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Friday, June 12, 2026

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Republican House candidate under fire for anti-LGBTQ+ statements

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

REGION — A local candidate for state office has drawn a firestorm of criticism from both political parties after a controversial post condemning Pride Month.

On June 2, Jadon MacCormack, a Republican candidate for Connecticut's 50th House District, which includes Brooklyn, Eastford, Pomfret, and Woodstock, posted a message on his campaign's official Facebook Page calling June "Straight Month" and speaking against the LGBTQ+ community that he believes "threaten the innocence of the next generation." The rhetoric drew backlash from both Republicans and Democrats who have called for him to drop out of the race.

June is celebrated as Pride Month, a celebration of identity for the LGBTQ+ community. Over the years, the month has grown in popularity and presence as the community has become more publicly accepted. MacCormack, who Republicans endorsed to represent the party in the race for the 50th District held by Democrat Pat Boyd since 2017, took to social media to speak against Pride Month and the entire LGBTQ+ community calling for voters to "take a stand." He made a promise to "stand firmly against" the LGBTQ+ community, which he feels has corrupted families and "eroded the foundational

Turn To **MACCORMACK** page **A11**

Putnam to host Fourth Annual Arts and Crafts Festival

PUTNAM — The Putnam Arts Council (PAC) is pleased to announce it will be hosting the Putnam Fine Arts and Crafts Festival on June 13 and 14.

This event is becoming another major art attraction for which Putnam is known. It will bring local communities together for a day of art, music, and fun as well as being close to the wonderful restaurants and businesses in the downtown area.

The festival will take place at the Putnam Municipal Complex, 200 School St., Putnam, and will feature more than 55 artists from throughout New England, live demonstrations by area artists, music by local musicians, and more. Attendees can expect to select from a variety of mediums including paintings, pottery, photography, and more.

"We are thrilled to once again bring a fine arts and crafts festival to Putnam and to showcase the incredible talent in our area and beyond," said Beth Johnston, one of the festival's organizers. "Our Arts Council is excited to welcome everyone to experience the joy and creativity that the arts can bring, while supporting local artists, and finding the perfect gift for a loved one or the next amazing piece for your home."

An additional feature this year is the opportunity to visit the Particle Accelerator music concert in Rotary Park on Saturday. This event raises money for mental health awareness. It's sure to be an exciting day in Putnam with a variety of opportunities.

The Festival will run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day, rain or shine. Parking and admission are free. A free shuttle bus will also be available to take visitors to selected sights in town.

For more information, visit www.putnamctartscouncil.com or follow Putnam CT Arts Council on social media.



Courtesy

It started with some messages through the Aspinock Facebook platform wanting to know if we would like a donation of some General Israel Putnam memorabilia. Of course, the answer is a huge yes. This is how we met Frank Racette, who walked into the museum with a large box and a big smile. One by one, the contents came out with ooh's and ahh's over each piece. You can see the great treasures here or in person at our museum. Books, postcards, art and even a pin from a Cracker Jack box. If you have an interest in General Putnam, you need to check these out. The museum is located upstairs in the Putnam Municipal complex and can be viewed from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays. Pictured, left to right, are Frank Racette and town historian Bill Pearsall.

Occupants and animals escape Mechanic Street fire

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

DANIELSON — No injuries were reported following a fire on Mechanic Street in Danielson on Friday, May 29, with first responders even helping rescue a cat from the home.

The Danielson Fire Department has reported that at 10:27 a.m. on May 29, the department was alerted to a first-alarm fire at 263 Mechanic St., an address listed for Rosemary Ridge Farm. Initial reports indicated possible entrapment of children inside the residence, but all residents and a pet escaped safely.

"At the time of the dispatch, a full engine crew from the Danielson Fire Department, along with Car 61, responded immediately to the scene. While en route, QV Dispatch advised that all children had safely exited the home," wrote the department on social media. "Members from KB Ambulance and an officer from the South Killingly Fire Department arrived on scene to find a working kitchen fire. Turn To **FIRE** page **A11**

Interact Club finishes one busy year



Courtesy

Left to right: Alyssa Daniels, Ava Tucker, Paige Perry, Gabriell Cerasiello, Billie Lewis, Mabel Perreault, Calleigh Levesque, Estella Freitas.

PUTNAM — Paige Perry and Gabriell Cerasiello, seniors at Putnam High School, rang the Interact bell for the last time at its award and Induction celebration May 26.

Perry and Cerasiello were this year's Putnam

Rotary's Interact Club co-presidents. They finished one busy year!

In their presentation they listed all the events and activities the club took part in throughout the school year. In August the club: Volunteered at the Kid's Zone in Rotary

Park, distributed backpacks and school supplies to families at TEEG and

Turn To **INTERACT**

page **A11**



Courtesy

This past Saturday, Killingly Track & Field sent the best of the best to compete against the rest of the State of Connecticut in State-Opens! That was Jeremiah Smith and Cooper Logee... although Logee could not compete, he certainly deserves a shout out for qualifying in High Jump! Smith competed in the 110 hurdles, which he has been dominant in all season! He finished 10th with a time of 15.15 seconds!

How much should you really have saved by age 40, 50, 60?

When it comes to retirement planning, one of the most common questions we receive from our clients is simple on the surface, but complex in practice: how much should I actually have saved by now?

It's a fair question, especially in a world where financial benchmarks are easy to find and even easier to compare yourself against. By age 40, you may hear that you should have three times your annual salary saved. By 50, five to six times. And by 60, closer to eight or ten times.

Those numbers can be helpful. They provide a quick snapshot and a way to gauge progress. But they don't tell the full story. Because while benchmarks offer direction, they don't account for the most important variable in any financial plan: your life.

Income doesn't grow in a straight line. Priorities shift; families expand; careers change. Some individuals spend their 30s aggressively saving, while others are investing in a business or paying down debt. On paper, those paths can look very different, even if they ultimately lead to the same outcome.

That's why it's important to view these savings targets not as rules, but as reference points.

Goals for each stage

By your 40s, the focus is less about hitting a perfect number and more about building momentum. This is often a decade defined by competing priorities—career growth, raising a family, managing expenses—and it's easy for long-term planning to take a back seat. But this is also when consistency begins to compound. Establishing a disciplined approach to saving and investing, even if it isn't perfect, creates the foundation

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HOLLY C. WANEGAR
INVESTMENT ADVISER

that everything else builds on. In your 50s, the conversation tends to shift. For many, this is the period where income peaks, and with that comes the opportunity to accelerate progress. This is often where small adjustments can make a meaningful difference, whether that's increasing contributions, reducing debt, or becoming more intentional about how assets are allocated. It's also a time when tax strategy and long-term planning start to play a larger role in shaping outcomes.

By your 60s, the focus becomes less about accumulation and more about transition. The question is no longer only how much you've saved, but how those savings will support your lifestyle. How will income be generated? How will risk be managed? How will all these pieces fit together? And that's why at this stage the structure of your financial plan matters just as much as the size of your wealth.

The magic ingredient at every stage: Alignment

One of the biggest misconceptions we hear is that financial progress is defined by a single number. In reality, it's also heavily defined by alignment—alignment between your resources and your goals, your strategy and your timeline, and between what you've built and how you plan to use it.

Ultimately, the goal isn't to hit a benchmark; it's to create a level of financial independence that allows you to make decisions with confidence. For many people, that realization can be both reassuring and motivating. Especially if they feel like they're behind.

The truth is, very few financial journeys follow a perfectly predictable path. There are periods of acceleration and periods of

pause. There are decisions that move you forward and moments where things feel uncertain. What matters most isn't where you fall relative to a benchmark today; it's what direction you're moving in and whether that direction is in alignment with the end goals of your financial plan.

The next steps

In many cases, the next step isn't drastic. It's not about overhauling everything overnight. It's about gaining clarity and understanding of where you're at in your financial plan, identifying what's working, and adjusting where needed in order to stay on track toward your goals.

Sometimes that means increasing your savings rate. Sometimes it means refining your investment approach. Sometimes it simply means putting a structure around decisions that previously felt scattered.

And in many cases, it means stepping back and asking a better question. Not, "Am I where I should be?" but, "Am I building a plan that supports where I want to go?" Because that's where real progress can happen.

At WHZ Strategic Wealth Advisors, we work with individuals and families to connect those pieces, bringing together investments, tax strategy, and long-term planning into a coordinated approach. The goal is not to chase some magic number, but to create clarity around what's required to achieve your dreams and to build a plan that you can feel confident will help to get you there over time.

If you're evaluating where you stand today, benchmarks can be a useful starting point. But a well-built plan is what ultimately determines where you go from here.

If you're ready to create a tailored strategy designed to support your long-term financial goals, schedule a complimentary discovery

session with us at whzwealth.com or call (860) 928-2341. We'll help you build and maintain a financial plan to connect today to the tomorrow you envision with "Absolute Confidence. Unwavering Partnership. For Life."

Authored by WHZ Vice President, Associate Wealth Advisor Holly C. Wanegar, CFP®. AI may have been used in the research and initial drafting of this piece. 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 Commonwealth Financial Network®, Member FINRA/SIPC, a Registered Investment Adviser. 697 Pomfret St., Pomfret Center, CT 06259 and 392-A Merrow Rd., Tolland, CT 06084, 860-928-2341. <http://www.whzwealth.com>.

2026 Pluck-A-Duck Raffle adds two 'quacktastic' features for Jeep owners, duck enthusiasts

PUTNAM — Jeep Ducking just got better! The 2026 Pluck-A-Duck Raffle Event introduces two major enhancements: Duck Duck Jeep Contest and The Ultimate Duck Count Challenge. These contests are rolled out as two new ways Jeep owners, duck enthusiasts and the community can join in the fun.

The Ultimate Duck Count Challenge encourages the community to Guess the Ducks and Win Big! How many rubber ducks can fit inside a mini Jeep? That's the question Pluck-A-Duck organizers are asking the community in a fun-filled contest designed to bring smiles, excitement, and a little friendly competition.

Now through Aug. 10, the community is invited to submit their best guess for the number of rubber ducks packed into a specially displayed mini Jeep on display at contest sponsor, JT's Appliance. The person whose guess is closest to the actual number of ducks without going over will win a \$100 VISA gift card. The contest is hosted by JT's Appliance, 51 Pomfret Street in Putnam CT and is free and open to participants of all ages. Entries can be submitted during JT's Appliance business hours, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

The winner will be announced on Aug. 11.

"Whether you're a rubber duck or Jeep enthusiast or just enjoy a good challenge, everyone has a chance to win," said Beth Markowski-Roop, Chairperson 2026 PBA Pluck A Duck Raffle Event.

Rubber ducks have become a beloved symbol among Jeep owners through the popular "Duck Duck Jeep" tradition, where Jeep

drivers randomly leave rubber ducks on fellow Jeeps as a gesture of kindness and camaraderie. This contest puts a creative twist on that tradition by challenging participants to estimate just how many ducks can fit into our mini Jeep, professionally painted "rubber duck yellow" by Flawless Painting Pros.

Community members are encouraged to stop by, take a close look at the mini Jeep, and make their best guess. One lucky participant will walk away with the \$100 VISA gift card grand prize and bragging rights as the ultimate duck-counting expert.

The Duck Duck Jeep Contest is a fun new contest for the Main Street Car Cruise, held August 9 in the downtown area in Putnam CT. Jeep owners are encouraged to participate in this year's event and turn heads by creating the most duck-tastic ride in town with this rubber duck themed decorating contest.

