We are all just travelers on this earth. Enjoy the ride.

PUTNAM VILLAGER

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©2026, Issue #47

Friday, November 20, 2026

Complimentary to homes by request

Thompson honors its veterans



Courtesy

Doris LaFontaine, Delpha Very and Paul Provost listen intently to the history of the Quilt of Valor Program.





THOMPSON — Nov. 11 at 11 a.m., the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Thompson Memorial Post 10088 hosted its annual Veterans Day program at Swanson Park in North Grosvenordale.

Guest speaker Fred Ruhlemann, President of the Danielson Veterans Coffeehouse, shared his experiences with The Wall that Heals, the traveling exhibit that was showcased in Putnam in September.

The highlight of the day was the presentation of three Quilts of Valor; these quilts are given to men and women who have been in service to our country. Paul Provost accepted one on behalf of his deceased brother David Provost, who died in service in 1968; Delpha Very accepted one on behalf of her deceased husband, Daniel. John LaFontaine was unable to attend the ceremony; his wife Doris accepted his. These recipients all served during the Vietnam Conflict.

Brian Fitts, Thompson's November Veteran of the Month and a permanently disabled Vietnam Marine veteran, created the quilts; he received a certificate of appreciation from the Kellogg-Atwater Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the Union 15861-1865 for recognizing these veterans with his quilts. Ida Ransom, President of the Auxiliary to the Thompson Memorial Post 10088 laid the commemorative wreath. Following the ceremony, the community was invited to lunch at the VFW Post Home in Quinebaug.

Brooklyn Cares partners with Friends of Assisi for Thanksgiving food basket distribution

BROOKLYN — Brooklyn Cares Community Center is assisting the Friends of Assisi with food baskets for Brooklyn residents!

Brooklyn Cares Community Center opened in September 2023. We have distributed food to Brooklyn residents at no cost twice monthly since opening. We also offer free clothes to anyone from any town in Connecticut, and have had shoppers from 26 Connecticut towns and three other states! In April of 2026, we began a Laundry Love offering for guests who have low to no income. They join us so they can wash their laundry monthly at no cost! We are a 501c3, supported by the Town of Brooklyn, local businesses and many individuals. We are staffed with 100 percent volunteers and are pleased to partner and support our neighbors.

In 2025, we supported more than 500 households and over 1500 individuals. We distributed 4,299 bags of groceries and 28,700 articles of clothing. This was accomplished with about 2500 volunteer hours! In 2026, we are on track to exceed these numbers. We are very proud of what has been created and this year we are building Thanksgiving Food Baskets for the first time! Our neighbors at Friends of Assisi have been doing this for 35 years, and shared all of their great ideas, forms and procedures with us so that we can replicate their successful distribution for the first time!

We are very pleased to be able to work with the Brooklyn Business Association and Brooklyn Public School students, staff and families to collect food items and create baskets! While we are nervous about this huge task, we are very excited to have many helpers!

We would like to invite you to visit us on Monday, Nov. 23 between 1:30 and 3 p.m., when Brooklyn Middle School

Turn To FOOD BASKET *page* A10

Woodstock Volunteer Fire Department hosts 21st Toy Drive



BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

WOODSTOCK — It's one of the Quiet Corner's longest running holiday traditions, and on Nov. 14, the Woodstock Volunteer Fire Department hosted its 21st annual toy drive, continuing their dedication to helping support local families and provide a magical holiday for children across the region.

Every November, volunteers from the Woodstock Volunteer Fire Association and local schools come together to collect toys to benefit local organizations and communities, helping offset the cost of giving a delightful holiday to children throughout the Quiet Corner. Last year marked its 20th year and things have not slowed down. The crew still sees the drive as one of the most important days on

Turn To TOY DRIVE *page* A10

Senexet Grange holds annual Boot Drive



BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

PUTNAM — The Senexet Grange in Woodstock held its annual boot drive on Nov. 7, addressing a key local need by collecting warm socks and winter footwear for community members.

Originally hosted by the Woodstock Democratic Party, the initiative was transferred to the Senexet Grange in 2023 to ensure the effort remained non-political. Since assuming leadership, the organization has expanded the campaign to benefit clients of TEEG, a Thompson-based nonprofit supporting residents across Pomfret, Thompson, and Woodstock.

Danielle Duquette, Vice President of the Senexet Grange, emphasized that the initiative helps local families stay warm without having to choose between purchasing proper footwear and managing other essential living expenses.

"It's essential not just for keeping feet warm, it

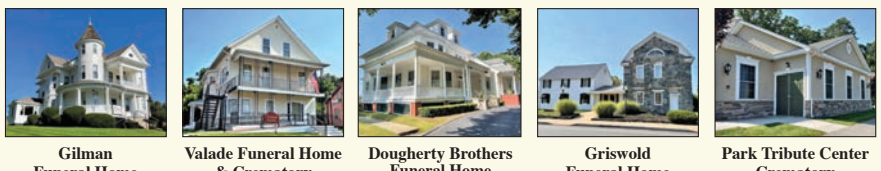
Turn To BOOT DRIVE *page* A10

Early deadlines for Thanksgiving week

The offices of Villager Newspapers will be closed Thursday, Nov. 26 in observance of Thanksgiving.

To ensure that our Nov. 27 edition arrives in subscribers' mail boxes before the holiday, the submission deadline for any press releases and letters to the Editor intended for publication that week has been moved up one business day, to Friday, Nov. 20 at 4 p.m.

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Hellstar falls to Fear of God, holds off Newman, knocks off Darrow

WOODSTOCK — Hellstar suffered a tough 98-89 defeat against Fear of God (FL) on Monday night, Nov. 9, dropping its season record to 7-2 in a highly competitive matchup.

Hellstar showed plenty of fight throughout the contest and held the lead in the third quarter, putting itself in position to pull off an important victory. However, missed free throws, defensive breakdowns, and turnovers ultimately proved costly as Fear of God pulled away late to secure the nine-point win.

Offensively, Hellstar had several standout performances. Zack Dawson led the way with 24 points, three rebounds, three assists, and three steals. Jalen Taggart followed closely with 23 points and three rebounds, providing another major scoring threat.

Siy Siaisiai delivered a strong performance inside, recording a double-double with 15 points and 12 rebounds while adding three blocks. Bright Delves contributed 11 points, six assists, and four rebounds in the loss. Hellstar plays next this weekend in Boston in two NEBL games.

Hellstar rebounded by continuing its strong season Saturday, Nov. 13 earning an 82-69 victory over No. 4 Newman School to improve to 8-2 on the year.

Zack Dawson led the way with 21 points and six rebounds, while Jalen Taggart added 17 points and Bright Delves contributed 16 points, five rebounds and five assists as Hellstar put together a balanced offensive performance against the defending Prep School national champions.

Hellstar's offensive production extended well beyond its leading scorers. Ant Pannell finished with nine points and seven rebounds while adding three blocks. Jason Nistrio chipped in seven points and six rebounds in the win.

Siy Siaisiai recorded four points, nine rebounds and three blocks, while Antoine Caughman added four points, eight rebounds and three assists. Isaac Olaniba contributed four points and four rebounds, and Ty Grudzien filled the stat sheet with three rebounds, three assists and three steals.

