score of 28 were Brian Lynch, Shirley Mancini, Ann Rathbone, and Bill Rathbone. Finishing just as strong, the Second Place team of Drew Aitken, John Aitken, Connor Liebscher, and Clara Siegmund, also posted a 28, while Third Place went to Brian Bardier, Richard Beaudry, Marc Cotnoir, and John Rhea, who finished with a score of 31.

There was more than team competition to keep golfers on their toes. Special contests added to the fun, including:

Closest to the Pin — Ravine, Hole #7: Mora Cristy

Longest Drive — Long Tom, Hole #8: Women's — Molly Thienel; Men's — Drew Aitken; Senior Men's — Mitchell Eaffy.

Of course, the day was about more than scorecards and bragging rights. The tournament is part of the League's effort to make a lasting difference at Woodstock Golf Course. Thanks to the generosity of golfers and donors, the 2025 inaugural tournament funded the purchase of two benches at the course. Proceeds from this year's event will help fund additional benches and other course improvements, while supporting the League's goal of encouraging families to enjoy golf together.

After the final putts dropped, participants gathered to share a meal, swap stories, and celebrate a successful day on the course. The event was another step toward making the golf course an even more welcoming place for golfers and families.

The Woodstock Women's Golf League looks forward to continuing its tradition of friendship, fun, and community support, both on and off the fairways.

For more information about the Woodstock Women's Golf League, please contact Margaret Young at youngmargaret421@gmail.com.

A veteran, a family, and the meaning of service



TIPS FOR SUCCESS

MIKE BOGDANSKI

As Veterans Day approaches, I find myself thinking about some very special veterans in my life. One, in particular, was Carl Hurley.

Back in the 1970s, my parents and I owned a local nightclub. During the day, folks would stop in for a cold one before heading to the off-track betting parlor. Among our regulars was a gentleman who stood six feet, seven inches tall. Because of his height, my father nicknamed him "Too Tall." He became a daily fixture.

One morning, my dad arrived to open up and found Too Tall sleeping beside the dumpster. Instead of waking him up and sending him on his way, Dad bought him a coffee and breakfast. Before long, he offered him a job as our cleanup man.

As we got to know Carl, we learned more about his past. He was a Vietnam veteran struggling with PTSD and alcoholism. We eventually discovered that he had been sleeping in an abandoned chicken coop. Realizing he had nowhere to go, we took him in.

We gave Carl a job, a place to live, and, most importantly, a family. We looked after his health and well-being for much of the rest of his life.

Eventually, he became what I can only describe as our unofficial adopted brother. He lived in a bedroom in the basement, and what began as one year turned into ten, then twenty.

When my father passed away, my mother became Carl's caretaker and later, my brother.

The years were flying by, and Carl eventually chose to live at the Soldiers' Home in Connecticut and later in Boston. My sister made certain Carl joined us every holiday and birthday.

Carl passed away a few years ago. I often think that had my family not taken him in that morning, his story might have ended differently. I believe that giving him a home, purpose, and family helped him live many more years.

Sometimes, the greatest thing we can do for a veteran isn't to build a monument or hold a ceremony. It's simply to make sure they know they are not alone.

I'm a baby boomer, and I grew up surrounded by stories of World War II. My father served as a Navy Seabee, and my uncles also answered the call.

My Uncle Stash occasionally talked about the terrible experiences he and his fellow soldiers endured, particularly during the famous Battle of the Bulge. Those were days of unimaginable hardship, courage, and sacrifice.

Those stories shaped my upbringing. They gave me an appreciation for the men and women who served, often carrying memories and experiences that those of us who stayed home could never fully understand.

Recently, we had the privilege of volunteering at The Wall That Heals.

The Putnam Veterans Advisory Council, Rob Challinor, and Hans Lowell planted the seed for this project more than two years ago. Bringing the traveling Vietnam Veterans Memorial to our community required countless meetings, months of preparation, and hundreds of volunteers.