Jeep owners can deck out their Jeep with ducks, yellow flair and splashy style, and compete to win one of three new categories, with trophies and a \$25 RUNNINGS gift card awarded to each winner. The duck-themed categories include:

DUCKARAMA - Awarded to the Jeep with the most ducks displayed, largest "duck pond" (dashboards covered in ducks), or the most creatively integrated ducks.

QUIRKIEST QUACK - Awarded to the Jeep that has the funniest, most unique, or custom-painted duck on display

BEST THEME - Awarded to the Jeep customized to fit a specific motif (i.e. pirate, superhero, holiday) that includes perfectly matching rubber ducks.

"We're excited to bring the Duck Duck Jeep tradition and love of rubber ducks to the Main Street Car Cruise with fun displays thousands of attendees will enjoy," said Beth Markowski-Roop, Chairperson 2026 PBA Pluck A Duck Raffle Event.

The Putnam Business Association's Duck Duck Jeep Contest is fun and free, thanks to the support of the Town of Putnam's Main Street Car Cruise and contest sponsor RUNNINGS!

When: August 9, 9am-2pm

Where: Downtown Putnam, Kennedy Drive, Putnam CT

Registration: Begins at 8am. Registration cards can be obtained by visiting the bandstand at Rotary Park on the morning of the event.

Contest winners will be announced and posted by 1 p.m. in the Pluck A Duck Kids Corner, Rotary Park. Gift Cards and trophies will be awarded.

In addition to the Duck Duck Jeep Contest, attendees can enjoy a wide variety of classic cars, custom vehicles, vendor exhibits, food trucks, entertainment, and family-friendly activities throughout the day.

The 2026 Pluck-A-Duck Raffle Event is a powerful fundraising platform for the Putnam Business Association, their advocacy for local businesses and many free community events. The event also supports 37 non-profit organizations and schools who are selling PBA Pluck-A-Duck raffle tickets and retain a portion from every ticket sold for their worthy cause. Additional details on the contests and Raffle Event are available at <https://www.discoverputnam.com/pbarubberduckrace>.

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Poets at Large presents DiCaronimo & Wheeler June 20

POMFRET — Poets at Large will host poets from Fitchburg, Mass. on Saturday night, June 20, at 7 p.m. at The Vanilla Bean Café, 450 Deerfield Rd. in Pomfret. The featured readers that night will be Laura DiCaronimo and Sarah Beth Wheeler. Admission is free and donations are welcome.

DiCaronimo is an optician, poet and wife who holds certification in nonprofit management. She hosts and organizes The Openest Mic series and is a board member of Worcester County Poetry Association. She was the inaugural Dan Lewis recipient and was one of the nominees for the 2025 Spoken Word Artist of the Year through the Boston Music Awards. DiCaronimo has performed internationally, and her first chapbook, "Winner for Trying" (Metaphysical Fox Press), was published in 2025. Her email is listenstotheradio@gmail.com.

Wheeler is a lifelong poet, and has performed from Boston to San Francisco plac-

ing second in the Dancing Poetry Festival. She recently served as a judge for the Second Annual Massachusetts Poetry Olympics. Wheeler has been published in multiple chapbooks and she is co-creator of the album, "The Unforgivable Ghetto," where her poetry is powerfully accompanied with a musical underscore. This event begins at 7 p.m. Contact karen.warinsky@gmail.com to be in the open mic. Age 16 and up.

Poets at Large has brought more than 120 published and awarded poets to the area since 2020 and dozens of people have participated in the open mic portions during that time. Poets at Large is a project of Windham Arts. All events are ADA compliant and are recommended for ages 16 and up. Readings for the rest of the season are sponsored in part by donations from bankHometown, Charter Oak FCU, WHZ Financial and The Putnam Area Foundation. Contact karen.warinsky@gmail.com to sign up for the open mic; five-minute max as time allows.

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OPINION

Opinion and commentary from the Quiet Corner

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Brooklyn EMS needs you!

To the Editor:

After offering public comment at three meetings and creating a Facebook post questioning the decision for our town to change ambulance providers, I was invited to a Mortlake Board of Directors meeting. In many ways, I feel that the conversation that evening was a productive one.

I still do not agree with the decision to change ambulance providers. Going forward with the plan to have American Ambulance be our emergency provider, ambulance service will not look the same. However, we can be assured that when 911 is called, an ambulance will come to your home. This ambulance will be a "vanulance," not the typical ambulance that you are used to seeing. If you are not on Medicare or Medicaid, the bill that you receive will be at least 40 percent higher. So although, you would be seeing a savings in your annual tax bill, American Ambulance is not really offering a savings, they're just shifting where they're receiving that money from. I'm also not convinced that depending entirely on mutual aid for second ambulance calls is the best way to move forward.

While meeting with the Board of Directors, it was agreed that they followed the meeting procedures for sharing information and that they thought that the public was aware of the changes that were happening. They conceded that now they can see that this may not have been as open as they assumed and assured me that they will try to do better going forward.

I could hear that the members of the Board of Directors who worked on this change did so in a short time. They felt pressured by the upcoming budget vote. I think that the decision was rushed and that the Mortlake members who were allowed to vote and choose the ambulance contract were not given the time to understand and digest the information involved in all the options to the same depth that I was at this meeting. It was clear that the members of the Board of Directors have been tasked with many responsibilities and they are tired. I believe that the decision to put forward American Ambulance as the choice for our town was made partly because of

this. American Ambulance is the least expensive choice and that they believed would cause the least amount of discussion at budget time. It also relieves the Board of Directors of many of their responsibilities.

At the Town Forum on May 28, a discussion was held regarding how emergency services are going to look in our town going forward. We do not have the same amount of volunteers that we had years ago and there are fewer young volunteers joining the fire departments. If this continues, we may find ourselves in a situation where we need to consider other options for fire service which would be much more expensive than the volunteer model that we're now using. It is up to us, as townspeople, to step up and help with our emergency services. The volunteers that we have now are carrying a burden that is wearing them out.

Volunteering can look like receiving training as an EMT or Firefighter and becoming an emergency provider. But, that is not the only way that you can serve your town. Every resident of the town has different skills which can be of value. The fire department can use people skilled in accounting, grant writing, cleaning, website development, landscaping, building maintenance, vehicle repair, and community engagement. This list is just a beginning - think about the skills that you have or the services that your business can offer and look toward sharing those with our fire department.

Anyone can apply to be an associate member of the fire department and help our emergency services by volunteering. Find an application on the Web site mortlakefire.com. Click on the "make a difference" tab and scroll to the bottom for an application. If you have questions, the fire department can be contacted at 860-774-7555. There is an administrative assistant at the department Monday to Friday from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Let the changes to our ambulance service be a wake up call to our community to become involved and so we can do better!

COURTNEY CROFTS
 BROOKLYN

Blaming Trump for Colbert's cancellation is silly

To the Editor:

A regular contributor to this Opinion page recently opined that Stephen Colbert's show was cancelled because "our thin-skinned egomaniac president wants to silence anyone who disagrees with him."

Claims of this nature are from ignorance, or are opposition efforts to drag and attach Trump to any and all skullduggery. "Late Night" shows have been on a slide since their peak, when Johnny Carson was averaging 15 to 17 million nightly viewers per show. Compare that to Colbert's 2.7 million for each show during the past year and Kimmel's 2.5 million, and it is plain to see that it is nearly impossible for the networks to monetize "Late Night."

We must demand basic human decency from our representatives

To the Editor:

As a resident of Woodstock/50th District and a licensed mental health professional with nearly 30 years of experience counseling traumatized children and families, I feel a professional and moral obligation to speak out regarding the recent social media post by state representative candidate Jadon MacCormack, as posted on social media ("X"). This image and repost, juxtaposes an image of a noose with the caption, "The Bible has a better idea" in response to the LGBTQ+ community. This post crosses a dangerous line from political rhetoric into the psychological endangerment of our community members. It's not only disturbing, it's abusive.

My entire career has been dedicated to helping children and families build resilience through grief, conflict, and trauma, including designing psychosocial support programs for families surviving active warfare. I know firsthand how institutional and cultural safety matters to the developing minds of children and teens. When an individual seeking legislative power utilizes imagery explicitly tied to execution and terror to target a specific demographic, it severely disrupts that sense of safety, and it risks normalizing such hatred.

We stand with our fellow Windham County communities

To the Editor:

The past few days have seen our greater bipartisan Windham County community unite in the condemnation of viciously ignorant and opportunistic remarks made by the current Republican candidate for the 50th District Assembly seat.

The Putnam Democratic Town Committee denounces this individual, his poor judgment, and misguided candidacy, and encourages all area Republican leadership and candidates to repudiate his run for office. Clearly, his campaign strategy was to gain publicity; but this defies the adage that even "bad publicity is good publicity." He wanted our attention—he certainly has it now—along with the attention of over 23,000 residents and

voters in Ashford, Brooklyn, Eastford, Hampton, Mansfield, Pomfret, and Woodstock. These are our neighbors: people we work with, friends we attend church with, celebrate our children at school gatherings, and share the joy of our communities with.

Putnam stands with all of the towns in Windham County and the Town of Mansfield in solidarity and the extravagant embrace of each other's diversity, in that we cannot withhold our best in the face of hate and ignorance when it is within our power to act.

MARY LOUISE OLIVER
 CHAIR
 PUTNAM DEMOCRATIC TOWN COMMITTEE

A grand old flag

ATHA Quiet Corner Hook-In. Saturday, June 13, Woodstock Fairgrounds, Route 169 & 171 Woodstock. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Stop by and learn the basics of rug hooking, punch needle, rug braiding, spinning, basket and broom making,



wool applique, hand embroidery and knitting. \$5 entrance fee for demonstration participation. Questions: whisperhill@earthlink.net.

KILLINGLY
 AT
300
MARGARET WEAVER

Support a Killingly Historic Property. Killingly Grange #112, 801 Hartford Turnpike (Route 101), will hold a Chicken BBQ Saturday, June 13 from 4:30-6:30 p.m. Rain or shine. half chicken, corn on the cob, potato salad, roll, watermelon. \$16. Dine in or take out. Limited number of meals. To reserve a meal call or text 860-884-1813. The Grange is collecting non-perishable food for the local food pantries. At the door pay by cash, check, or credit card.

Celebrate America 250, Thursday, June 18, 6 p.m. Putnam Public Library. "A Heroic But Doomed Defense: The Battle of New London" with Matthew Reardon. Learn of the treachery of Eastern CT native Benedict Arnold. Co-sponsored by the Aspinock Historical Society.

DAR Book Club (16+). Killingly Public Library. Friday, July 17, 1-2 p.m. Join DAR members for a special historical fiction book read/discussion on *A Girl Called Samson* by Amy Harmon. You do not have to be a member to participate. Pick up a copy of the book at the circulation desk beginning June 15. Amazon had this to say, "Deborah (Samson), impassioned by the cause, disguises herself as a soldier and enlists in the Continental army. Her impressive height and lanky build make her transformation a convincing one, and it isn't long before she finds herself confronting the horrors of war head-on."