With the win secured, Hellstar will have little time to celebrate. The team returns to the court Sunday morning in Boston for another challenging matchup against No. 9 Darrow School of New York.

Tipoff is scheduled for 11:50 a.m. as Hellstar looks to build on its 8-2 record and extend its winning momentum.

Hellstar added another impressive victory to its résumé Sunday afternoon, Nov. 14, defeating No. 9 Darrow, 67-54, to improve to 9-2 on the season.

The No. 1-ranked Hellstar squad delivered another strong performance, following up a successful weekend that included victories over the No. 4 and No. 9 teams in the rankings.

Head coach Thomas Espinosa was pleased with the team's performance and the statement it made against two highly ranked opponents.

"We just had a great weekend, knocking off the No. 4 and No. 9 teams. Being No. 1, you always have a target on your back, and opponents always want their best game against you. We showed a lot this weekend and knocked off two really good teams," said Espinosa.

Leading the way against Darrow was Jalen Taggart, who finished with a game-high 19 points and added four steals and a block.

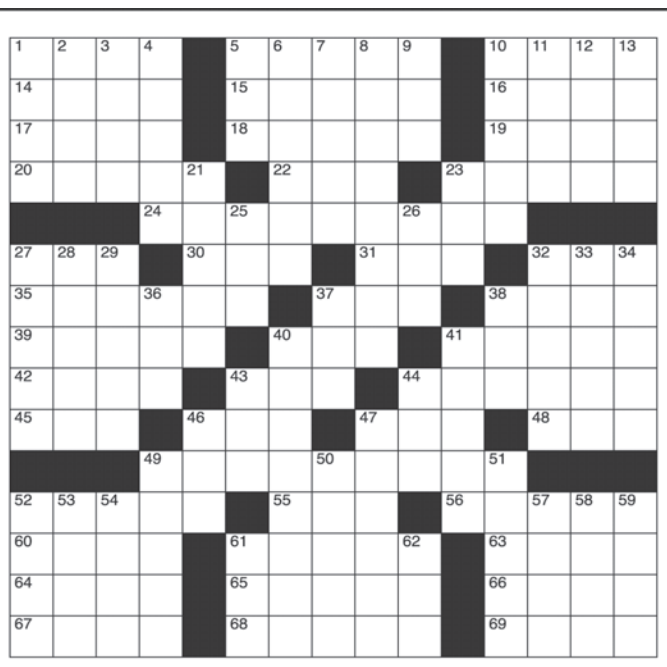
Antoine Caughman, Jr. contributed 12 points and three rebounds, while Siy Siaisiai made his presence felt inside with nine points, eight rebounds and three blocks.

Zack Dawson delivered an all-around performance with eight points, nine rebounds, three assists and three steals. Ant Pannell added six points, five rebounds and two blocks.

Bright Delves chipped in five points and six assists, while Jason Nistrio also scored five points, grabbed five rebounds and recorded two blocks. Ty Grudzien finished with two points, three rebounds and three steals in the win.

With the victory, Hellstar moves to 9-2 and will look to carry its momentum into another busy week in Florida. Hellstar plays Tuesday night against the Cold Hearts in an OTE battle, with an 8 p.m. tipoff. The team will be back on the court Wednesday night against the City Reapers, also scheduled for an 8 p.m. start.

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Perceive a sound
5. Pretends to be
10. Type of guitar
14. Actor Idris
15. A citizen of Iran
16. Creative
17. Keep under control
18. Weight unit for precious stones
19. You better call him
20. Fanatical
22. Male cat
23. Jewish spiritual leader
24. One who takes risks
27. A way to nail
30. Cool!
31. Progressive policy supporter
32. "Losing My Religion" rockers
35. Step-shaped recess
37. Round globular seed
38. Somewhat
39. Butterhead lettuces
40. Color at the end of the spectrum
41. Lines where fabrics are sewn together
42. Dodgers great Hershiser
43. Floor covering
44. Traveled aimlessly
45. Rocker Stewart
46. Body art
47. Congressman (abbr.)
48. No seats available
49. Categorizes
52. Iraq-Syria border town
55. Ballplayer's tool
56. Type of sword
60. Baseball team
61. Upper bracts of grass
63. Italian seaport
64. Ancient city in Syria
65. Shoelace tube
66. U. of Miami mascot is one
67. South American nation
68. "Nebraska" director Alexander
69. Upper body part

CLUES DOWN

1. German courtesy title
2. Ancient Greek City
3. Skin care manufacturer
4. A long-legged frog
5. Photo
6. Delivered a speech
7. Lute in northern Indian music
8. Decorated
9. Take a seat
10. Bottom layer
11. Type of horse
12. Ticket part
13. Defunct currency of Guinea
21. Challenges
23. Popular BBQ food
25. Subway rodent
26. By way of
27. Shady garden alcove
28. City in Egypt
29. __ and flowed
32. Large quantities of paper
33. Eurasian wheat
34. Act incorrectly
36. Layer of water right above sediment (abbr.)
37. Al Bundy's wife
38. Ocean
40. Large, round root
41. Sound units
43. Knock
44. Soak in water
46. Hot drink
47. A cotton fabric with a satiny finish
49. Rumanian city
50. Come back from being down
51. Vaccine developer
52. Canadian law enforcers
53. Wings
54. "Perry Mason" actor Raymond
57. Small fry
58. __ Clapton, musician
59. Gamble
61. Semi-liquid food
62. Consumed food

PUZZLE SOLUTION

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Living Faith UMC hosting Parents Day Out event

PUTNAM — Living Faith United Methodist Church at 53 Grove St. in Putnam is holding their first "Parents Day Out" event on Nov. 21 from 2-5 p.m.

Realizing that parents of young children need some time by themselves, Living Faith has scheduled three hours for children between the ages of three and nine to have childcare for a cozy, fun-filled afternoon.

This is a free event for children. There will be Holiday themed activities, stories and snacks.

Children must be registered by calling 860-230-6804.

Parenting is a beautiful journey - and it's also exhausting! If you need a little time to yourself, we've got you covered. Let us treat your children to fun and games in a safe environment while you choose how to spend some time off.

The things worth fixing

CORNER OF KINDNESS

By CHIP

There's an old saying that goes something like this: If it ain't broke, don't fix it. I've always liked that bit of Yankee wisdom, although I've come to believe there's something equally important that ought to go along with it. If something is broken, that doesn't necessarily mean you ought to throw it away.

I was thinking about that recently while looking at a perfectly good household item that had developed one small problem. Nothing serious, mind you. The sort of thing that, 30 or 40 years ago, would have sent a fellow rummaging through a coffee can full of screws, washers and assorted bits of hardware.

These days, the first instinct seems to be to look up the price of a replacement.

Somewhere along the way, we became a society that finds it easier to replace things than repair them. And while I understand the economics of it, I can't help wondering what we've lost in the process.

Growing up in New England, you learned pretty early that most things deserved a second chance. A lawn mower that wouldn't start wasn't necessarily a dead lawn mower. A chair with a loose leg wasn't headed for the dump. And a pair of work boots with worn soles might still have a few good miles left in them.