Much of the credit goes to co-chairs Alan Joslin and Brian Maynard, along with Mayor Barney Seney, Fred Ruhleman, Bruce Hay, Ron Pariseau, and the many other veterans and volunteers who made it happen.

A contingent of vets escorted the Wall into Putnam, and people lined the streets along the way. Over a hundred veterans worked tirelessly and even took on the physically demanding, emotionally taxing work of assembling and dismantling. Like the departure of an old friend, they stood by and waved it goodbye as it continued to its next destination. The wall and its history made this a labor of love, respect, and remembrance.

During my shifts, I spoke with veterans and heard their personal stories. Some were heartbreaking. Others were inspiring. All reminded me that behind every name on that Wall is a human being, a family, and a story worth remembering.

One powerful moment came during the Agent Orange ceremony when Vietnam veteran Alan Joslin addressed the crowd.

Alan told us about being ambushed while returning and being shot multiple times, his rescue by a man on a motorbike, and the more than a year he spent in hospitals recovering from his injuries.

The crowd listened as he shared an experience that few of us could ever imagine enduring. I have heard many stories of courage, but not one like this that showed such extraordinary resilience. It was a powerful reminder of the physical and emotional scars that many veterans carry after the fighting ends.

I had another memorable conversation with veteran Ron Pariseau.

I mentioned that my father had served in the Navy Seabees during World War II. Ron immediately lit up. He told me that he, too, had been a Seabee!

He explained that watching John Wayne's movie The Fighting Seabees inspired his dream of joining this unique military construction battalion. The Seabees were more than builders. They were skilled construction workers who also served as warriors when duty called.

Ron also spoke about the many friends and fellow service members he lost in Vietnam, and the anguish that remains with him still.

During our conversation, I showed Ron a Danielson Veterans Coffeehouse challenge coin I had recently received. (Thanks, Fred R) If you're unfamiliar with the significance of these coins, I encourage you to look into their tradition and meaning.

Ron reached into his pocket, shook my hand, and placed the Navy Seabee challenge coin in my palm.

My heart skipped a beat.

Here was a Seabee, a man who had shared a special bond with my father, passing along something that represented that connection. For a moment, the generations seemed to come together. I felt like I had received a small piece of my father's history, handed to me by someone who understood exactly what it meant.

It was one of those moments you don't forget.

As Veterans Day approaches, I hope we take a moment to think beyond the parades, ceremonies, and speeches.

Think about the men and women who put themselves in harm's way, who used their strength and courage in service to something greater than themselves. Think about those who came home carrying physical wounds, emotional scars, and memories they would rather forget.

Think about the families who waited, the friends who never returned, and the veterans who sometimes needed someone to reach out and give them a helping hand.

My adopted brother, Carl "Too Tall" Hurley, didn't need a monument. He needed a chance, a home, and people who cared enough to welcome him into their lives.

Each story is different, but all are connected by service, sacrifice, and the human spirit.

This Veterans Day, let's honor not only those who fought for our freedom, but also those who came home and needed us to stand beside them.

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

Winter Farm & Market Guide promotes local farms and farmers' markets in Northeastern CT



REGION — Just in time for the season of warm hearty meals, Grown ConNECTed is releasing the 2026/2027 Northeastern Connecticut Winter Farm & Market Local Food Guide.

And for the first time, this year's guide will be available in print, as well as online. The free Winter Guide will debut Thursday, Nov. 5 at the Taste of Northeast Connecticut at the Stonehurst at Hampton Valley in Hampton. This event is presented by the Northeastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce in partnership with Grown ConNECTed and features local farms and restaurants. Tickets are available through the Chamber.

"We're excited to share the first ever print edition of the Winter Farm & Market Local Food Guide, which will be available at the Taste of Northeastern Connecticut just before we distribute it across the area," said Ginger Jenne, who is the Grown ConNECTed Project Coordinator for UConn Extension. "Our goal with the Guide is to be a comprehensive resource to promote the incredible variety of locally grown foods produced from the hard work of farmers across the Quiet Corner of the state."