Celebrate America 250/ Putnam. Wednesday, June 24, 6-7 p.m. Putnam Public Library. "Jordan Freeman: The Fight to Set a People Free." Historian Kevin Johnson's portrayal of Jordan Freeman is told from an emotional and exciting first person narrative that vividly illustrates the struggle of an African-American during the Revolutionary War. It is based on extensive research in the collections of the Connecticut State Library and the Museum of Connecticut History. Co-sponsored by the Aspinock Historical Society and the CT State Library.

Celebrate America 250 in Killingly at the Red, White and Blue Celebration Friday, June 26 at Owen Bell Park. Food court, music. Event begins at 5. Fireworks at approximately 9:15 a.m. (weather permitting).

Sunday, June 14 is Flag Day. Do stop at the Killingly Public Library to see the wonderful flag exhibit done by Laurie Waite of Plainfield's Deborah Avery Putnam Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Special books on flags were ordered by the staff of the library for the display.

Do you associate the original American flag with Betsey Ross? An Internet search provided background on both our flag and Flag Day. "(1775): Before adopting a completely distinct flag, the Continental Army used the Grand Union

Words matter in public life

The Quiet Corner has long prided itself on being a place where neighbors can disagree without becoming enemies.

Whether discussing school budgets, land use, taxes, economic development, or elections, residents of Killingly, Putnam, Thompson, Woodstock and surrounding communities have often found themselves on different sides of important issues. Yet most understand that healthy debate is part of a functioning democracy. Strong opinions are not a problem. In fact, they are often necessary.

What happened this past week serves as a reminder that there is a difference between disagreement and dehumanization.

A candidate for public office drew widespread criticism after posting comments about the LGBTQ+ community that were condemned not only by political opponents, but by members of his own party. Republican leaders at the state and local levels joined Democratic officials in rejecting language that many viewed as hateful and inconsistent with the values of a free society.

The remarkable aspect of this controversy is not that people disagreed. Politics has always involved disagreement. The remarkable aspect is the broad bipartisan response. Leaders from across the political spectrum found common ground on a simple principle: no one should face threats, punishment, violence, or discrimination because of who they are.

The strength of a community is measured not by how it treats people with whom everyone agrees, but by how it treats those who are different.

The First Amendment protects speech, including speech that many find offensive. That protection is one of the cornerstones of American liberty. But the existence of a right does not remove the responsibility that comes with exercising it. Candidates seeking public office are asking voters to trust them with leadership. Their words carry weight. They help define the tone of public conversation and shape how communities view themselves.

Residents of the 50th District are facing important issues. Families are concerned about rising costs, education funding, housing affordability, economic opportunity, infrastructure, and the future of local communities. These are the challenges that deserve thoughtful discussion during an election season.

When public debate becomes dominated by rhetoric that targets groups of people rather than solutions to problems, everyone loses. Attention is diverted from issues that affect daily life. Communities become more divided. Trust erodes.

One encouraging lesson from the past week is that residents and elected officials alike demonstrated a willingness to speak up when they believed a line had been crossed. They did so from different political perspectives, but with a shared commitment to civility and respect.

That commitment is worth preserving. The Quiet Corner is home to people of many backgrounds, beliefs, faiths, and viewpoints. No election result will change that reality. After campaign signs come down and votes are counted, neighbors will still see one another at town meetings, school events, churches, businesses, and community gatherings.

Public service should be about bringing communities together around common goals, even when disagreements remain. Respectful debate strengthens democracy. Personal attacks and rhetoric that diminishes the humanity of others weaken it.

As another election season unfolds, residents should expect candidates to offer ideas, leadership, and solutions. They should expect spirited debate. They should also expect a basic level of decency.

That is not a partisan value. It is a community value.

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.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Stronger schools are the key to a stronger Thompson

To the Editor:

In a letter written by the late Joseph Lindley for the 100th anniversary of Tourtellotte Memorial High School, he left a message in the voice of Mrs. Harriet Tourtellotte for future generations of Thompson residents:

“To those students and citizens of Thompson who sit here listening to this letter 100 years after we dedicated the school to my two little girls, there is one thing that I ask; learn, live, and grow to your fullest potential. Respect the knowledge imparted upon you at this fine facility and use it as a means to make the world, and our small community, a better place to live.”

More than a century after Tourtellotte Memorial High School was established, these words remain just as relevant today. The generations before us invested in education because they understood that strong schools create strong communities. They built opportunities not only for the students of their time, but for those who would come long after them. As students and citizens of Thompson today, we have a responsibility to continue that legacy by supporting the schools that have helped generations of students learn, grow, and reach their fullest potential.

As a lifelong Thompson resident and student within Thompson Public Schools, I have spent my entire education experiencing firsthand the opportunities, support, and community our schools provide students every day. This is why community support matters so deeply, not only for the success of our schools, but for the future and strength of Thompson as a whole.

Over the years, I have watched our district work tirelessly to provide students with opportunities that fit nearly every interest, pathway, and learning style imaginable. Whether students are pursuing college, trades, athletics, the arts, leadership opportunities, internships, or technical education, Thompson Public Schools consistently works to create an environment where students are encouraged and supported to succeed in their own ways. The dedication from teachers, staff members, and administrators is something I have personally experienced

throughout my entire education and will continue to value throughout my life.

Because of the positive learning environment of our schools, the continued budget struggles within our town are difficult to watch. Thompson students continue to need the support, stability, and encouragement of their community to maintain the opportunities that make our schools so special. After multiple referendum failures last year and another significant failed vote this year, many students are beginning to feel the uncertainty surrounding their education. While adults often see budget numbers, tax increases, and financial concerns, students see the possible loss of opportunities, programs, staffing, and stability within the schools in which they spend most of their lives. Many of these same programs and opportunities are the accomplishments and successes that community members proudly celebrate and enjoy seeing students have access to, which is why continued support for our schools matters so deeply.

At the same time, I believe students also understand something important: this issue is much larger than Thompson alone. Your vote and opinion absolutely matter, but so does being informed about where many of these financial pressures truly originate. Many of the growing concerns surrounding education funding, especially regarding special education costs and state mandates, extend far beyond the control of our local schools and town government. Meaningful change will require not only local involvement but also stronger community advocacy and attention at the state level where many of these broader funding issues begin.

This letter is not meant to ignore those realities; it is simply a call for greater support, involvement, communication, and peaceful collaboration within our town. Rather than being divisive or attacking one another online, we must remain respectful and productive. Important discussions surrounding our schools deserve more than a yes- or -no vote. If residents have concerns, questions, frustrations, or ideas, those conversations should be happening consistently at Board of Education meetings, Board of

Finance meetings, and public hearings.

I would also like to express appreciation to the members of the Board of Education, who volunteer countless hours to serve our schools and community. While not every decision is easy or universally agreed upon, their continued commitment to advocating for students, supporting staff, and navigating difficult challenges deserves recognition and respect.

Across Connecticut, communities are experiencing failed referendums and difficult budget conversations as local governments try to balance educational needs with taxpayers' financial concerns. These are not issues created solely by local districts or communities, but broader challenges requiring greater attention and advocacy at the state level as well. Enough is enough when it comes to communities being left to repeatedly fight the same battles without broader solutions.

Our schools have spent the past year highlighting student success, academic achievement, athletics, leadership, career pathways, and the countless opportunities available within

Thompson Public Schools because there truly is so much worth celebrating here. Thompson has

a long history of community, education, and pride that is worth continuing to build upon rather than allowing constant financial uncer-

tainty to slowly weaken. The generations before us built a town and school system that many students, families, and educators still care deeply about today.

That foundation deserves continued support and investment moving forward.

Even with limited funding and ongoing financial strain, our educators, staff members, and supporters continue working tirelessly to maintain opportunities for students. However, there comes a point where hard work and dedication alone cannot continue compensating for the growing financial pressures schools are facing.

Thompson is capable of being an even stronger town if we work together. Supporting schools is not only about funding a building or passing a budget. It is about investing in the students who will eventually become the future workforce, leaders, parents, educators, and community members of this town.

As a student who has grown up here, I still believe deeply in our schools, our educators, and our community. I hope our town can continue moving toward solutions through greater involvement, stronger advocacy, and a shared commitment to preserving the opportunities and traditions that make Thompson Public Schools so special.

Sincerely,

MADDISON CARLSON
THOMPSON

Jadon MacCormack is a perfectly valid Republican candidate

To the Editor:

The current Republican uproar over Jadon MacCormack is just the party coming to grips with what the GOP has become in the age of Trump.

For those unfamiliar, Jadon MacCormack is a homeschooled, obviously Independent Fundamental Baptist, and a blatant hardcore social conservative, as opposed to New England Republicans traditionally favoring fiscal conservatism. His extreme views are not anything I haven't seen before. They harken back to the God Family Republic days of the Constitution Party. Former God Family Republic supporters however may find a more mainstream political home in the party of Trump.

Traditionally the parties are center left and center right. In the age of MAGA though, I question whether center right should still vote Red because of Trump re-enfranchising the fringe that previously would have voted third party.

We saw this in his first term with the aftermath of Charlottesville and the infamous “good people on both sides” remark, which evolved to numerous forms of both-sides-ism when it comes to issues like vaccines during the pandemic or other cable news edgelord stuff you might see on Fox or OAN. Most recently we saw it with President Trump's tantrum on “Meet The Press.” Anger is welcome in the GOP again. The fringe is welcome in the GOP again. I'm not surprised at all that the GOP has wound up with a candidate who wants the death penalty for LGBTQ people.

After the worst of Anne Dauphinais, it

does not surprise me that The Trump Corner has gone from “Ned Lamont is Hitler” to “sodomites deserve the death penalty.” These words are a very effective incubator for extremism. I dealt with the Pentecostal version of what MacCormack believes when I was growing up. When I smartened up and got some real education, I wound up Confessional Lutheran instead. However, the fishbowl effect of these woods is something we just cannot ignore, nor do we have the luxury of doing so. I've seen more than enough bad actors over the years taking full advantage of what Quiet Corner people don't know, even with everyone having the internet in their pockets.

I think the GOP is more concerned about bad PR with MacCormack's candidacy than his specific form of conservatism. Let's suppose he won. What exactly would he be able to accomplish? I think he'd just not get along with many others in Hartford and most of what he pushed for would just be academic, and the Quiet Corner already has stick-in-the-mud Republicans doing exactly that. What's another disagreement machine in Hartford between friends?

The party's looking to primary him, but even if the primary fails, I don't expect him to win, and even if he does, I don't expect him to accomplish much. Then his lack of progress becomes political fodder for his challenger next go-round. Either way, as the King James Bible says in Psalm 30:5, weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning.

JAY GERHART
PUTNAM

What happened to fiscal responsibility in Thompson?

To the Editor:

At every Thompson Town Meeting, there is someone to defend the school budget, and it's always the State of Connecticut's fault.

True, Connecticut came up with the Excess Cost Grant Formula for Local Districts. That is an added expense. Sadly, that is not where Thompson's School problems started. Thompson's bloated school budget started in the 2000's with the irresponsible expansion of the school. Twenty years ago, our fearless Leaders with the utmost confidence claimed Thompson needed a school that could graduate 100 students a year. At the time, many town residents said Thompson did not need such a large school; others said Thompson cannot afford it. So here we are, with one of the most expensive schools in the country, fact.

Will Thompson have 40 graduating this year.? Imagine 20 years ago, people right here in Thompson could predict the future.