People fixed things because money was tight, certainly, but there was something more to it. There was pride in knowing how things worked, satisfaction in solving a problem and a healthy reluctance to waste something that still had value.

My father's generation understood that better than most. They weren't necessarily sentimental about their possessions. They were practical. If a repair cost a dollar and a replacement cost 10, the decision didn't require much discussion.

Of course, the world has changed. Plenty of modern products aren't designed to be repaired. Try taking apart a household appliance today and you'll discover screws that require a special tool, plastic pieces that snap when you touch them and electronic components that might as well have come from a spaceship.

I sometimes suspect the manufacturers would prefer that we didn't look inside.

Still, I think the old repair mentality has something to teach us, and not only about appliances.

Consider how quickly we sometimes give up on things that have become inconvenient. A hobby gets difficult, so we abandon it. A friendship grows distant, so we stop calling. A disagreement develops, and rather than work through it, we decide the relationship isn't worth the trouble.

Now, I'm not suggesting that every broken relationship can or should be repaired. Some situations are better left behind. But there are plenty of ordinary misunderstandings that could be settled with a conversation, a little patience and the willingness to admit we might have been wrong.

That last part can be particularly difficult for a stubborn New Englander. I speak from experience.

There's also something to be said for passing along the skills that earlier generations took for granted. Knowing how to sew on a button, sharpen a tool, change a tire or tighten a loose hinge may not seem especially impressive. But those little abilities give a person a certain independence.

And independence has always been a valuable commodity around here.

I think about the older houses scattered throughout Woodstock, Thompson, Pomfret and the surrounding countryside. Many have stood for generations, not because they never needed attention, but because somebody cared enough to keep them standing.

A roof was replaced. A porch was rebuilt. A window was repaired. One generation handed the place to another, along with the understanding that ownership involved responsibility.

There's a lesson in that, too.

Unfortunately, the same philosophy doesn't always extend to the people in our lives. We can spend an entire Saturday trying to get an old snowblower running, yet hesitate to spend 10 minutes making a phone call that might mend a friendship.

Maybe it's because machines are easier to understand than people. A machine generally doesn't hold a grudge. It doesn't remember something foolish you said at Thanksgiving in 1998, either. People are a little more complicated.

As we approach another Thanksgiving, I'm inclined to think that repairing things might be a worthwhile tradition to revive. Not necessarily the broken toaster or the wobbly kitchen chair, although those are good places to start. I'm thinking about the things we sometimes neglect because we're too busy, too proud or too convinced that tomorrow will provide another opportunity.

An overdue apology. A conversation that ended badly. A promise that slipped through the cracks. Even a family tradition that somehow disappeared as everyone got older and busier.

None of those things comes with an instruction manual. There isn't a helpful fellow at the hardware store who can tell you which replacement part to buy.

But most of us have enough experience to know where to begin.

I still believe there are things worth replacing. An unreliable furnace in November comes to mind. So does a smoke detector that has reached the end of its useful life. Common sense ought to have a vote in these matters.

But before we discard something that has served us well, perhaps we should ask whether a little effort might give it another chance.

The older I get, the more I appreciate the satisfaction of making something useful again. There's a quiet pleasure in tightening the final screw, stepping back and realizing that the old thing still has some life left in it.

And when it comes to people, the rewards can be considerably greater.

After all, a repaired chair might last another 10 years. A repaired friendship could last the rest of your life.

That's a pretty good return on a little patience and a willingness to try.

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Dunn Marketing moves into new office, launches new Web site, earns Silver Davey Award



KILLINGLY — Dunn Marketing LLC has moved into a larger office at 142 Main St. in Killingly, launched a new website and earned a Silver Davey Award, three milestones that reflect the agency's steady growth into one of northeastern Connecticut's leading marketing firms.

More room for the team, and for clients

The new office sits right downstairs from the agency's former home on Killingly Main Street and offers more than double the space. It gives Dunn Marketing's growing team room to work side by side, along with a larger, more comfortable meeting space that is better equipped for client meetings and working sessions.

"Our team has grown, and the way we work with clients has grown with it," said Laura Dunn, founder, CEO and chief brand strategist of Dunn Marketing. "We wanted a space where a client can sit down with us, spread out and really work through a plan together. Staying on Main Street mattered to us, too. This community is home."

A new dunnmarketing.com

This month, Dunn Marketing also launched a new website at dunnmarketing.com. The site features expanded client case studies and new information on how the agency serves organizations in life services sectors such as healthcare, law, nonprofit organizations, and finance.

"Before someone picks up the phone, they want to know we understand their world," Dunn said. "A behavioral health nonprofit and a wealth management firm have very different audiences and very different rules. The new site shows the work we've done for both, and the results behind it."

Silver Davey Award for Trudeau Center film

Also this month, "60 Years of Transforming Lives & Creating Bright Futures at Trudeau" earned a Silver Davey Award in the 2026 Film/Video Non-Profit category. The film, produced by Dunn Marketing with J. Russo Productions, celebrates six decades of the J. Arthur Trudeau Memorial Center's work with children and adults with developmental disabilities, and the families, staff and community who make it possible. The Davey Awards honor small teams and independent creators producing strong work on limited budgets. Entries are judged by the Academy of Interactive and Visual Arts (AIVA). The 2026 competition drew thousands of entries from boutique agencies, in-house creative teams, small production companies and independent creators.

"Telling a story that meaningful was an honor from the first interview to the final cut," said Marci Seney, PCM®, CDMP, vice president of client services at Dunn Marketing. "Our whole team felt that responsibility in every frame. This award really belongs to the people who let us into their lives and trusted us with their stories."

A growing record of national recognition

The Davey Award is Dunn Marketing's eighth national honor in three years. Earlier in 2026, the agency earned three Communicator Awards of Distinction, also judged by AIVA: one for its brand refresh of The Prue Law Group, P.C., and two for its work with WHZ Strategic Wealth Advisors, recognizing a financial services TV commercial series and a white paper.

In 2025, Dunn Marketing received three Communicator Awards. Its Trudeau Center 60th anniversary video earned an Award of Excellence, the program's highest honor, and Trudeau's "We Create Bright Futures" billboard campaign earned an Award of Distinction. A third award recognized the agency's campaign for WHZ.

In 2024, Dunn Marketing's "Serve, Don't Sell" content marketing campaign for WHZ won a Gramercy Institute Financial Content Marketing Award, sharing the Personal Investing, Business-to-Consumer category with Vanguard.

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

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Final spoken word reading for Poets at Large's Fall season set for Nov. 21

POMFRET, Conn. — Nov. 21 will be the final spoken word event of 2026 for Poets at Large. That night poet and troubadour Tommy Twilite will perform, followed by author, poet, musician Scott Laudati.

This event begins at 7 p.m. at The Vanilla Bean, 450 Deerfield Rd., Pomfret. Suggested donation: $10. Contact karen.warinsky@gmail.com to be in the open mic. Recommended for age 16 and up.