This year's 28-page guide provides a user-friendly layout divided into sections featuring farms that offer winter vegetables, preserved goods, honey, maple syrup, dairy, meats, and CSA shares. There are also sections that feature Certified Organic farms and SNAP retailer farms, as well as a list and map, and a full schedule of winter farmers markets.

Those who look for creative gifts for the upcoming holidays will especially enjoy the Sorts & Sundries section, a guide to farmers who make soaps, fiber, candles, and items "uniquely farm grown and made."

"The Guide is an important part of the mission of Grown ConNECTed, which really has three primary goals," said Jenne, who designed the Guide. "First, to promote the region's farms and farmers markets; second, to let families across the region know there's locally grown food available to them – and in many cases closer to them than the few supermarkets in this area; and third, to invite visitors from outside the region to explore our farms, visit our farmers markets, and to connect everyone with the farms that can provide food for them all year round."

This year, Grown ConNECTed has initiated a campaign to spread awareness to those who receive food assistance that more farms and farmers markets now accept SNAP with the Grown ConNECTed for All project. SNAP retailer farms are listed in the Guide with the supporting message of "Local Farms Feeding Our Communities is a SNAP."

Farms that participate in Community Supported Agriculture farm shares, informally known as "CSA shares," are also listed separately so that families can plan for the upcoming 2027 season.

The FREE 2026/2027 Northeastern Connecticut Winter Farm & Market Local Food Guide will be available at winter farmers markets, the Willimantic Food Co-op, libraries, and social service agencies in towns across Northeast Connecticut. It can also be viewed at GrownConNECTed.org.

About Grown ConNECTed

Grown ConNECTed is an initiative of UConn Extension to build connections between farmers and residents in Northeast Connecticut. The project supports more than 180 farms and 21 farmers' markets across 32 towns in Eastern CT. The goal of the Grown ConNECTed For All campaign is to increase opportunities for all residents to find and purchase locally grown food, specifically by building awareness that those who receive SNAP food assistance are able to use their EBT cards at local SNAP retailer farms.

Grown ConNECTed works with social service organizations and municipal representatives to provide accessible information about these resources to those who face food insecurity.

Funding for Grown ConNECTed is made possible by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service through grant award number 24FMPPCT1225-00. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the USDA.

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.



NCEF

continued from page A1

and helps hundreds of local students pursue their education dreams."

The NCEF Golf Tournament, always held on the third Wednesday in September, took place on September 16th at Connecticut National Golf Club in Putnam. The event raised more than $70,000 thanks to platinum, gold, silver and hole sponsors, new and returning teams, and dedicated volunteers. Special thanks to 2026 chair and NCEF vice president Peter Deary and the golf committee for making the tournament a success.

Always held the third Saturday in October, Tackle the Trail ™ celebrated its 13th running on October 17th, raising over $81,000. Since 2021, the event has welcomed runners from 35 states and territories, and five countries to our unique race in an amazing place. With various start lines in Windham and Pomfret, all races finish at the Hale YMCA Youth and Family Center in Putnam. A true testament to the community served by the NCEF, Tackle the Trail was supported by several sponsors and over 125 volunteers, including NCEF members, faculty and staff from CT State Community College Quinebaug Valley, and many northeast CT residents.

Monique Wolanin, Tackle the Trail Race Director and CT State Community College Quinebaug Valley Director of Institutional Advancement, shared the importance of supporting education for students in the region, "Thanks to events like Tackle the Trail and the Golf Tournament, proceeds help NCEF support our community with over $300,000 given annually to local students, many of whom attend QV. These funds provide scholarships, block grants, various awards and educational initiatives, which is a win-win for students and our community."