Big schools come with big expenses. Heat/air, general maintenance. You get the picture. St. Joseph School tuition was roughly \$5,500, yet the public school is well over four times that. Why didn't we sent students to St. Joe's? Yes, taxpayers spend millions on a school Thompson did not need and cannot afford. Generous pay raises for everyone, school bathrooms \$120,000, school lockers \$50,000, gym floor \$33,000, all on borrowed money. This would be a good time to teach the students how to use sandpaper and paint to renovate the school lockers.

What has happened to the Republican party in Thompson? Why this euphoria on spending money? What happened to Republican fiscal responsibility & limited government? Vote no.

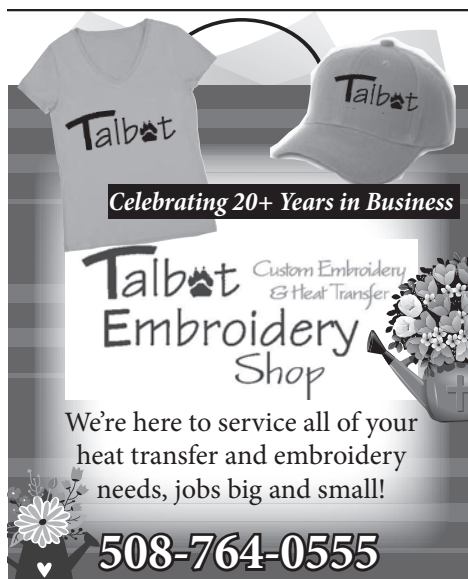
Be well.

LEE LANDRY
THOMPSON

Additional Letters To The Editor, see Page A-7



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KILLINGLY

continued from page A4

Flag. It featured the British Union Jack in the canton (upper left corner) alongside 13 alternating red and white stripes. (See the second DAR display at the Killingly Public Library). While popular legend credits Philadelphia seamstress Betsy Ross with stitching the very first flag, historians primarily credit New Jersey Congressman Francis Hopkinson for the design. On June 14, 1777 (now celebrated as Flag Day), the Continental Congress passed its first Flag Act. It established that the flag would feature 13 alternating red and white stripes and 13 white stars on a blue field, representing "a new constellation." (PBS, Wikipedia and AI references). "Red signifies hardiness and

valor. White signifies purity and innocence. Blue signifies vigilance, perseverance, and justice." (Flag-andBanner.com, +).

Did you know that the Deborah Avery Putnam Chapter of the DAR was named for Israel Putnam's second wife, who lived during the Revolutionary era and accompanied him to a number of his winter camps just as Martha Washington followed her husband, George? Born Deborah Lathrop in Norwich, CT in 1738, she was first the wife of Rev. Ephraim Avery, minister of the second (Congregational) church of Pomfret (Brooklyn society). Her husband, Rev. Avery, and one of her nine children died in 1754 of a "malignant dysentery (which) raged in Brooklyn." She married John Gardiner who died in 1764 leaving two addi-

tional children. Deborah married Israel Putnam in 1767 "and took care of his seven children-the youngest was three years old." They moved to the Avery property in present-day Brooklyn and "opened their house as an inn." Deborah followed Israel Putnam to his winter encampment in New York where she died Oct. 14, 1777. "She is probably buried in the Robinson's family vault at the Highlands of the Hudson in the Episcopal cemetery." (Deborah Avery Putnam Chapter DAR brochure).

Have you had to drive on one of the many roads in Northeastern Connecticut which is "under construction?" I live on Route 21 which has been torn up for quite a while but thankfully is nearing completion. I'm tempted to complain — until I

think about what qualified as a road in the early 1700's and even the 1800's. Early settlers to what is now Woodstock (then New Roxbury, Massachusetts) at least had access to the Old Connecticut Path which ran through a section of their tract. However, can you imagine walking here with your livestock from Roxbury, Massachusetts? Windham County historian Ellen D. Larned noted that the in 1691 Peter Aspinwall of Woodstock was charged with laying out a road across the Quinebaug on towards Providence in what is now Killingly. His "road" wound around the base of Rattlesnake Hill (Killingly Hill/Putnam Heights). Although he petitioned the Legislature for permission to build a bridge, both houses could not agree so people were forced to ford

the Quinebaug for many years. By the early 1700's Aspinwall had moved to the eastern side of the river. (History of Windham County, Connecticut, Vol. I, p.134, Swordsmithe edition). Killingly's early 18th century town meeting records talk of numerous roads being laid out in the young town—many to the meetinghouses or saw and grist mills in the early years. During the 1800's new roads were being laid out to accommodate the growing cotton manufacturing enterprises especially along the Whetstone Brook.

It was not until after the Connecticut State Highway Department was created in 1895 that the roads began to significantly improve, and some stretches of macadam were laid down. However, in 1913 the State passed a \$5 mil-

lion bond plan to utilize concrete which was more durable. The rising popularity of the automobiles fueled the necessity for better roads. If you are interested in a timeline of Connecticut's roads visit ConnecticutRoads.com. You can find a most interesting article on Overland Travel in Connecticut from Footpaths to Interstates at connecticuthistory.org.

Margaret M. Weaver Killingly Municipal Historian, June 2026. 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.



Courtesy

Cub Scout Pack 21 of Putnam and Pack 93 of Hampton spent the weekend of June 5 camping together at Camp Waldron in Thompson. This included a Saturday swimming trip to Quaddick State Park, also in Thompson. Packs 21 and 93, along with the other Cub Scout packs in northeastern Connecticut, offer great programs for boys and girls ages five through ten, having fun while building character and self confidence. To join, call John Ryan, at (860) 928-5873.

SCOUTS CAMPING

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Protecting the Last Green Valley: Health, safety, and welfare over sprawl

To the Editor:

The Last Green Valley is a nationally recognized heritage corridor encompassing 35 towns in eastern Connecticut and south-central Massachusetts. It is known for its forests, farms, rivers, dark night skies, and rural character, qualities that make our region unique and worth protecting.

Increasing pressure from mega warehouses, distribution centers, and data centers are threatening the region. Amazon wants to buy more than 500 acres in Killingly, tearing down dense forest and spending \$200 million for a 1.3 million-square-foot facility operating 24/7. (WFSB) CT already has 52 data centers and 267 warehouses across 169 towns. How many more hundreds of acres of green land must be consumed before residents ask: when is enough, enough?

Communities across the country are questioning whether these projects deliver the promised benefits. In Essex, Vt., after nearly four months of public meetings, local officials voted 4 to 2 to deny Amazon's proposal, it would have been the company's first facility in the state. The board cited "incomplete, contradictory, and unreliable information on critical traffic issues" as central to its rejection. Vermont state regulators have since dealt Amazon a further blow, denying a permit to build a road necessary to access the site, a decision a community attorney called "a victory for the legal process, the rule of law, and local communities who want to stand up against one of the most powerful and wealthy corporations in the world." (Vermont Public) If Essex, Vt. can do it, Killingly and every town in The Last Green Valley can do it too.

The costs of big-box sprawl are well established: lost natural land, diesel pollution, truck traffic generation in residential neighborhoods, noise, and massive struc-

tures nearly impossible to repurpose once built. Then there are questions like: Will Amazon dodge taxes and demand subsidies it doesn't need? Will it ask for taxpayer-funded road improvements and infrastructure fixes? How many of its promised jobs will be eliminated by its own robots within the next five years?

Economic development should not come at the expense of the health, safety, and general welfare of residents. State and local leaders must ensure that decisions are guided by sound data, transparent planning, and the long-term interests of the communities they serve.

Communities achieve better outcomes when they adopt clear zoning standards, enforceable operating requirements, and rigorous traffic and environmental reviews that protect neighborhoods while ensuring that developments truly serve the public good, not just a corporation's bottom line. (Warehouse study by the Capitol Region Council of Governments)

What can we do? Attend town planning and zoning meetings. Submit public comments before the July deadline on the Killingly proposal. Call state legislators. Demand that Connecticut conduct a comprehensive study of the cumulative impacts of warehouses, distribution centers and data centers on land, water, air, and transportation before approving any more mega-facilities.

The Last Green Valley's dark skies and quiet roads belong to the people who live here, not to the next corporate giant looking for cheap land and a tax break. Show up. Speak up. The Quiet Corner is worth defending and is counting on us.

LISA ARENDS
BROOKLYN

Commentaries

To the Editor:

The One Citizen, One Vote letter in the June 5 edition of the Thompson Villager does not understand the reason for the Electoral College process. This process was established to prevent voters in large metropolitan areas (New York, Los Angeles, etc.) from determining the results of elections due to the vast number of voters there versus the much smaller voter numbers in smaller States (Maine, Rhode Island Wyoming, etc.)

If the Electoral College was eliminat-

ed, large cities would determine election results, not the one citizen, one vote from Woodstock.

Congratulations to the writer of the Thompson school spending letter in the same Villager issue. Well done, Tim Piette, on clearly showing why the Thompson Public School system budget is "extravagant and wasteful."

Thank You,

DICK TRUDEAU
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Local residents earn degrees from Clark University

WORCESTER, Mass. — Clark University held its Commencement exercises at the DCU Center in Worcester, Mass., on Monday, May 18. The University awarded 612 bachelor's degrees and 636 graduate degrees and conferred two honorary degrees during two ceremonies; graduates represented 49 states and 69 countries.

The following students earned degrees from Clark: Sarah Lucas of Woodstock graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. Lucas is a member of the Fiat Lux honor society.

Andrea Van Wormer of North Grosvenordale graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice-Legal Studies.

Clark University President David B. Fithian urged the graduates to be engaged global citizens.

"The world needs you to exhibit the value of higher education, to exercise principles of free expression, to

believe in the progress of ideas, and to defend democracy and individual rights - even, and especially, when doing so requires listening across deep differences," President Fithian said.

Dr. Wendy L. Freedman, one of the world's most accomplished astrophysicists, delivered the undergraduate ceremony address. Freedman, currently the John and Marion Sullivan University Professor of Astronomy and Astrophysics at the University of Chicago, is widely recognized for her leadership of the Hubble Space Telescope Key Project, which produced the first precise measurements of the Hubble constant (the rate at which the universe is expanding) and dramatically refined scientific understanding of the scale, age, and expansion of the universe.

Early in her career, Freedman told the graduates, her research arrived at a conclusion different than the accepted view of those in her field. She

carried on despite opposition. Freedman noted that Clark physicist Robert H. Goddard, who 100 years ago launched the world's first liquid fuel rocket, an advancement that helped pave the way for man to reach the moon, faced similar skepticism. After experiencing multiple failures and widespread derision, Goddard in 1926 launched his rocket, which traveled 2.5 minutes, rose 41 feet into the air, and landed in a cabbage patch.

"From a cabbage field to lunar and even farther missions," said Freedman, "it is an important reminder of the power of persistence."

Dr. Wendy Freedman was awarded the degree of Doctor of Science, honoris causa.

Student speaker William Stafford '26, a political science major and aspiring lawyer, spoke to his peers about how choices shape a person.

"We don't always get to choose our circumstances, but we always get to choose how we respond to

them, and who we become because of them," said Stafford. "And now we're about to step into a world that won't always give us clear directions. There won't always be a syllabus. No one's going to tell you exactly what to do next. But you will always have the ability to choose."

Sir Andrew Steer, one of the world's foremost climate experts, addressed Clark University students receiving master's and doctoral degrees, and encouraged them to act boldly and remain hopeful, no matter their path.