Tommy Twilite is a Massachusetts troubadour who combines music, poetry, exploration and

adventure into his performances. He is the co-founder and former director of the Florence Poets

Society, former editor of Silkworm and is a Lifetime Beat Poet Laureate. He also hosts the Twilite Poetry Pub on WXOJ Valley Free Radio. His latest chapbook, Kills No Bird is a follow up to his 2021 collection, Fifty Words for Rain. Twilite is well known as someone who can transport an audience to another realm with his words and music. He was honored by the National Baseball Poetry Festival in 2024 for his poem, "The Tools of Ignorance."

Scott Laudati runs Bone Machine, a punk rock press, from his apartment in NYC with his dog, Josie. He is the author of Play The Devil (novel) and RAINBOW ROAD (poetry). His essays/poems/short stories have been published by The Columbia Journal, The Stockholm Review, Hobart, The Belfast Review, The Adirondack Review and others. Laudati has won the Jack Grapes Poetry Prize, The Riggs Gold Medal Essay Award and The Stark Award in Fiction. Follow him for his ruminations on pizza & existentialism published yearly by X-R-AY magazine at @ScottLaudati. Poets at Large is a project of Windham Arts and is sponsored in part by bankHometown, Linemaster Switch, Charter Oak FCU, WHZ Financial and The Putnam Area Foundation. The Vanilla Bean is ADA compliant.

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Editor

A holiday tradition that delivers more than toys

There are certain traditions that become so deeply rooted in a community that it is difficult to imagine the season without them. In Woodstock and throughout the Quiet Corner, the annual Woodstock Volunteer Fire Department toy drive has earned its place among those traditions.

On Nov. 14, the department hosted its 21st annual toy drive, continuing an effort that has brought holiday happiness to thousands of local children over more than two decades. What began as an opportunity to help families during the Christmas season has grown into one of the region's most meaningful annual charitable efforts.

The numbers tell an impressive story. According to Woodstock Volunteer Fire Association President Russ Downer, the drive has collected more than 50,000 toys and $150,000 in monetary donations over its 21-year history. Perhaps most importantly, those contributions have remained in the local community, benefiting families right here in northeastern Connecticut.

Those figures represent far more than an impressive fundraising accomplishment. Behind every donated toy is a child who will have something special to open during the holidays. Behind every monetary contribution is a family that may find the season a little less financially overwhelming.

And behind the entire effort is a group of people who have made helping their neighbors a priority year after year.

Volunteer firefighters and emergency medical personnel occupy a particularly important place in small communities. They are the people who respond when a house catches fire, when someone suffers a medical emergency or when an accident turns an ordinary day into a frightening one. Their service often requires them to leave their own families, interrupt their work and place themselves in difficult situations for the benefit of someone else. That commitment alone deserves recognition.

Yet the Woodstock volunteers have demonstrated that their understanding of public service extends beyond emergency calls. Through the toy drive, they have created an opportunity to make a difference in circumstances that may never generate a call for assistance but are nevertheless deeply important to the families experiencing them.

Financial hardship does not always announce itself. The family struggling to afford Christmas presents may live next door. The parents trying to stretch their paychecks through December may be the same people encountered at the grocery store, at school functions or at community events. For those households, a little assistance can mean an enormous amount.

There is another particularly encouraging aspect of this tradition: the involvement of local students. Young people who volunteer alongside the firefighters are learning something that cannot be fully taught in a classroom. They are discovering that community service requires time, effort and a willingness to contribute without expecting anything in return. They are also seeing firsthand what happens when people work together toward a common purpose.

Those lessons matter. The students participating today may become tomorrow's firefighters, nonprofit volunteers, community organizers or simply neighbors who recognize when someone needs a helping hand. In that sense, the toy drive is doing more than providing gifts. It is helping preserve the values that allow small communities to remain strong from one generation to the next.

The distribution of the collected toys through TEEG, the Putnam Resource Center and the Eastford school district also illustrates the importance of cooperation among local organizations. No single group can address every need, but partnerships

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OPINION

Opinion and commentary from the Quiet Corner

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Driving the wrong way

To the Editor:

Steve Nickerson's letter in the Nov. 13 issue of the Villager lauding Thompson voters for standing red against the Blue Tsunami reminded me of a joke I once heard.

A man is driving down the highway when his cell phone rings. It's his wife saying "Honey, be careful. I just heard on the radio that there is some idiot driving the wrong way down the highway!"

The husband replies, "It's worse than they said; they're all driving the wrong way."

Dave Clark
Thompson

Now it's up to the Democrats to "Make America Great Again"

To the Editor:

Something that is a concern to us in the Quiet Corner came via a (Nov. 10) report from "MoneyLion" (via Yahoo finance) stating "Social Security Cuts: retirees in these 15 states will lose more than $500 a month in benefits." And guess what state was listed as the number one state to be hit the hardest? Yup, it's Connecticut! This could happen starting in 2033 if nothing is done to prevent it, and haven't we been warned about these pending cuts?

Additionally mentioned was that Social Security isn't running out of money, but its reserves, specifically for the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI) trust fund, are expected to be depleted by the fourth quarter of 2032. (OASI is funded through payroll taxes paid by workers.) One of its causes is that there are now less working and contributing people. (And why is that?) OASI will not stop making payments, but retirees could see a minimum 22% projected reduction in benefits if Congress doesn't act. The pressure is now on newly elected senators to act on Social Security reform before a predicted drought in the benefits' trust fund by 2032. During an earlier midterm, the democrats campaign sucker bait was that the republicans were going to take away your social security benefits, and now we're relying on the newly elected members of "both parties" to work together and find a solution this pending problem? What could go wrong?

Certainly expected was last week's gloating over the midterm election results. Putting that aside, I enjoyed Steve Nickerson's letter. Yes, conservative values took a nation-wide hit, and I hope that Trump and the Republicans learned a lesson by it. But look on the bright side — there are voters who are now counting on the Democrats to "Make America Great Again." Imagine that — we now have new "MAGA" cult members. All joking aside, but is making America great a bad thing?

Apparently, today's gimme, gimme crowd and the able-bodied welfare deadbeats think that getting a job is a bad thing – or more likely, they think it's up to people like me, Mr. Clark, and every working person who's reading this letter to support them. I always thought that America was the land of opportunity, and it was built off the sweat of its working class. It's that sweat that leads to accomplishment as was evident in Mr. Clark's last letter. And though we're on opposite sides of the fence, we do have something in common — we both have jobs, and we both are the contributors.

At this point, what's done is done. But if you voted for the Democrats solely to keep America the land of your freebies, both you and your opinions are as worthless to me as a cigarette butt or an empty beer can. And if you think I don't know anything about that campaign sucker bait, or about the continual generations of welfare deadbeats, just ask me — do it, please!

Ed DeLuca
North Grosvenordale

Thank you, First Responders of Woodstock

To the Editor:

This past Saturday, the 21st annual Toy Drive took place in the town of Woodstock. I cannot express my sincere appreciation for the efforts of Bungay Fire Brigade, Muddy Brook Fire Department, Woodstock Volunteer Fire Association and Woodstock EMS, to continually volunteer their time and resources to make a difference for our community members.