For more information on the NCEF and a complete list of tournament sponsors, and winners, please visit www.necteducationfoundation.org. For Tackle the Trail sponsors, race day results, and photos, visit www.tacklethetrail.org.

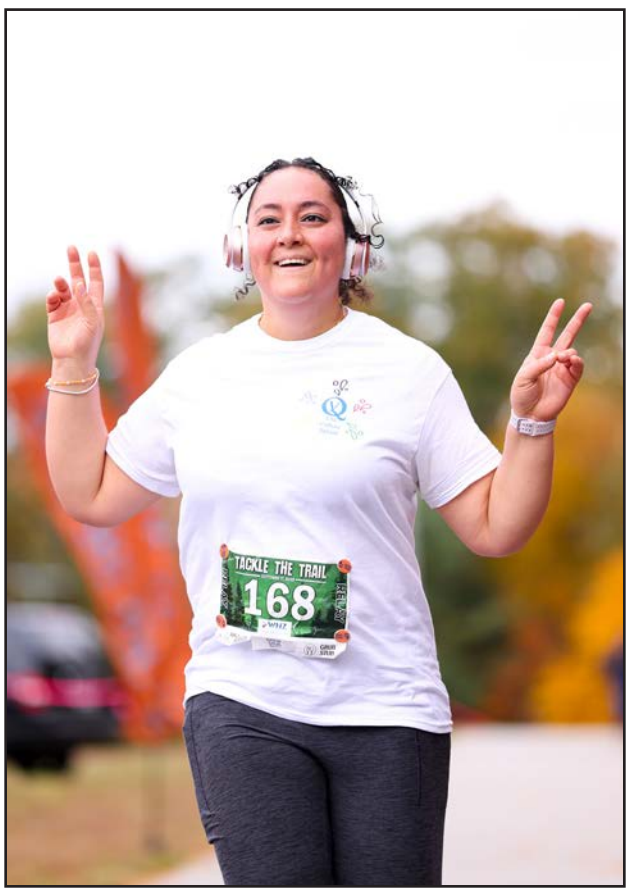
The mission of the Northeast Connecticut Education Foundation is to provide scholarships and other financial support to residents of Northeast Connecticut who want to pursue higher education.



Team Baker's Dozen: Trevor Cardinal, Jeremy Hendrickson, Dan Desonor, and Mark Lowell.



ESL Culture Splash relay team member Zorimar Rodriguez crosses the finish line at Tackle the Trail on Oct. 17. Zorimar is a CT State Quinebaug Valley student and 2026 NCEF scholarship recipient.



Each year, Tackle the Trail attracts runners from near and far, including Canadian runners Matt Cole and Niels Thakkar who traveled from New Brunswick and Ontario.

Project HOPE of Eastern Connecticut receives $100,000 in state funding for homeless services

WILLIMANTIC — Project HOPE of Eastern Connecticut today announced the award of $100,000 in state funding secured by Connecticut State Sen. Mae Flexer to support the organization's ongoing operations and services for adults experiencing homelessness and housing instability throughout Eastern Connecticut.

The funding, included in the *Connecticut State Budget, FY 2027 Revisions*, designates $100,000 for operational support for Project HOPE. The award will help sustain the organization's 24/7/365 services as colder weather approaches and demand for safe shelter, housing assistance and homelessness prevention continues.

"We are grateful to Sen. Flexer for helping secure this significant funding and for recognizing the critical need for homelessness services in our region," said Avery Lenhart, executive director of Project HOPE. "As the need for services continues to grow, the costs of operating a 24-hour, year-round shelter and its associated programs—including staffing, utilities and other essential expenses—continue to rise. This award will help sustain our life-saving services and ensure we can continue supporting adults experiencing homelessness, particularly at a time when government funding remains uncertain."

"Project hope does incredible work for our neighbors most in need, and because of that, they have received tremendous support from our community," said Flexer. "I was thrilled to secure state money this year to bolster their work and give Project Hope a little breathing room as they help more of our neighbors find stability and community."