In his address after receiving a Doctor of Humane Letters degree, Steer acknowledged that the students are graduating into a world with several major challenges - among them, AI, the erosion of trust in facts and truth, and dysfunctional governments. The last half-century has seen unimaginable progress and growth - demographically, technologically, and economically. "But this explosion of the human

economic footprint has put unprecedented pressure on the planet and created severe inequality and social challenges."

Steer praised Clark's new School of Climate, Environment, and Society for including economics in its interdisciplinary lineup, which "is pointing precisely to the systems change we will need to address climate change." And every single member of the Class of 2026 has a part to play, he said, whatever their field - education, finance, social work, healthcare, the arts.

Steer then turned his gaze fifty years into the future. "What will the world look like? My prediction is that it will be cleaner, greener, healthier, more prosperous, and more just. It's up to you."

Nourhan Beshir Attia, graduating with a master's in environmental science and policy, delivered the graduate student address. A native of Egypt, she shared that the COVID-19 pandemic forced the can-

cellation of her bachelor's degree ceremony in 2020.

"When I came to Clark, I thought I was looking for acceptance as someone coming from Egypt," Beshir Attia said. "As a modest Muslim hijabi woman, I wondered: Will I belong here? And yes, I found people who respected me. But the most important thing I found was something I wasn't expecting. I found the moment I stopped waiting for permission to be myself."

Founded in 1887, Clark University is a liberal arts-based research university that prepares its students to meet tomorrow's most daunting challenges and embrace its greatest opportunities. Through 33 undergraduate majors, more than 30 advanced degree programs, and nationally recognized community partnerships, Clark fuses rigorous scholarship with authentic world and workplace experiences that empower our students to pursue lives and careers of meaning and consequence.

Killingly High School announces honor roll

KILLINGLY — Killingly High School has released its honor roll for the third quarter of the 2025-2026 school year.

The following Seniors achieved High Honors in Quarter 3: Layla Adams, Hayden Allard, Emma Belliveau, Ezekiel Benoit, Gavin Bessenaire, Jaliyah Blair, Samantha

Bourque, Elizabeth Carlson, Alena Clayton, Shannon Donovan, Kane Geddis, Christopher Graff, Kristine Hamilton, Melody Hutchinson, Emerson Joly, Evan Kozey, Alex Murdock, Lily Peckham, Mackenzie Pothier, Cheyenne Reynolds, Talia Santese, Tyler Smith, Samantha Smyth, Amaya Spadola.

First Honors: Peityn Adams, Hunter Allard, Michael Allen, Amirah Alston-Madison, Aniyah Basehore, Jace Basinet, Lillian Beach, Aurora Beggs, Isaiah Benoit, Adam Breton, Logan Burt, Nicholas Caron, Chase Conklin, Gavin Corrao, Abbey Danielson, Morgan Deojay, Jenna DiFusco, Jayden Durand, Kayce Edwards, Brianna Gervais, Joseph Gould, Siobhan Hart, Savannah LaFlash, Aiden Lamotte, Miguel Morente Uz, Walter Okoney, Ella Pereira, Elizabeth Poplawski, Klaus Resulaj, Julianna Rodriguez, Kendall Rosen, Brianna Schardt, Callan Senecal, Sebastian Sierakowski, Brian Smith, Quinn Sumner, Hailey Therrien, Sophia Tomany, Mariette Vien.

Second Honors: Jayden Alvarez, Aliza Asselin, Samantha Baker, Brady Brezniak, Eva Briere, Hailey Collins, Grace Cook, Madison Cote, Jacob Cozza, Neishalie Delbrey, Kiara Delvalle, Hannah Desimone, Kalynn Dombkowski, Ella Dunn, Michael Fabiano, Roman Garcia Colococho, Ian Gaudet, Selena Gonzalez, Alexa Gregoire, Kaiden Guertin, Ethan Hall, Lilli Herbrandt, Hannah Highley, Angelina Hitchew, Amber Hunt, Ava Johnston, Lacie Keegan, Teagan Klewin, Chris Kokinakis, Isaac Lake, Logan Lamontagne, Lindsay Lemery, Dakota Loring, Joseph Mackie, Grace Main, Ashleigh Mendoza, Chloe Moniz, Madison Moreau, Ella Moyer, Owen Murray, Exael Padilla, Jordan Parker, Giuliana Rheume, Riley Ritchotte, Joseline Sanchez-Ruelas, Jake Sangasy, Donovan Stephenson, Ryan Webster, Logan Zajac, Hugo Zayas.

The following Juniors achieved High Honors in Quarter 3: Aiden Anforth,

Logan Brooks, Chloe Cesolini, Rowan Crousey, Kayla Drinkwater, Tomas Gutierrez, Addyson Larkin, Alisa Libby, Gracie Pekarovic-West, Edward Purcell, Trevor Remillard, Alexa Rodriguez, Sophia St. Germain, Kendall Ternowchek, Cydney Thompson, and Allegra Turbayevskiy.

First Honors: Shai Baker, Jiyeard Baldwin, Quin Crowley, Felicia Desabota, Justin Dominguez-Bolaina, Owen Hartley, Zoe Labonte, Emilie Lecrone, William Mancini, Taber Mowrey, McKenna Mulvey, Riley Nolin, Sarah Owen, Mason Parker, Jaiden Rickell, Ayla Schaeztle, and Mason Yuill.

Second Honors: Alexandria Baron, Zachary Blanchard, Rhylee Boulier, Alexia Collazo, Xavier Cramer, Gaighe DeBella, Willow Deary, Ashton Dubeau, Kaden Dupuis, Brady Girardin, Hailey Gluck, Attilia Jarvis, Anna Kelly, Krista Kettle, Glen Leveille, Jenalys Lopez, Addison Lucier, Brandon Melmed, Esme Miller, Viviana Pearson, Dylan Pedersen, Arionna Pepin, Emily Plantier, Matthew Poirier, Mia Rayta, Max Richardson, Crystal Rondeau, Drew Seiffert, Maximus Shafer, Lillian Shippee, Athena Soler, Christian Tremblay, and Hailey Tursi, Leah Valentine, Atalia Vessello, Jake Voyer, Presley Waterman, Jaelyn Wellman, Amiyah Woodmansee, and Claire Zachow.

The following Sophomores achieved High Honors in Quarter 3: Kylie Anderson, Jaden Barnett, Jake Beaudreault, Ashley Boudreau, Olivia Cabral, Caitlyn Cote, Kate Crowley, Corinne Daniels, Ev Dos Santos, Ava Ellis, Marika Exarhoulias, Michael Gottlieb, Lianna Hutchinson, Zachary Lackner, Peyton Loeber,

Samairy Madera, Sophia Moran, Nina Purcell, Reese Ritchotte, Kalia Rosado, Satya Thongsouvanh.

First Honors: Ella Adams, Riley Anderson, Harris Benjamin, Alexandria Caisse, Alyssa Chartier, Ty Crowley, Jack Daher, Antonio Demaio, Gabriel Dombkowski, Bryce Dumeer, Rowan Frazer, Bethany Garvey, Gabriella Grajales, Madison Hardy, Katie Hill, Jake Jaworski, Liam Lamotte, Loretta Lannon, Scarlett Laws, Victoria Liguz, Jaynie MacQuarrie, Greyson Marquez, Lillian McDonald, Graham Milot, Haley Nolet, Jackson Olson, Rigel Pelletier, Madeline Plumadore, Daphne San Souci, Gianna Sanchas, Jackson Santese, Violet Schaefer, Arianna Turner.

Second Honors: Alan Abbott, Gabriella Adams, Claire Antunes, Isabella Baker, Graciella Baublitz, Samuel Berube, Devin Blanchette, Nolan Bonin, Hannah Bourque, Hazel Campbell, Christopher Caron, Delia Chmura, Adisen Clark, Adrianna Clark, William Clayton, Thailia Collette, Lylah Connetti, Denica Cribby, Alissa Daignault, Michael DeAngelis, Zoey Edwards, Isabella Jolley, Aaden Khamphoukeo, Max Kinsella, Ethan Laoroyal, Jacob Leblanc, Benjamin Lemery, Jacob Long, Emmanuel Martinez, Deven Mix, Monty Niyomkhem, Maximus Normandie, Loxley O'Leary, Ava O'Rourke, Chloe Oates, Jon Palmer, Naitik Pandya, Lyla Rondeau, Brandon Sanchez, Aaliyah Shields, Makayla Stubbs, Nathan Tiffany, Giselle Wolfenden, Rosalyn Worden.

The following Freshmen achieved High Honors in Quarter 3: Rosalie Beach, Declyn Benjamin, Natalya-Rose Benoit, Gabriel Covington, Makenzie Cutler, Everson DeVillez,

Hayden Frazer, Alivia Gagne, Lucy Gavis, Kairah Guertin, A-ris Kuljancic, Autumn LaCasse, Bryce Lemovitz, Adam Lovendale, Alexandria Magee, Avery Main, Adalyn

Malarkey, Gianna Peters, Mabel Peterson, Gabriela Romero-Garcia, Mariya Sarandi, Jaelyn Suprenant, Rosa Wilson.

First Honors: Olivia Cesolini, Peighton Denomme, Jayden Desimone, Joxel Fuentes Ortiz, Jasper Gilbert, Brandon Harrison Jr, Aislynn Hassett, Josie Hebert, Asher Jarvis, Maria Martinez, Xavier Mongeau, Kezlee Morarty, Emily Pedersen, Layla Raymond, Brianna Robbins, Liam Sierakowski, Emmalyn Soullier, Andre Souriyamath, Dakota St. Jean, Piper Vose, Emma Young, Lexie Young.

Second Honors: Ashley Amosco-Gilbert, Abigail Andrade, Olivia Barker, Laylanie Benitez, Mirabella Bonnette, Timothy Carlson, Tayla Charron, Jameson Chester-Ertman, Nathan Comtois, Larry Cote, Ri'Niyah Couillard, Alyson Crockett, Kennadie DaSilva, Liliana Delvalle, Adyson Desmarais, Maria Dos Reis, Zachary Ferland, Christopher Fernandes, Nathaniel Franklin, Zoie Hayes, Cruz Jimenez-Garvey, Kaleb Lavallee, Gabriella Lepine, Osvaldo Lugo, Juan Martinez, Haidynn Miller, Jose Morente Uz, Naomi Nunez, Amani Ortiz, Aubrey Paskalis, Lyla Rondeau, Brandon Polanco, Emma Robinson, Amyah Rodriguez, Collin Schofield, Alexis Schuller, Harrison Seney, Ryane Shutt, Evangelina Stockwell, Braydee Testa, Evah Thuotte, Nathan Toth, Isabella Weber, Emily Zadora.

Woodstock Academy student receives Matt Alsfeld Award

REGION — The Matt Alsfeld Memorial Fund reaches out to young adults with suicide prevention education and scholarship awards. The Fund was created by Matt's family after he died from suicide at the age of 16 in 2017.

The Matt Alsfeld Award is presented to a student who demonstrates care and compassion to the community, befriends those who don't fit into the norm, and treats others with respect. Their post-secondary plan can include college, trade school, or other vocational education. Perfect grades, above average athletics, or extreme extracurriculars are not part of our considerations. The award is meant for students who have much to offer but may be overlooked by mainstream scholarship requirements.

The Matt Alsfeld Memorial Fund has provided nearly \$30,000 in scholarship awards to students since 2017. An award is provided in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island.