Knowing that our three departments can come together during a time of need, should make everyone feel great. The passion and empathy exhibited during the Toy Drive was a blessing to be a part of. I would also like to extend a great deal of gratitude and thanks to our community members, who once again stood up and met the challenge of donating many wonderful gifts which our local youths will enjoy this Holiday season. The monetary donations were also amazing to support gifts and other needs which our community members will endure. With elevated prices across the board on everything, it is nice to know that the stress levels of many families in our community will be reduced as a result of the recent Toy Drive here in Woodstock. I continued to be amazed with the outpouring of support the community provides during the Holiday season and throughout the year.

Once again, thank you to Station 75,76, 77 and Woodstock EMS for your efforts in bringing smiles to our youth!

Chris Mayhew
Woodstock

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.

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The Colonial diet

CLOSED! THE KILLINGLY HISTORICAL CENTER WILL BE CLOSED WEDNESDAY, NOV. 25, THE DAY BEFORE THANKSGIVING. IT WILL BE OPEN AS USUAL ON SATURDAY, NOV. 28 FROM 10 A.M.-4 P.M.



Order your Thanksgiving Pies. Killingly Grange #112 is again selling apple and pumpkin pies for Thanksgiving. $16 per pie. To reserve a pie call Terry at 860-884-1813 or Penny at 860-230-7367. Last day to order Saturday, Nov. 21, 2026 at 5 p.m. Pick-up Wednesday, Nov. 25.

Killingly at 300
Margaret Weaver

Are you interested in copies of old photos of Putnam? The Aspinock Historical Society is giving away bundles of ten calendars from 1994-2004 or single calendars during that time frame. Stop by their archives on the second floor of the Putnam Town Hall. Call 860-963-6800, ext. 300 or 301 for additional information. The photos can be given new life with crayons, acrylics, etc. or can be used in collages.

"A Christmas Carol-A Ghost Story of Christmas." Putnam Public Library, Wednesday, Dec. 9, 6-7:15 p.m. Performed in costume and read by Michael Langlois. Be transported to Victorian London and rediscover this most famous of holiday stories. All are welcome.

Thanksgiving is almost upon us so I'm sure "food" is uppermost in many minds, and if you're the chief chef, you're busy stocking up on supplies. Why not pause a minute and reflect on what the inhabitants of this area might have been eating in November about the time of the Revolution. The harvests were in and hopefully the cellars and attics were full of provisions to last until the spring.

I've just read an interesting new book by Ronald W. Collins called "The Colonial Table." He compared not only the probable diet, but also the nutritional value of the available foods throughout the months of the years. Now I must admit, I've periodically thought about what our forefathers ate and what recipes they might have used but have never thought about their nutrition. Every day, we can go to the grocery store or often even a farmers' market for a variety of fresh foods. We are so lucky! I recall my late mother Maud Lyter Markunas (b. 1920) saying what a treat an orange was. They might find one in their stockings on Christmas morn.

Collins compared diets of two families, that of Richard Treat of Wethersfield, in the early 1641-1670 (long before there were white families here in Northeastern Connecticut) and that of General John Stark of Londonderry and Derryfield, New Hampshire, 1758-1770. Since the Stark family was closer in time frame to all the Revolutionary families I've been researching, I was more interested in that. Of course, there were many similar foods. Collins ranked foods according to "frequency of use, reliability across seasons and nutritional or agricultural function. It is not simply weight consumed. Milk, for example, ranks highly because it supplied protein, fat, calcium, and the raw material for butter and cheese." For Wethersfield, the top rank went to Indian corn and cornmeal; Londonderry, it went to potatoes. (I hadn't thought about our 18th century inhabitants eating potatoes---probably my very favorite food---and had not realized that they supplied vital Vitamin C, especially in the months near harvest before they shriveled). Second in Wethersfield was wheat and rye bread and grains; in New Hampshire oats and oatmeal. Third in Wethersfield was pork and pork fat; NH, Milk, butter, cheese and buttermilk. Foods like dry peas and beans, pumpkins and winter squash, cabbage, turnips, onions, and garden roots, eggs and poultry, apples, cider, small beer, nuts, berries, beef and venison (moose in New Hampshire), fish, and maple sugar in New Hampshire appeared in both the lists (p.139). The colonists, of course, had the best nutrition during the months when their gardens were producing a variety of vegetables. February, March, and April were lean months with stores often being rationed to make them last.

A very common food for this Revolutionary time period was a mixture called "pottage." "A pot kept near the fire could combine peas, beans, oatmeal or barley, onions, leeks, cabbage, herbs, roots, and pieces of salted meat. (Notice this probably would have been thicker than a soup). Pottage was efficient because it conserved cooking liquid, softened dried food, accepted leftovers, and could feed many people from one vessel" (p.26). The description made me think of the nursery rhyme, "Pease porridge hot, pease porridge cold, pease porridge in the pot, nine days old…"

The lists made me interested in seeing what I could find out about foodstuffs for local families of the Revolutionary era through inventories. I quickly discovered that some inventories revealed more than others. Some were very disappointing for I could tell little about the family's food. Nevertheless, I did discover a few very interesting entries. One of Killingly's earliest inhabitants Justice Joseph Leavens died in 1773 at age 90. His inventory mentioned a seder (cider) tub, and butter and cheese in addition to several cows and calves of various ages. Killingly's Nell Alexander (Alexander's Lake), a trader, died in 1774. His inventory included no grains but mentioned goats and kids, 4 cows, over fifty sheep and lambs, and nine hogs. That family would probably have had cheese in addition to milk and pork both salted and smoked. Reverend Aaron Brown of Killingly's Middle Society (now Putnam Heights), who died in 1775, owned cattle (number not given) and swine. His inventory included 12 cyder (sic) barrels---does not say if they were full and Indian corn (a staple for bread, etc.). By far the most interesting inventory in my mind was that of Captain Stephen Crosby of Killingly's Thompson Parish. You may recall that he died in September 1776 in New York drinking cold water after a fierce battle. Crosby was in the prime of his life. His inventory was taken November 5, 1776 and included 3 meat barrels,3 seder (sic) tubs, a number of cattle, swine, 120 bushels of Indian corn, 20 bushels of rey (rye), 24 bushels of oats, 2 bushels of wheat, 50 bushels of potatoes, 2 bushels of beans and 35 tons of hay and other fodder.

Turn To KILLINGLY page A5

Washington flips blue: What history says about markets after the midterms



Financial Focus

Jim Zahansky
Investment Adviser

Markets don't like surprises, but that's exactly what they got on Election Day when Democrats decisively won control of Congress and many governors' mansions. In the days since, market volatility has jumped, as investors try to make sense of what lies ahead. A look back at market history is reassuring. On average, the index has risen after midterm elections, no matter which party is in control or if power is divided between Congress and the executive branch.

Undoubtedly, some policies will change as Democrats step into their new roles. Data centers may have a tougher time breaking ground with more Democratic governors, and financial regulations may tighten with Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., heading the Senate Banking Committee next year.

Divided government might also tighten Washington's purse strings. Given the $40 trillion U.S. national debt, less government spending might prove a positive that could result in lower interest rates. Divided government might result in gridlock, where little gets done, which stock investors often consider a positive. Congress has little control over President Donald Trump's actions in Iran or on tariffs.

Regardless of what lies ahead, we'll keep our eye on fundamentals, including earnings, interest rates and valuations. And, as always, we'll help clients remain focused on their long-term investment plans, formulated to withstand good markets and bad, no matter which political party has control.