Courtesy

From left to right: Bruce Kay, Project HOPE board of directors; Avery Lenhart, Project HOPE executive director; Senator Mae Flexer; Elizabeth Lane, Project HOPE board of directors; Tom Devivo, Mayor of Willimantic.

Project HOPE is a 24-hour, year-round organization based in Willimantic that provides emergency shelter, street outreach, housing assistance, and homelessness prevention and diversion services. Formerly known as the Windham Region No Freeze Project, the organization works to help adults experiencing homelessness and housing instability find safe, stable housing.

About Project HOPE

Shelter is not a destination. It is a bridge. Since 2003, Project HOPE has advocated for, supported, and sheltered thousands of unstably housed adults in eastern Connecticut, offering both immediate relief and a path forward. Project HOPE, formerly the Windham Region No Freeze Project, provides adults experiencing homelessness with emergency shelter, supportive services, and community connections that foster lasting independence.

Westview hosts Sen. Jeff Gordon

DAYVILLE — Westview recently welcomed Connecticut State Sen. Jeff Gordon to their facilities for a visit. Gordon spent time touring the Westview campus, meeting members of the Westview team, and learning more about the work that goes into providing high-quality long-term care in Connecticut.

Gordon's tour of Country Living at Westview Commons included conversations with resident constituents sitting outside the Dayville, CT site on a late-summer afternoon.

Gordon spoke with Westview Health Care Center Administrator/Westview Commons Executive Vice President David T. Panteleakos as well as Westview Child Care Center Director/Westview Health Care Center Assistant Administrator Katy Holzer and Country Living at Westview Commons Resident Services Director Mary Belcher. Westview's leadership appreciated this opportunity to hold open and thoughtful discussions about some of the challenges facing nursing homes today; including regulatory oversight, workforce demands, and the growing cost of providing care. With equal priority, the dialogue detailed what makes Westview special: the dedicated people who care for patients, residents, and students every day, and the connected community that Westview has built together.

Panteleakos expressed gratitude on behalf of the Westview facilities for Gordon's outreach and visit, stating, "We are delighted to have Connecticut State Senator Gordon here on our location for the first time. We greatly appreciate him listening to our specific insights with firsthand examples about the realities of long-term care. Thank you, Senator Gordon—all of us here at Westview value opportunities like this to continue supporting strong, sustainable care for Connecticut's seniors."

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

Friends of Assisi Food Pantry announces Thanksgiving basket registration for Killingly, Brooklyn residents

KILLINGLY — The Friends of Assisi Food Pantry will hold registration for its annual Thanksgiving food basket program Friday, Nov. 6, offering assistance to residents of Killingly and Brooklyn as the holiday season approaches.

Registration will take place from 9 to 11:30 a.m. in the Community Room at the Killingly Public Library. Residents seeking Thanksgiving assistance are encouraged to attend during their designated registration period, which has been organized alphabetically by last name to help streamline the process.

Residents whose last names begin with the letters A through L are asked to register between 9 and 10:15 a.m. Those whose last names begin with L through Z should attend between 10:15 and 11:30 a.m.

All applicants must bring identification and proof of address for every member of their household.

Residents who are unable to attend the registration session in person may designate someone else to register on their behalf. The representative must bring the required identification and household information.

The food pantry is also asking families to register with only one assistance agency for Thanksgiving baskets, helping ensure that available resources can reach as many households as possible.

The Thanksgiving basket program is intended to help local families prepare for the holiday while easing some of the financial pressures associated with providing a holiday meal.

Residents with questions about registration, documentation requirements or the Thanksgiving basket program may contact the Friends of Assisi Food Pantry at 860-774-2310 or by email at directorfoodpantry@gmail.com.

Registration is open to residents of Killingly and Brooklyn only.