This year, awards were presented to ten students: six \$1000 first-place awards, and four \$500 second-place awards, the list of whom follows. The large number of awards is a testament to the sincerity and authenticity of this year's applicants.

Connecticut

Brenden Bush (Griswold High School)

Brenden will be attending Champlain College, with a major in Sonic Arts.

David Genay (Woodstock Academy)

David will be attending college for Mechanical Engineering.

Sabrina Myshrall (Nonnewaug High School)

Sabrina will be attending Rhode Island College, with a major in Diagnostic Medical Imaging.

Massachusetts

Lindie Dorvil (Burncoat High School)

Lindie will be attending college for Healthcare.

Gianna DiPietro (Burncoat High School)

Gianna will be attending UMass Amherst, with a double major in Music and Engineering.

Gloria Adumatto (Burncoat High School)

Gloria will be attending college for Pre-Med Neuroscience.

Gileyza Gonzalez Benitez (Claremont Academy)

Gileyza will be attending Boston College, with a major in Marketing.

Rhode Island

Alex Sundberg (Cranston West High School)

Alex will be attending college for Construction Management.

Chloe Joseph (Exeter-West Greenwich High School)

Chloe will be attending Johnson & Wales University, with a major in Baking/Pastry Arts.

Faith Barlow (Ponaganset High School)

Faith will be attending University of New Hampshire, with a major in Animal Science, Pre-Veterinary.

Congratulations to all!

Assumption students named to Spring Dean's List

WORCESTER, Mass. — Assumption University has announced those who have been named to the University's Dean's List for the spring 2026 semester. Students named to the Dean's List must achieve a grade point average of 3.5 for a five-class, 15-credit semester to be included on this prestigious list, which is announced at the completion of the fall and spring semesters.

Avi Miller of Danielson

Audrey DeFilippo of Thompson

Justin Griffiths-Lam of Thompson

About Assumption University

Assumption University, founded in 1904 by the

Augustinians of the Assumption, is a premier New England university for high-quality education, integrating career preparation and education of the whole person, drawing on the best in the rich and centuries-long tradition of Catholic higher education. Assumption's graduates are known for their intellectual seriousness, thoughtful citizenship, and devotion to the common good. The University offers 37 majors and 49 minors in the liberal arts, sciences, business, nursing, professional studies, and other areas, as well as graduate degrees and professional credentials. For more information about Assumption University, please visit assumption.edu or follow us @AssumptionUMA.

Local residents receive degrees at WPI's 157th Undergraduate Commencement

WORCESTER, Mass. — Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) celebrated the accomplishments of the Class of 2026 during its 157th Commencement exercises, honoring graduates whose innovation, perseverance, and purpose-driven achievements will help shape the future. Ceremonies were held on May 14 and 15 at the DCU Center, where WPI awarded nearly 1,200 bachelor's degrees, over 600 master's degrees, and more than 60 doctoral degrees to graduates across a broad spectrum of disciplines in science, engineering, technology, business, and the humanities. Together, these graduates join a global network of WPI changemakers prepared to lead with

knowledge, creativity, and impact.

WPI President Grace Wang and Board of Trustees Chair William Fitzgerald presided over the university's undergraduate Commencement exercises.

In her address, Wang reminded graduates that their WPI education has prepared them not only with technical expertise and ethical leadership skills, but with the resilience, critical thinking, teamwork, and global responsibility needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving world.

"We stand at the dawn of a new technological age," said Wang. "There's a good chance you will do jobs that are yet to be invented. You will work in companies that are yet to be established.

You will address issues that are yet to be defined. This does not mean we should feel uncertain. This means everything can be questioned, and everything can be new. Never before has so much possibility existed to make the world better, the future brighter."

Delivering an inspiring undergraduate address was multiplatinum, Grammy Award-winning artist, tech founder, philanthropist, and STEAM education advocate will.i.am. Known globally for his groundbreaking work at the intersection of music, artificial intelligence, entrepreneurship, education, and through his i.am Angel Foundation, will.i.am challenged graduates to embrace creativity, innovation, and service as

they forge their own paths.

"How intentional are you going to be with this technology as you unearth tomorrow's industries?" asked will.i.am. "Pick a problem, solve it. That solution is an industry. This is the time for imagination, and AI is not imagining. It's the regurgitation of the human imagination. Turn that off."

As part of the undergraduate ceremony, honorary doctoral degrees were bestowed on will.i.am and Paul Covec '64, an entrepreneur and investor who has played a formative role in advancing technologies that have shaped modern industry.

This year's undergraduate student remarks were delivered by Mena Youssif, who received a bachelor of

science in civil engineering. In his speech, "We Didn't See It Coming," he reflected on the pace of change in the world and the unexpected growth and personal changes students experienced.

The following students earned their Bachelor's degree:

Woodstock resident Eliza Dutson, who majored in Biology and Biotechnology.

Pomfret Center resident Zachary Roethlein, who majored in Aerospace Engineering.

Brooklyn resident Annarose Avery, who majored in Management Engineering.

About Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) is a top-ti-

er, STEM-focused university with an R1 research classification and global leadership in project-based learning. Founded in 1865, WPI's distinctive approach integrates classroom theory with real-world practice, preparing students to tackle critical challenges through inclusive education, impactful projects, and interdisciplinary research. With more than 70 bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs across 18 academic departments and over 50 global project centers, WPI advances knowledge and innovation in fields such as life sciences, smart technologies, advanced materials and manufacturing, and global innovation. Learn more at www.wpi.edu.

Area residents completes intensive capstone research projects at WPI

WORCESTER, Mass. — Zachary Roethlein of Pomfret Center, a member of the class of 2026 majoring in Aerospace Engineering at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), recently completed a senior thesis that is required of all graduating seniors as part of the university's distinctive project-based educa-

tional experience.

Roethlein's Major Qualifying Project (MQP), a research-driven, professional-level project that challenges students to solve the kinds of problems they would typically encounter in their professional discipline, was titled "Performance Analysis of a Stock and Modified P-51 Mustang."

Annarose Avery of

Brooklyn, a member of the class of 2026 majoring in Management Engineering, completed a project titled "Alternative Materials & Designs for Motorcycle Body Armor."

"It's inspiring to see the creativity and skills that our students bring to these projects, as well as the professionalism with which they present their research,"

says Arne Gericke, interim dean of undergraduate studies and director of the Office of Undergraduate Research. "Their experience managing a major project like this—including identifying a problem and researching all of the implications and possible solutions while also managing team dynamics over an extended period of several months—sets them up well for success not only in their first jobs after graduation but throughout their careers."

WPI's innovative undergraduate education is centered around project-based learning, a hands-on approach that offers students opportunities to apply their scientific and technical knowledge to real-world, open-ended problems. These projects produce tan-

gible results that affect the quality of people's lives, an experience that changes both the student and their world.

MQPs are usually team-based and often focus on specific issues or needs of an organization that has partnered with the university to sponsor the students' work. In addition to providing practical work experience that proves valuable to future employers, MQPs often lead to publications in peer-reviewed journals, presentations at regional and national conferences, patents, and entrepreneurial ventures. Others become useful innovations and products for their corporate sponsors.

About Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Worcester Polytechnic

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Area residents complete intensive research projects at WPI

WORCESTER, Mass. — Vicente Bastura of Pomfret Center, a member of the class of 2027 majoring in Mechanical Engineering at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), was a member of a student team that recently completed a professional-level research-driven project titled "Incendios Forestales."

Anjolina Ortiz of Brooklyn, a member of the Class of 2027 majoring in Biochemistry, was part of a team that completed a project titled "Raising Awareness of Vegan/Vegetarian Access in Greece."

Known as the Interactive Qualifying Project (IQP), this project is a core part

of the innovative undergraduate experience at WPI. Centered around project-based learning, this hands-on approach offers students opportunities to help develop thoughtful solutions to open-ended problems. These real-world problems affect the quality of life for people in the communities where students work, giving students a chance to make a difference in the world before they graduate. All WPI undergraduates are required to complete an IQP, usually in their junior year, through which they apply science and technology to address an important societal need or issue. About two-thirds of

WPI students complete their IQP at one of the university's 50+ off-campus project centers located in more than 30 countries around the world.

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

About Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) is a top-tier, STEM-focused university with an R1 research classification and global leadership in project-based learning. Founded in 1865, WPI's distinctive approach integrates classroom theory with real-world practice, preparing students to tackle critical challenges through inclusive education, impactful projects, and interdisciplinary research. With more than 70 Bachelor's, Master's, and doctoral degree programs across 18 academic departments and over 50 global project centers, WPI advances knowledge and innovation in fields such as life sciences, smart technologies, advanced materials and manufacturing, and global innovation. Learn more at www.wpi.edu.

Windham celebrates America's 250th with monumental community event at Jillson Park

WILLIMANTIC — Windham will mark the 250th anniversary of the United States with a

landmark community celebration, Windham Celebrates America's 250th, taking place on the historic Shaboo Stage at Jillson Park, immediately following the 41st annual WILI

Willimantic Boombox Parade.

This monumental celebration will bring together music, history, and community storytelling in a powerful tribute to America's founding era.

Park gates will open at 12:30 p.m., with the program beginning at 1:30 p.m. The event will run

approximately 90 minutes, offering a dynamic, family-friendly experience designed to honor

both national history and local community pride.

Featured programming includes:

- The nearly 100-member Windham Concert Band, under the direction of Kathryn M.

- Niemasik
- Zaccari Curtis and his Quartet, the 2025 Grammy Award-winning Latin Jazz Pianist (Best Latin Jazz Album, 2025)

- The "Windham Troubadours," led by Bruce John

- More than 16 histor-

ical reenactors, including portrayals of George Washington, Israel

Putnam, and Samuel Huntington

- Canned video presentations, including a recitation of the Preamble to the Declaration

of Independence performed by local youth

Throughout the grounds, attendees will also enjoy eight food trucks, featuring a wide variety of

cuisine—from Mexican fare and fried chicken to sweet treats and desserts.

Immersive "Historical Vignettes" will be on display across Jillson Park, bringing the American

Revolution to life through interactive scenes including a colonial schoolhouse, blacksmith and

loom demonstrations, and period punishment stocks.

Float Contest & Pre-Celebration Programming

Prior to the main celebration, a float contest will be held at the America 250 viewing stand,

generously donated and constructed by The O.L. Willard Company, adding an additional layer

of community creativity and parade-day excitement. Production

This event is produced by Willimantic Renaissance, Inc., whose ongoing work supports arts,

culture, and economic revitalization throughout

downtown Willimantic.

Generous support provided by:

- The Town of Windham
- Hartford HealthCare
- The Residences at 804 Main

- Jewett City Savings
- The Windham Regional Arts Council

- WILI Good Company
- The O.L. Willard Company

- CT Humanities
- Eastern Connecticut State University

- The Windham Republicans
- The Windham Democrats

- The Willimantic Police Department
- YONO - Yoga on North and Quiet Corner Float

- The Willimantic Downtown Neighborhood Association

(Sponsors are still coming on board! For an up-to-date list, please visit linker.

ee/

windhamAM250)

Windham's America 250 Committee

- Chris Beaudry, Chair
- Bev York
- Kathryn Niemasik
- Cathy Shires
- Bill Sayers

For more information, visit: linktr.ee/windham250.

Area residents named to dean's list at Quinnipiac University

HAMDEN — Timothy Mozzi of Pomfret Center and Ava Simoes of Woodstock Valley were named to the dean's list for the Spring 2026 semester at Quinnipiac University.