Democrats go to Washington

The outcome of the midterm elections certainly surprised those in Washington and on Wall Street. While prognosticators were expecting the Democrats to win back control of the House of Representatives, the party's ability to turn the Senate and many governor seats blue came as quite a shock. American voters sent a clear message to their representatives: They're not happy about the country's elevated cost of living.

The outcome has subsequently caused a fair amount of volatility in the stock markets, with the Dow gaining more than 1,569 points the day after the election, followed by an 1,833-point loss the following day. Investors are trying to determine how the election results will affect the economy and markets. And certainly, there will be changes. Democratic governors may make it harder to build new data centers. Warren may push for tighter financial regulations. But in general, a divided government, with Democrats in control of Congress and Republicans in control of the executive branch, may find it tough to get much accomplished.

Those anxiously watching the market's gyrations may be glad to hear that the stock market has fared well regardless of which political party controls Washington. On average, markets have risen under Republicans and under Democrats. The most important thing investors can do is stick with their long-term investing plan, no matter who wields power in Washington. Washington may have flipped from red to blue, but our investment discipline remains unwavering.

Here's a look at what history has to say and what changes may await:

Markets rise over time

The average total return of the S&P 500 is positive both during midterm years and non-midterm years from 1937 through 2025. Non-midterm year returns are slightly higher, 13.3 percent, than midterm year returns, 9.2 percent, but that's primarily because the uncertainty prior to the midterms weighs on the markets.

During midterm years, the average S&P 500 price return from 1982 through 2022 has been slightly negative in each of the year's first three quarters. Those declines are followed by decidedly positive fourth-quarter results, when the S&P 500 rallied by 6.6 percent on average. In the one year following midterm elections, the S&P 500's average return has been 15.4 percent, better than the 7.8 percent return in all other years.

The S&P 500 also rallies when Washington is controlled by Republicans, Democrats or split between the two parties. Looking back to 1947, when Washington is controlled by Republicans, the S&P 500 has rallied on average by 13.3 percent; when Democrats hold the reins, it has rallied 9.3 percent; and when power is divided, the S&P 500 has gained 8.6 percent.

What policies might change?

It may be early days after the election, but markets are already signaling some of the changes that may be coming. Democrats won many governor races on promises to slow data center construction and reevaluate the centers' impact on the environment, water consumption and electricity prices. While the pace of construction may slow, and scrutiny of new projects may increase, we don't expect construction to grind to a halt. Artificial intelligence (AI) is just too important to the United States.

Many technology stocks related to the AI business have fallen sharply amid the uncertainty. While client portfolios undoubtedly include technology investments, we've been very mindful about rebalancing portfolios at regular intervals over the years to help keep portfolios diversified.

Less spending ahead?

Markets often like divided government because it becomes more difficult for either party to increase spending. With the national debt at record levels, less spending would certainly be welcomed by investors in bonds, which have rallied in the days since the election. Lower interest rates should help reduce the cost of home mortgage loans and, if the trend continues, could boost home sales and housing-related stocks.

The current Republican-controlled Congress needs to focus on funding the government before Dec. 11, and it might try to lift the debt ceiling as well before it's reached in late 2027. More likely, the new Congress, which will be sworn in on Jan. 3, will address the debt ceiling later next year.

New Congressional leadership

With the Democrats controlling Congress, new leaders of its various committees will be appointed. One of the most vocal is Warren, who will likely head the Senate Banking Committee and, in the past, has agreed with President Trump that credit card interest rates should be capped.

Under her purview, it's unlikely cryptocurrency legislation will be revived, and the committee could investigate large financial institutions' involvement with private credit. Warren wrote recently in Time magazine that she'd like to use the budget reconciliation process to reverse Republican health care cuts, fund universal child care and cancel Trump administration tax breaks for corporations and high-net-worth individuals.

What Congress can't control

The Democratic-controlled Congress shouldn't have any sway over the Federal Reserve, which is still widely expected to raise interest rates twice over the next year. Nor does it have much control over tariffs, which President Trump has enacted by way of executive order.

Congress's ability to pull the U.S. out of the Iran conflict is also limited, as the president has authority as commander in chief and the general power to conduct U.S. foreign relations and initiate military strikes without a congressional declaration of war. Events in Iran, rather than control of Congress, will have much more of an impact on the direction of oil prices.

While volatility may continue over the upcoming weeks, investors should rest assured that markets have, on average, risen during periods when Congress and the presidency were controlled by different political parties. In the meantime, we'll keep watching the economic fundamentals that drive stocks: earnings, inflation, interest rates and valuations.

If you have any questions about how your portfolio is positioned as changes occur in Washington, reach out to our team at 860-928-2341 or visit whzwealth.com for a complimentary consultation. Learn more about how we work to provide our clients with "Absolute Confidence. Unwavering Partnership. For Life."

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New history of Woodstock released



WOODSTOCK — For the first time in 100 years, a new detailed history of Woodstock has been published to commemorate the 340th anniversary of the town. "Woodstock 340: A Collection of Engaging Bits of History and Tradition" is written by local author and historian Charlene Perkins Cutler.

Cutler noted that "At the time Woodstock celebrated its Tercentenary (300th) in 1986, there were about 5,300 people living in the town. Now there are closer to 8,300. When I listen to people at town meetings and public hearings, I realized that newer residents lack knowledge of Woodstock's past and, unfortunately, have no way to access past histories. Most are out of print and do not circulate from local libraries. In my opinion it is difficult to make decisions about Woodstock's future if one does not know about its past. That is why I have written 'Woodstock 340.'"

Cutler's volume is not a typical history book. It is not arranged thematically or chronologically. It is a series of stories, randomly sequenced, about some of Woodstock's history. The author prefers to use the term story, as opposed to chapter.

"Chapters are meant to be read, understood but not designed to be repeated. Stories, true stories like those contained in this volume, are meant to be read, understood, and passed along, retold and kept alive," explains Cutler.

Woodstock 340 contains information and images that have never been published. It is 8.5 x 11, soft bound volume of 266 pages that was professionally designed and printed in full color. There are a total of 240 photos and illustrations (163 color, 77 black & white). The book contains images from 14 well-known museums and archives, as well as those from people in the Woodstock community.

The author is a historian and writer who has worked with historical and cultural resources for more than 45 years. She served as the administrator of Roseland Cottage for seven years and was the president of the Woodstock Historical Society. Cutler was the governor's appointee to the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Commission. After being the executive director of several museums, she began a consulting service focusing on advancing nonprofits throughout New England. Cutler has authored and edited numerous articles, publications, and books. Ms. Cutler was the first executive director of The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor, building the organization from its beginning. She ended her professional career as the executive director of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. She has lived in Woodstock and has been learning of its history for 55 years.

Woodstock 340 is available at Echo Farm, 1051 Route 169 in Woodstock, at various library events the town, and through Green Corn Press, greencornpress340@gmail.com.