Paws Cat Shelter to host Drag Bingo Night fundraiser

PUTNAM — Paws Cat Shelter is hosting a Drag Bingo Night featuring the Darling Divas at the VFW in Putnam, 207 Providence St. on Saturday, Nov. 14. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Show includes 10 Bingo games, 12 performances and a table decorating contest. Cash bar.

Tickets are $40, and can be purchased at the shelter, 74 School St., Putnam or via Venmo. Contact Paws at pawsctshelter@gmail.com if any questions.

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

Community invited to Veterans' Day observance

KILLINGLY — The Killingly Veterans' Council extends an invitation to join us honoring our Veterans on Veterans' Day. The Ceremony will be held Nov. 11 at 1 p.m. in Davis Park in Danielson. All are welcome.

OBITUARIES

Constance May Thomas, 85



Quinebaug- It is with heavy hearts and profound sadness, that we announce the unexpected passing of Constance May Thomas, age 85, of Quinebaug, Connecticut, on October 23, 2026, at Umass Memorial Medical Center. Connie was born on September 27, 1941 in Troy, Vermont, to her loving parents Wilfred and Katherine (Breault) Boudreau.

Connie was a loving daughter, wife, a devoted and caring mother, treasured grandmother and great-grandmother. She leaves behind two children, Douglas K. Baird and his wife Amy of Bradenton Florida., Diana J. Fishwick and her husband Thomas of Dudley Massachusetts.

She also leaves behind four cherished grandchildren, Kelsey Ryan and her husband Nick, Jacob Baird and his wife Jennifer of Bradenton Florida, Tommy Fishwick of Auburn, Massachusetts, and Kyle Fishwick and his wife Patricia of Millbury Massachusetts. She was also blessed with eight adored great-grandchildren, Finley, Eden, Monica, Hadley, Colson, Lillian, Lorelei and Lenora. Several loved nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her beloved husband of 35 years, Robert Thomas, and her two siblings Richard and Judy Boudreau. Connie grew up in South Portland and Westbrook Maine, where she graduated from High School. Later moving to Webster, Massachusetts where she graduated from Quinsigamond Community College (QCC), and raised her family.

Connie was employed by the Webster School District for 34 years, retiring from the Superintendent's office, as a bookkeeper/secretary in 2002. She was known for her pleasant smile, affable demeanor, and readiness to lend a helping hand to anyone who needed it.

Connie was a truly special woman, whose life was defined by love, kindness, compassion and selflessness. She is our angel. Her greatest joy was her family. She was devoted and supportive, and always put her family and others first. She cared for her family in every way she could. Her heart was always willing to give, and her words offered encouragement when it was needed most. She gave without expecting anything in return and loved unconditionally.

After retiring, Connie enjoyed part-time employment at Park and Shop, where she especially loved seeing and visiting with people from the community. The friendships and connections she made there brought her great joy and gave her another opportunity to share her warm smile and caring nature with others.

Her life was a blessing, her love was a treasure, and her loss is immeasurable. She will be greatly missed! She leaves behind a legacy of love, family and her faith in God. Her love can never be replaced and her memories will be treasured forever. May she rest peacefully reunited in eternity with those she loved so dearly. All are invited to Connie's Mass of Christian Burial Thursday Nov.5th at 11 AM in St. Stephens Church 130 Old Turnpike Rd. Quinebaug, CT .Burial will follow St. Joseph garden of peace in Webster. Bartel Funeral Home 33 Schofield Ave. Dudley is directing arrangements.www.bartelfuneralhome.com

Ross A. Johnson
1968 – 2026



Pomfret Center – Ross A. Johnson, 57, of Putnam Road, passed away Monday evening, October 26, 2026, in the comfort of his home. Born in Putnam, he was the son of Elizabeth "Betty" Johnson of Brooklyn and the late Donald Johnson.

Ross spent much of his career as a well driller, beginning with Dalmik, where he worked for 14 years, and later joining Richardson Well Drilling, where he worked for many years. He concluded his career as a sign maker with Serrato Signs of Worcester, where he spent 16 years.