To qualify for the dean's list, students must earn a grade point average of at least 3.5 with no grade lower than C. Full-time students must complete at least 14 credits in a semester, with at least 12 credits that have been graded on a letter grade basis to be eligible. Part-time students must complete at least six credits during a semester. Names followed by an asterisk denotes with honors.

About Quinnipiac University

Quinnipiac is a private, coeducational institution located 90 minutes north of New York City and two hours from Boston. The university enrolls 9,700 students in more than 100 degree programs through its Schools of Business, Communications, Education, Computing and Engineering, Health Sciences, Law, Medicine, Nursing and the College of Arts & Sciences. Quinnipiac is ranked 51st in The Wall Street Journal/College Pulse "2026 Best Colleges in the U.S." and is also recognized by U.S. News & World Report and The Princeton Review's "The Best 391 Colleges." The university is expanding innovative programs for both traditional and adult learners and developing dynamic corporate partnerships. Quinnipiac recently completed a significant capital expansion on its main campus, including a state-of-the-art new School of Business and an interdisciplinary science and innovation hub. For more information, please visit qu.edu. Connect with Quinnipiac on Facebook and Instagram and follow Quinnipiac on X @QuinnipiacU.

Brooklyn's Eliza Simpson graduates from College of the Holy Cross

WORCESTER, Mass. — Eliza Simpson of Brooklyn received a Bachelor of Arts degree from College of the Holy Cross.

Simpson is among 803 bachelor of arts degree recipients Holy Cross celebrated at its 180th Commencement held on Friday, May 22 at the DCU Center in Worcester.

Charlie Baker, president of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and former governor of Massachusetts, delivered this year's address to the Class of 2026 and received an honorary degree.

In his remarks, Baker emphasized the impor-

ance of resilience, personal growth and community, encouraging graduates to embrace life's unexpected turns and define themselves through character.

"Life is a journey, not a destination," said Baker. "The goal is to take the paths that give you the best chance to grow, find meaning in what you do, and become the very best version of yourself. These are the paths that embrace perseverance, build character and define purpose."

In addition to Baker, Holy Cross also awarded an honorary degree to Tim Garvin, president and CEO of the United Way of Central

Massachusetts.

About Holy Cross

The College of the Holy Cross, in Worcester, Mass., is among the nation's leading liberal arts institutions. A highly selective, four-year, exclusively undergraduate college of 3,200 students, Holy Cross is renowned for offering a rigorous, personalized education in the Jesuit, Catholic tradition. Since its founding in 1843, Holy Cross has made a positive impact in society by graduating students who distinguish themselves as thoughtful leaders in business, professional and civic life.

Local students receive student life awards from Nichols College

DUDLEY, Mass. — Nichols College proudly congratulates the students honored for their remarkable leadership, dedication and contributions at the College's annual Student Life Awards ceremony on Monday, April 20. The event recognized individuals and groups who have made a meaningful impact on campus life through their passion, service and commitment to the Nichols community.

The following local students received the awards listed:

Hannah Cozza of Dayville received a Class of 2027 Scholarship. The Senior Class Scholarship is awarded to students who exemplify leadership and

involvement in the Nichols community.

Makala Dube of Brooklyn received a Bison Excellence Award. This award recognizes outstanding juniors and seniors who fully embody the mission of Nichols College and the spirit of student life.

We applaud these students for their outstanding leadership and service. Their contributions reflect a deep commitment to campus life and the culture of connection, collaboration and school pride that shapes student life at Nichols.

About Nichols College Nichols College has earned business accreditation from the prestigious Association to Advance Collegiate Schools

of Business (AACSB International), the longest serving global accrediting body for business schools and the largest business education network connecting learners, educators, and businesses worldwide. Founded in 1815, Nichols transforms today's students into tomorrow's leaders through a dynamic, career-focused business and professional education. Nichols offers real-world learning focused on professional depth - combined with vibrant living, competitive athletics, and an unmatched alumni advantage - equipping students to exceed their own expectations. www.nichols.edu

Morgan Bonin named to Western New England University's Spring Dean's List

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. — Western New England University (WNE) is proud to recognize Morgan Bonin of Woodstock as one of 805 students who have earned a place on the Spring 2026 Dean's List, reflecting their dedication to academic excellence, perseverance, and commitment to achieving their educational goals.

Bonin also earned a place on the spring 2026 President's List, one of the University's highest academic honors.

The WNE Dean's List honors students who earned a semester GPA of 3.30

or higher and who have demonstrated exceptional academic performance during the semester. Their achievements exemplify the hard work, determination, and intellectual curiosity that define the Western New England University student experience.

WNE congratulates these outstanding students for their accomplishments and applauds their continued pursuit of academic success.

Western New England University (WNE) is a private, nationally ranked, comprehensive institution

with a focus on preparing work-ready and world-ready graduates. Founded in 1919 in Springfield, Mass. as a division of Northeastern College, WNE's 215-acre suburban campus serves more than 3,500 students, including over 2,500 full-time undergraduates. More than 50,000 alumni have earned degrees through its more than 90 undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs at Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business, Engineering, Pharmacy and Health Sciences, and School of Law. Students come from

26 U.S. states and territories and 7 countries. Of 45,104 living alumni, 30% remain within the region, residing in the four Western Massachusetts counties and northern Connecticut.

WNE is classified among nationally ranked universities in US News and World Report, and among the Top 100 Undergraduate Engineering programs, and in the Doctoral/Professional Universities category in the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education.

Local student earns Dean's List recognition at Norwich University

NORTHFIELD, Vt. — Norwich University is pleased to announce that Gunnar Basak of Woodstock has earned Dean's List honors for the Spring 2026 semester. Founded in 1819, Norwich University is recognized for its emphasis on experiential education and leadership development.

Dean's List recognition is awarded to full-time undergraduate students who achieve a semester grade point

average of 3.4 or higher, acknowledging sustained academic achievement and dedication to scholarly success.

About Norwich University

Norwich University is a diversified academic institution that educates traditional-age students and adults in a Corps of Cadets and as civilians. Norwich offers a broad selection of traditional and distance-learning

programs culminating in baccalaureate and graduate degrees. Norwich University was founded in 1819 by Captain Alden Partridge of the U.S. Army and is the oldest private military college in the United States of America. Norwich is one of our nation's six senior military colleges and the birthplace of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC). www.norwich.edu

Abbie O'Brien of Dayville named Presidential Scholar at Clarkson University

POTSDAM, N.Y. — Abbie Elizabeth O'Brien of Dayville, a senior majoring in chemical engineering, was named a Presidential Scholar for the Spring 2026 semester at Clarkson University.

Presidential Scholars must achieve a minimum 3.80 grade-point average and carry at least 14 credit hours.

Clarkson University is a proven

leader in technological education, research, innovation and sustainable economic development. With its main campus in Potsdam, N.Y., and additional graduate program and research facilities in the Capital Region and Hudson Valley, Clarkson faculty have a direct impact on more than 7,800 students annually through nationally recognized undergraduate and gradu-

ate STEM designated degrees in engineering, business, science and health professions; executive education, industry-relevant credentials and K-12 STEM programs. Alumni earn salaries among the top 2% in the nation: one in five already leads in the c-suite. To learn more, go to www.clarkson.edu.

Fairfield University congratulates Spring Dean's List

FAIRFIELD — Sydney Lundt and Madison Whitehouse of Woodstock received Dean's List Honors for the Spring 2026 semester at Fairfield University.

In order to be placed on the Dean's List, students must have completed a minimum of 12 credit hours in a semester, have no outstanding or incomplete grades for that semester, and have attained a semester grade point average of 3.50 or better.

SEND US YOUR NEWS!!!



brendan@villagernewspapers.com



Local student named to Bucknell University Dean's list

LEWISBURG, Pa. — Keenan LaMontagne of Pomfret Center, a recent graduate with the Class of 2026 with a Bachelor of Science in electrical engineering, has been named to the dean's list for outstanding academic achievement during the spring semester of the 2025-26 academic year at Bucknell University.

A student must earn a grade point average of 3.5 or higher on a scale of 4.0 to receive dean's list recognition.

Ellis Tech graduation set for June 22

DANIELSON — Harvard H. Ellis Technical High School will hold its 2026 graduation ceremony Monday, June 22 at 5 p.m. at Quinebaug Valley Community College. In the event of inclement weather, the ceremony will be moved to the gymnasium at Ellis Tech.

Pet Pals Northeast to hold low cost rabies clinic

DANIELSON — Pet Pals Northeast, a local animal welfare organization, is holding a low cost rabies clinic at the Quinebaug Valley Veterinary Hospital, Route 12, Danielson/Plainfield town line, on June 20 from 2 to 3 p.m. Cost is \$15 cash per animal. Pre-registration and appointment is required. No walk-ins, please.

For information, registration and appointment contact Pet Pals at 860-317-1720. This is the last clinic until October.

Benson-Flugal Legion Post hosting free breakfast June 20

WOODSTOCK — The Benson-Flugal American Legion Post 111 is holding a free breakfast for veterans and family on Saturday, June 20. Come see our post and meet some of our members. All veterans are welcome.

WestConn announces spring Dean's List

DANBURY — The following full- and part-time students have been named to the Dean's List for the spring 2026 semester at Western Connecticut State University:

Danielson: Victoria Griffin, Digital and Interactive Marketing

Thompson: Kaylee Tackson, Nursing

Tolland: Serah Oyelola, Nursing; Anthony Uriano, Music

OBITUARIES

James A. Benzie March 14, 1947 - May 30, 2026



Danielson, CT - James A. Benzie (Tarz), 79, of Valley Road, passed away on May 30, 2026, in the comfort of his home, surrounded by his family. He was the loving husband of Margaret "Peggy"

LaRoche.

James was born in Boston, Massachusetts and was the son of the late James and Mary (Massey) Benzie. James graduated from Prince Tech in Hartford, CT and went on to work as a Carpenter and Mechanic. He spent many years working for the Town to Killingly as Mechanic, Bus driver and Facility Maintenance with parks and recreation. As known by his alias Tarz, he had been battling leukemia for the past 3 years.

James is survived by his two beloved

sons, Matthew Benzie of Punta Gorda, FL, Philip Benzie of Worcester, MA, his sister, Cyndy Poole of Punta Gorda, FL, as well as Peggy's and her children Brent, Jodi, Ryan and Kyle. His extended family includes nieces, nephews and grandchildren, all of whom will cherish his memory.

James is predeceased by his son Aaron Benzie and his brother, Robert Benzie.

Relatives and friends are invited to a graveside service for James on Saturday, June 13, 11am at Quasset Cemetery, East Quasset Road, Woodstock, CT. A celebration of life for James will be held immediately following the service at VFW Post 4908, 1035 North Road, Dayville, CT 06241. Memorial donations may be made to VFW Post 4908, where he was a life member and Commander numerous times for over 5 decades. For memorial guestbook visit www.GilmanAndValade.com.



Thompson - Robert DeFilippo, 90, of West Thompson Road, passed away on May 31, 2026. He was the loving husband of Beverly (Loiselle) DeFilippo. Born in Mechanicsville, CT, he was the son of the late Alfonso and Anna (Verlotta) DeFilippo.

Flip worked as a sheet metal worker at Pratt & Whitney for many years.

He enjoyed nothing more than fixing things that were broken, and even sometimes things that weren't. There was nothing he couldn't make better!