KILLINGLHY

continued from page A4

I was unable to locate an inventory for Israel Putnam but did find one for Colonel William Danielson of Killingly who died August 19, 1798. His estate included 230 pounds of new milk. Perhaps cheese was being made in large quantities for trading. He had 3 bushels of shell beans, 60 bushels of corn, 100 of rye, 16 of wheat, 20 of barley, 20 of oats, and 15 tons of English hay. (All inventories were found at Ancestry.com CT U.S. Wills & Probate 1650-1999). Our residents were fortunate to live near rivers and brooks which could supply fish to supplement the diets. Contact with Providence and Boston also afforded ample opportunities to trade for various spices to enhance the cooking. Still, I'm glad for all our variety in today's grocery stores.

As you prepare for your Thanksgiving celebration, please keep in mind those who might need a little help this year. Friends of Assisi in Danielson will again be distributing baskets. Support them or a food pantry in your town by making a donation of food or money. Many of the grocery stores have containers in which to deposit food. Do not take what we eat for granted! We are blessed to have such abundance. Share your good fortune!

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

Members of the public are invited to

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

VIRTUAL PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

State Project No. 0141-0159
Rehabilitation of Bridge No. 03071
Carrying Route 193 over Interstate 395
in Thompson

Thursday, December 3, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Access the Meeting & Learn More:
portal.ct.gov/DOTThompson0141-0159

The purpose of this meeting is to provide the community with an opportunity to learn about the proposed project and allow an open discussion of any views and comments concerning the proposed improvements. A Q&A session will immediately follow the presentation.

Originally constructed in 1965, this project will replace vital structural components of the existing bridge to extend its service life and improve safety for all roadway users.

Right-of-way impacts are not anticipated.

Construction is anticipated to start spring 2029, depending on funding, possible future right-of-way acquisitions, and permits. The estimated cost is $6 million with 80 percent Federal funds and 20 percent State funds.

The public can submit comments and questions during two-week public comment period following the meeting. Comments and questions can be submitted by Thursday, December 17, 2026, to **DOTProject141-159@ct.gov** or (860) 594-2020.

ACCESSIBILITY

The recording will also be posted following the meeting in CTDOT's public meeting playlist at **portal.ct.gov/ctdotVPIMarchive**. Non-English language closed captioning will be available on Zoom and YouTube.

For audio only, call(877) 853-5257 with Meeting ID 810 8949 4418. Project information can be mailed within one week by contacting Brianna Ritacco at **Brianna.Ritacco@ct.gov** or (860) 594-3205.

Individuals with hearing/speech disabilities can dial 711 for Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS). Request language assistance from CTDOT's Language Assistance at (860) 594-2109 at least five business days before meeting.

Putnam Legion Post holds annual Veterans Night







PUTNAM — Putnam's Mayotte-Viens American Legion Post 13 held their annual Veterans Night Guest Bartending and Veteran Recognition event at the Black Dog Bar & Grille on Wednesday night, Nov. 11, which was also Veterans Day – a national holiday. The Masters of Ceremony for the event included Post 13 Commander Michael Rocchetti and Linda Colangelo.

The event opened with the beautiful singing of the National Anthem by the most lovely and talented Linda Colangelo. Then Jacob Meyer, an eighth grader and phenomenal young musician from Putnam dazzled the crowd with his psychedelic rendition of the National Anthem, played "Jimi Hendrix style" on an electric guitar. It was a very touching moment – especially for the many Vietnam War veterans in attendance. The room erupted in hearty applause and boisterous cheers as Jacob struck the final note of the anthem on his guitar. After that, the guest bartenders worked the bar collecting tips for the American Legion.

According to Commander Rocchetti, "The Guest Bartenders really brought in a tremendous amount of donations for the Post. This is really important for us because it helps pay for our Hometown Hero publications, scholarships, American Legion Baseball, Boys State, Girls State, the State Police Youth Academy, the youth oratorical contest, our Veterans-in-need fund, and our on-going Americanism initiatives."

Rocchetti also had high praise for the Black Dog including their regular bartenders, cooks and servers, noting, "This is a friendly, happy place! We love it – and we always have fun here. The courteous service, the food and beverages are top notch. The waiters and waitresses were so patient and gracious, and it amazes me how they could skillfully navigate a "standing room only" crowd without dropping anything from the huge serving platters of delicious food and beverages that they were carrying!"

There were five guest bartending teams. Team 1, the O'Brien Group had Kelley Graves, Kiana Barnes, Tyler Dewaele, and Colby Smith. Team #2, the Gates Auto Group, had Craig Gates, Tom Borner, Denny Gates, Chelsea Cormier, Kyle Borner and Nick Truax. Team #3, the Putnam Business Association, had Gary Osbrey, Earl Rosebrooks, Jeff Rawson, and Beth Frost. Team #4, Day Kimball Health Care had Roger Franklin, Jacob Hicks, Crystal Lanning, Dan Durand and Jillian Mancini. Finally Team #5, the Putnam Rotary Club had Martha Paquette and Bob & Adrian Fournier.

Commander Rocchetti also recognized the generosity of the many donors that made the event successful, commenting, "Dozens of gift baskets were donated for the raffle, and some nice auction items were donated by members and friends. Foxwoods Resort and Casino generously donated a voucher for deluxe overnight accommodations for two in a luxury suite."

According to Post 13's Finance Officer Chas Mackenzie, "Between the tips, donations, raffle ticket sales, and auctions, this event raised just over $12,650 for the Post – I am overwhelmed by the generosity of all of the people who made this possible, especially: Craig Gates, Denny Gates, Steve Raheb, Tom Borner, the O'Brien Group, Earl Rosebrooks, Jeff Rawson, Gary & Karen Osbrey, Linda Lemmon, Bob & Adrian Fournier, Patricia George, and many others."

The highlight of the night was when Post 13 honored four local veterans for their military and community service: Roger Franklin, Ronald Pariseau, Steven Raheb and Barbara Smith. The Legion Post also presented a Quilt of Valor to Roger Franklin. The beautiful quilt was skillfully crafted by Maureen Desilets, the wife of our Post Chaplain Pierre Desilets.

Roger Franklin is a longtime member of the American Legion and was honored for his many years of service to the community state and nation, including 30 years as an officer in the US Army Reserve. He served with the XIII Corps and the 76th Training Division where he was responsible for training, mobilizing and preparing US Army Reserve and National Guard personnel for their wartime missions.

Ronald Pariseau, a longtime member of several local veteran organizations was honored for his many years of service to the community, state, and nation including his volunteer service as a US Navy Seabee. Ron served two difficult tours of duty in Vietnam during the Tet Offensive in 1968 and 1969, with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 11. Recently, he was highly involved in bringing the "Wall That Heals" Vietnam War Memorial to Putnam.

Dr. Steven Raheb, MD, a longtime member of the American Legion, was honored for his many years of service to the community, state, and nation as a Medical Doctor, Professor, and his service in the US Navy Medical Corps as a doctor providing obstetrical, gynecological, and surgical care to US Navy personnel and their dependents.

Barbara Smith, a longtime member of the American Legion Post #13, was honored for her many years of service to the community, state and nation as a school teacher and her US Air Force service as a Recruiter and Administrative Specialist at Edwards Air Force Base, California during the Korean War.

The Post #13 Legionnaire of the Year Award for the 2025/2026 year was belatedly presented to Christopher Steinbrick, a US Navy veteran, for his many years of faithful service to Post #13 as an officer, executive committee member, and as a Color Guard.