Ross enjoyed spending time at Old Orchard Beach, watching football on Sundays at his friend's backyard bar, ice fishing with his best friend, Bo, and sharing many good times playing cards and horseshoes with his longtime friends, Everett Davis and Don Benoit.

He is survived by his children, Christopher Johnson of Putnam, and Chelsea Bergeron and her husband, Randy, of Woodstock; his mother, Elizabeth "Betty" Johnson of Brooklyn; his sister, Brenda Laprade and her husband, Jim, of Eastford; and his five grandchildren, Cole Bergeron, Maggie Johnson, Callan Johnson, Reese Bergeron, and Riley Bergeron.

A celebration of Ross' life will be held on November 14, 2026, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Putnam Elks, located at 64 Edmond Street, Putnam, CT 06260.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Ross' memory may be made to National Pancreatic Cancer Foundation at NPCF, P.O. Box 189, Box Elder, SD 57719 or online at www.npcf.us/ways-to-donate/.com.

Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to Gilman Funeral Home, 104 Church Street, Putnam, CT 06260. For memorial guestbook please visit www.GilanAndValade.com

DISTINCTION
continued from page A1

recognition for a third consecutive year is a testament to the dedication, perseverance, and heart that define the Killingly Memorial School community. When I reflect on this honor, I think of the students who come to school each day eager to learn, the educators and staff who inspire and support them, and the families who partner with our schools every step of the way. This recognition belongs to all of them. On behalf of the Board of Education, I offer my heartfelt congratulations and sincere thanks to the entire KMS community. I am especially grateful for the leadership of Principal Tina Chahanovich and the commitment of her staff, whose unwavering dedication continues to make a lasting difference in the lives of our students. This is a proud moment for Killingly, and a celebration of what can be accomplished when a community comes together in support of its children."

District leaders noted that the School of Distinction designation recognizes more than test scores alone. It reflects a comprehensive commitment to student achievement, educational opportunity, and continuous growth. The award further reinforces the district's mission of providing high-quality educational experiences that empower all students to reach their full potential.

Killingly Public Schools will formally celebrate the accomplishment with the staff and students of Killingly Memorial School and will continue to highlight the innovative work taking place throughout its schools.

About Killingly Public Schools

Killingly Public Schools serve students and families in the Town of Killingly, Connecticut, and surrounding communities of the Northeast corner of the state; and is committed to fostering academic excellence, innovation, opportunity, and student success through high-quality educational programs and strong partnerships with families and the community.

SECURITY
continued from page A1

situation further and release properly detailed messaging when appropriate.

Drake said their response to the swatting epidemic has received praise.

"We have been recognized for our response and commended for our new approaches. We have new procedures that we can take instead of necessarily going to an evacuation or a lockdown so there's less of a disruption, but obviously it's very important that we take every call and incident as a true call," said Drake. "We're better equipped now with knowing those warning signs of a true call."

Later in the meeting, the Town Council also approved the Memorandum of Understanding agreement that continues a collaboration with the Board of Education to maintain a school resource officer for the district. This agreement is required to be updated and approved every three years.

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

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LEGALS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ESTATE OF
James E Warner (26-00414)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate,District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated October 28, 2026, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Elyssa A. Foley, Clerk

The fiduciary is:
Angela Beaulieu
c/o CHRISTIAN GEORGE SARANTOPOULOS,
SARANTOPOULOS &,
SARANTOPOULOS, LLC, 143 SCHOOL STREET,
DANIELSON, CT 06239
November 6, 2026

Town of Putnam
Planning & Zoning Commission
Legal Notice

The Town of Putnam Planning & Zoning Commission will hold a Hybrid meeting on November 18, 2026, at 7:00 P. M. in Room 201 at the Putnam Municipal Complex, located at 200 School Street, Putnam, CT. A public hearing will take place on each of the following:

Docket # 2026-16 High Street Condominium Association is requesting a Special Permit in accordance with Section 703 to convert 2(4Family Buildings) known as 8-12 High Street into 8 individual condo units and for an upcoming build of 4 units known as 16 High Street into 4 individual condo units. The applicant is requesting a waiver under subsection 9(k) and 9(m) be placed as a condition of approval. Property is located at 8-12,16 High Street. Town Assessors Map 15, Lot 108, Zoned R-10.