Flip was a member of Emanuel Lutheran Church for many years, joyfully serving as caretaker and handyman, as well as filling positions of leadership on the church council. And let's not forget to mention his great mashed potatoes at the Swedish Meatball suppers!

Robert is survived by daughter, Sandra Kubis and her husband Tom of Morristown,

TN; two sons, Michael DeFilippo and his wife Kelly of North Grosvenordale, CT, James DeFilippo and his wife Robin Mayfield of White Plains, NY; two grandsons, Justin Murphy, Matthew Kubis; four granddaughters, Emily Kubis, Faith Kubis, Lindsey DeFilippo, Sydney DeFilippo; two great-granddaughters, Kaylee Murphy, Raegan Murphy.

Robert is predeceased by sister, Caroline Hull; brother, Carmine DeFilippo.

Relatives and friends are invited to attend a funeral service for Flip on Tuesday, June 9, at 10:30am at the Emanuel Lutheran Church, 83 Main Street, North Grosvenordale, CT 06255. Reception to follow in the church hall immediately following the service. Memorial donations may be made to either the Emanuel Lutheran Church Memorial Fund, 83 Main Street, North Grosvenordale, CT 06255, or Lutheran World Relief, PO Box 17061, Baltimore, MD 21297-1061. For memorial guestbook visit www.GilmanAndValade.com.

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



MACCORMACK

continued from page A1

values of our society," and spoke favorably of revisiting and applying historical punishments to members of that community.

"This ideology promotes confusion over clarity, prioritizes feelings over biological reality, and seeks to redefine the natural order of marriage, family, and human identity in ways that directly contradict God-given rights and common sense," MacCormack wrote in his post.

The divisive comments sparked backlash even from his own party. House GOP Leader Vincent Candelora released a statement denouncing MacCormack's

post saying he "will not support a candidate who suggests that people should be jailed or hung based upon their sexuality."

Sen. Jeff Gordon, a local Republican who represents Connecticut's 35th District that includes Pomfret, Eastford, and Woodstock, also spoke out against MacCormack's post in a statement on social media, saying he has spoken against hate speech in all forms and "as a community, we do not condone rhetoric like this in any form."

Republican State Rep. Anne Dauphinais, who represents the 44th District, which includes Killingly, also weighed in on the matter on social media, saying she would not endorse

MacCormack, but acknowledged the decision is in the hands of the voters in the 50th District.

"I absolutely do not support the idea that someone should be fined, serve jail time or be executed for exercising their constitutional freedoms. In a free society, people should not be subjected to government punishment, simply because others disagree with their personal partner choices they make in their own lives," said Dauphinais. "We can strongly disagree

with one another's beliefs and actions, but threatening death to those with whom we disagree undermines the very principles of freedom, individual liberty, and respect for the rule of law that our Constitution is designed to protect."

The Connecticut Republican Party posted a statement condemning the rhetoric, which they see as potentially encouraging hostility and violence. The Brooklyn Republican Town Committee has withdrawn its support for MacCormack,

claiming they feel he had a "hidden agenda" when he sought their endorsement. The Pomfret, Woodstock and Eastford Republican Town Committees have posted a petition to endorse a new candidate, Pomfret resident Anthony Emilio, to challenge MacCormack in a primary if he refuses to end his campaign.

MacCormack has seemingly embraced the feedback, doubling down on his statement in subsequent posts. He responded to both Candelora's and Gordon's

statements expressing his commitment to the values presented in his statements and called Connecticut's current Republican lawmakers "weak and complacent." As of our press deadline for this week's edition, he has expressed his intention to remain in the race for the 50th District House seat.

The rhetoric has also drawn backlash from the Democratic party. Pat Boyd, MacCormack's potential opponent, said he was disappointed that the post is drawing attention to the region for "the wrong reasons."

"One of the greatest freedoms we celebrate in the United States is the right to live your life exactly the way you want. But when a candidate crosses the line of basic human decency by judging others and plastering irrational, hateful posts about our neighbors, friends, and family across social media, it threatens the very fabric of our community," wrote Boyd. "I am encouraged by the strong, bipartisan voices, including Republican House leadership, who have stepped up to call out this immature and reckless behavior."

The post also received public condemnation from Democratic Congressman Joe Courtney, who called it "reckless rhetoric" that "erodes the fabric of our communities."

FIRE

continued from page A1

Initial extinguishment efforts were attempted; however, the fire had already begun to spread."

Firefighters began an interior attack of the fire, entering from the rear of the residence while mutual aid conducted a search of the building for occupants and pets. One cat was rescued from the building, although other pets were reported missing, but none were believed to be in the home implying the animals may have possibly escaped or been absent during the fire. All residents are reported to have escaped without major injuries.

The exact cause of the blaze was not disclosed by the fire department. The Killingly Fire Marshall's Office is leading the investigation.

In addition to KB Ambulance and the South Killingly Fire Department, Dayville Fire Company, Atwood Hose, the Moosup Fire Department, the Williamsville Fire Department, and the Attawaugan Fire Department also responded to assist on scene.

INTERACT

continued from page A1

worked in TEEG's community garden; September: Worked on their scarecrow for the Scarecrow contest in Rotary Park; October: Collected Halloween costumes to distribute at TEEG's fall fest, had a booth set up at the Great Pumpkin Fest where they collected canned goods and donations for Caitlyn's Cupboard at Day Kimball Hospital.

In November: Created ornaments for the elderly shut-ins, organized a food drive at WINY, and participated in the Camp Quinebaug Turkey Dip; December: The club's 29th year bell ringing for the local Salvation Army office; January: Salvation Army Kettle campaign pizza party and made Valentine cards for the shut-ins; February:

Participated in the Fire and Ice festival carving an ice block into a soup can to remind people of food insecurity.

In March: Volunteered at the QVR Rotaract Trivia Night and made St. Patrick Day cards; April: Volunteered at the YMCA Healthy Kids Day, and held a food drive at WINY. In May they volunteered at the Putnam Rotary Club's Noe Poulin Fishing Derby.

Rotarians Kayla Morin and Roberta Rocchetti, Interact advisors, gave awards to students who volunteered at many of the Interact club's activities. This year's top award went to Paige Perry for 84.5 hours of community service to the Interact club.

Rotary Club President Kathy Kirk awarded the new Interact Club co-presidents, Caleigh Levesque


and Mabel Perreault, Interact pins. She said she was "So proud of the club because they really live up to Rotary's motto 'Service Above Self'."


Levesque and Perreault, both from Tourtellotte Memorial High School, said their upcoming year will focus on education and literacy. They plan to work with the Putnam and Thompson libraries and they want to continue to work with TEEG and the Salvation Army as well. Alyssa Davis will be the new historian for the club.


The club's first meeting for the 2026 -2027 school year will be at 6:30 p.m. Sept. 8 in the Putnam Public Library. The Interact club is a regional club for students ages 12 - 18. For more information, contact Roberta Rocchetti at robertarocchetti4@gmail.com.


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LEGALS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF

Robert A Olson (26-00218)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated May 29, 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:
Robert G Olson,
51 Boulder Lane,
Mansfield Center, CT 06250
June 12, 2026

NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF

Michael D Burdett (26-00214)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated May 22, 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.

Brenda Duquette, Chief Clerk

The fiduciary is:
Samuel D Burdett
c/o ERNEST J COTNOIR,
MAHER AND COTNOIR,
163 PROVIDENCE STREET,
P.O. BOX 187,
PUTNAM, CT 06260
June 12, 2026

NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF

Richard J Madden (26-00229)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated June 2, 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:
Joseph E Madden, 203 Beaman
Road, Sterling, MA 01564
Wendy A Trudeau, 145 Oxford Road,
Charlton, MA 01507
June 12, 2026

NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF

Karol Avanecean (26-00197)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated June 2, 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.

Brenda Duquette, Chief Clerk

The fiduciary is:
Donna Avanecean
c/o JOSEPH MICHAEL BARNES,
REARDON LAW FIRM,
160 HEMPSTEAD ST,
P.O. BOX 1430,
NEW LONDON, CT 06320
June 12, 2026

Town of Thompson to host public workshop on Neighborhood Limited Enterprise (NLE) regulations

THOMPSON — The Town of Thompson is seeking input from residents on Neighborhood Limited Enterprise (NLE) regulations during a workshop Wednesday, July 1, from 6-8 p.m. at the Thompson Public Library/Community Center - Meeting Room 3, 934 Riverside Dr., North Grosvenordale.

What is a Neighborhood Limited Enterprise? A “Neighborhood Limited Enterprise” (NLE) is a new category of small business in Thompson that was introduced in the 2020 overhaul of the Zoning Regulations. Thompson is home to over 400 small businesses, the vast majority of which are entrepreneurial “kitchen

table” operations run out of the owners’ homes. As is common in many communities, Thompson’s Zoning Regulations have always had standards allowing for these Home Occupations; but those rules only accommodate for the very smallest businesses. The NLE created a slightly more expansive category to meet the needs of businesses ready to grow, while remaining compatible with operating in residential neighborhoods.

Why are we doing this? Since the introduction of the NLE concept to the Zoning Regulations, there have been very few test cases to show whether those new regulations were “right-sized” to meet their intent. In 2025 & 2026, certain businesses did try to apply under these regulations. Although the businesses were viewed very positively by the Planning and Zoning Commission and several members of the public, after consideration it was determined that they did not meet the standards for this new

home business category. This workshop is an opportunity for members of the public to learn more about the NLE concept and then discuss their preferences and priorities for businesses which may take root in Thompson’s residential and agricultural districts. Click here to view the current NLE regulations.

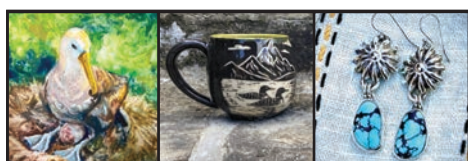
Why do we need NLEs? Thompson has structural challenges to attracting small businesses. The physical inventory of storefront properties that existed during the mill era have largely been lost. While efforts are underway to rebuild the historic downtown, that process will take several years to fully play out. In the meantime, roughly 85% of Thompson is zoned “Rural Residential Agricultural,” but, as noted above, we are still home to many small entrepreneurs. Additionally, some business types may be particularly suited to rural areas but currently lack a legal framework to locate here. The NLE is intended to bridge those gaps.

Who will participate? All members of the public are welcome to attend and participate but due to space limitations, attendance is capped at 42. Please use the Eventbrite registration link to sign up.

How will this work? Following a brief presentation about NLEs and the questions residents may wish to consider, participants will break out into smaller discussion groups. Guidance materials to facilitate meaningful discussion will be provided. At the conclusion, each discussion group will share their observations and preferences. Results of the workshop will be summarized and given to the Planning & Zoning Commission, to inform their annual regulations review process.

Please register to attend by Monday, June 29.

Questions? Please contact Tyra Penn-Gesek – planner@thompsonct.org or 860-923-9475.



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Cub Scout Pack 21 of Putnam got out crayons and construction paper and made get-well cards for a sick friend during their regular pack meeting on Wednesday, June 3 at their chartered organization, the Albert J. Breault VFW Post 1523. Caring for others is something Pack 21’s Cub Scouts learn to do, overseen by trained and experienced adults. Pack 21 welcomes boys and girls ages five through ten. To join, call John Ryan at (860) 928-5873.

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