Docket # 2026-17 Larry K. Groh Jr. & Erica Groh request for a Special Permit in accordance with Section 703 to convert a new construction duplex into 2 condominium units. Property is located at 17 Prospect Street, Town Assessors Map 15, Lots 134, Zoned R-10.

Patricia Hedenberg, Chairperson
November 6, 2026
November 13, 2026

Town of Putnam
Zoning Board of Appeals
Legal Notice

The Town of Putnam Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a hybrid meeting on November 17, 2026, at 7:00 P.M. in Room 201 on the second floor at the Putnam Municipal Complex, located at 200 School Street, Putnam, CT. A public hearing will take place on the following:

Appeal # 2026-007 Joseph Dion requests for variances for the side yard setback from the required 10 feet down to 6 feet and for the rear yard setback from the required 20 feet down to 0 feet for the construction of a new building. Property is located at 284 School Street, Town Assessors Map 12, Lot 17, Zoned HC.

Appeal # 2026-008 Bruce Fitzback request for a variance for the front yard setback from the required 50 feet down to 10 feet for a kitchen addition on the north side of the house and a sunroom on the south side of the house which was built in 1835. Property is located at 9 John Bennett Road, Town Assessors Map 45, Lot 12, Zoned R-40.

Scott Zadora, Chairman
November 6, 2026
November 13, 2026

NOTICE OF UNCLAIMED GOODS Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes § 50-2Notice is hereby given that the following non-perishable goods have been left at [full address of the barn or location, including town and Connecticut county], and the owner is unknown or has neglected to take them away for more than six months: Various tools, parts, engines, pieces of motorcycles, parts vehicles (ford) and other miscellaneous itemsThese goods will be held one month from the publication (30) @ 134 South Street, Brooklyn, Connecticut 06234. If the owner does not claim them 30 days after the date of the first publication all items with be removed disposed of. Any person claiming ownership should contact William Wolak 860-377-1430 or bill.wolak@att.net and be prepared to show ownership pay unpaid storage fees and other related expenses 10/9/2026
October 16, 2026

October 23, 2026
October 30, 2026
November 6, 2026

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ESTATE OF
J. Riley O'Connell (26-00428)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate,District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated October 23, 2026, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Elyssa A. Foley, Clerk

The fiduciary is:
John O'Connell & Donna O'Connell,
c/o CHRISTIAN GEORGE SARANTOPOULOS,
SARANTOPOULOS &,
SARANTOPOULOS, LLC, 143 SCHOOL STREET,
DANIELSON, CT 06239,
(860)779-3919.
November 6, 2026

Town of Putnam
Planning & Zoning Commission
Legal Notice

The Town of Putnam Planning & Zoning Commission will conduct a public hearing on November 18, 2026, at 7:00 P.M. in Room 201 of the Municipal Complex located at 200 School Street, Putnam, CT. for the proposed Plan of Conservation and Development in accordance with Section 8-23 of the State of Connecticut General Statutes. The proposed plan has been filed in the office of the Town Clerk and online on the Town of Putnam website at www.putnamct.us. A hard copy of the proposed Plan of Conservation and Development will be available for review, in the Land Use Office and the Putnam Public Library located in the Municipal Complex at 200 School Street, Putnam, CT during regular Town Hall business hours. At this Hearing interested persons may be heard and written communcations received.

Patricia Hedenberg, Chairman.
November 6, 2026
November 13, 2026

30 DAYS OF

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