The Mayotte-Viens Post #13 American Legion generally meets on the third Monday of each month, from 6 till 7 p.m. at room 201 of the Putnam Town Hall. Any veterans are welcomed to attend, to join our post and be a part of the many great things we are doing in Putnam. Interested members can also email us at: alegionpost13@gmail.com.

Grandmaster Mike Bogdanski, Linda Garcia empower seniors with self-defense seminar at Putnam Municipal Complex



PUTNAM — Seniors from across the community recently gathered at the Putnam Municipal Complex for an engaging and empowering self-defense seminar led by Grandmaster Mike Bogdanski and Linda Garcia. The educational and hands-on program focused on practical strategies that can help older adults stay safe, confident, and prepared in everyday situations.

The seminar emphasized that self-defense begins long before a physical confrontation. Participants learned the importance of situational awareness, recognizing potential threats, and making proactive decisions to avoid dangerous situations whenever possible. Grandmaster Bogdanski and Garcia also discussed techniques for controlling the body's adrenaline response, helping individuals remain calm and think clearly during stressful encounters.

A key focus of the program was teaching effective self-defense techniques specifically adapted for seniors. Rather than relying on strength or athletic ability, the instructors demonstrated practical methods that emphasize leverage, balance, targeting, and simple movements that can be used effectively by people of all ages and physical abilities.

The seminar also highlighted the role of assertiveness and confident body language in reducing the likelihood of becoming a target. Participants practiced verbal and non-verbal communication skills designed to deter potential aggressors and project confidence in public settings.

Adding excitement to the event, several seniors had the opportunity to break wooden boards under the guidance of the instructors. The board-breaking demonstration showcased the effectiveness of proper martial arts technique and gave participants a memorable, hands-on experience that reinforced the power and confidence they had gained throughout the seminar.

"This seminar was about giving seniors practical tools to protect themselves while building confidence and awareness," said Bogdanski. "The board breaking was a fun way to demonstrate that effective self-defense is based on technique and determination, not just strength."

Attendees left the program with valuable safety skills, increased confidence, and a deeper understanding of how awareness, preparation, and assertiveness can help them stay safe in their daily lives.

The successful seminar reflects the ongoing commitment of community leaders and instructors to provide educational programs that promote personal safety, empowerment, and well-being for northeast Connecticut senior residents.

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Hometown Heroes of the Quiet Corner

Private 1st Class David Michael Freeman, US Army (1949-1969)



Michael Freeman

Private First Class David Michael Freeman was just 20 years old when he lost his life in the jungles of South Vietnam on Aug. 11, 1969. A native of North Grosvenordale and a resident of Putnam, Freeman served with Company E, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), one of the United States Army's most distinguished combat formations. His death came during a period of intense fighting along the Cambodian border, where American soldiers defended isolated fire support bases against determined North Vietnamese attacks.

David Michael Freeman was born on May 8, 1949, in North Grosvenor Dale, a village in the town of Thompson. He was the son of George Clayton Freeman (1915–1997) and Emma Louise (Gagne) Freeman (1919–1998). Growing up in northeastern Connecticut during the 1950s and 1960s, David belonged to a generation whose young adulthood coincided with America's escalating involvement in the Vietnam War.

Freeman entered the United States Army through the Selective Service System. Following his military training, he was assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), an organization that had pioneered the extensive use of helicopters to transport infantry, artillery, supplies, and wounded soldiers across the difficult terrain of Vietnam.

He began his tour of duty in South Vietnam on Dec. 12, 1968. Assigned to Company E, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, Freeman served as an Infantry Operations and Intelligence Specialist. Company E included reconnaissance and combat-support elements responsible for gathering information about enemy movements, conducting patrols, and supporting the battalion's infantry operations. These assignments frequently required soldiers to operate in heavily forested territory where North Vietnamese forces maintained concealed positions, supply routes, and fortified base areas.

By the summer of 1969, Freeman's battalion was operating in Tây Ninh Province, a strategically important region northwest of Saigon. Much of the province formed part of War Zone C, a longstanding enemy sanctuary extending toward the Cambodian border. The region's dense jungles and extensive enemy infiltration routes made it particularly dangerous for American troops.

The 1st Cavalry Division relied upon a network of fire support bases and helicopter landing zones to sustain its operations. These installations were often established in remote clearings, surrounded by defensive wire, bunkers, fighting positions, and artillery emplacements. Although heavily defended, their isolation made them vulnerable to surprise attacks by North Vietnamese infantry and specially trained assault troops.

In August 1969, elements of the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry occupied Landing Zone Becky, a remote fire support base in Tây Ninh Province, approximately 20 miles west of An Lộc and southeast of Katum. Companies D and E participated in the defense of the installation, supported by artillery and other combat elements.

During the night of Aug. 11 & 12, 1969, North Vietnamese forces launched a coordinated attack against LZ Becky. The assault began in the early morning hours with an intense bombardment of 60mm and 82mm mortar rounds, rocket-propelled grenades, and small-arms fire. Under cover of the shelling, enemy assault troops attempted to penetrate the base's defensive perimeter.

The attacking force reportedly included North Vietnamese sappers, specially trained combat engineers who used explosives and other demolition weapons to destroy bunkers, artillery positions, and defensive obstacles. Such attacks were particularly dangerous because they combined indirect fire with close-range assaults against American positions.

The defenders of LZ Becky fought to prevent the enemy from overrunning the installation. American soldiers manned their defensive positions while artillerymen and infantrymen returned fire against the attackers. The principal engagement reportedly lasted approximately 45 minutes, with the main enemy assault broken by about 3:45 a.m.

The fighting inflicted casualties on both sides. Accounts of the engagement report five American soldiers killed and numerous others wounded, while approximately 17 North Vietnamese soldiers were reported killed near the perimeter. Reinforcements from Company E, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry were subsequently brought into the landing zone to strengthen its defenses.

Among the American dead was Private First Class David Michael Freeman. His casualty record lists his death as Aug. 11, 1969, in Tây Ninh Province. He suffered fatal multiple fragmentation wounds attributed to hostile action. Because accounts of the battle describe the principal assault as occurring during the early morning of Aug. 12, the precise relationship between Freeman's recorded death date and the timing of the attack remains a matter requiring further examination of the battalion's operational records.

Freeman had been in Vietnam for almost eight months when he was killed, just three months after celebrating his twentieth birthday.

His military decorations included the Bronze Star Medal with one oak leaf cluster, the Air Medal, and the Purple Heart. The oak leaf cluster indicates that Freeman received the Bronze Star Medal twice. These decorations were recorded on his government headstone application and are engraved on his grave marker. Although the original award citations have not yet been located, they provide important testimony to his military service. The Purple Heart recognizes the wounds he suffered as a result of enemy action, while his Bronze Star and Air Medal awards reflect additional recognition of his wartime service.

Following his death, Freeman's remains were returned to Connecticut. He was laid to rest in Saint Joseph Cemetery in North Grosvenor Dale, the community where he had been born two decades earlier. His parents, George and Emma Freeman, lived to see their son's sacrifice remembered by subsequent generations.

David Michael Freeman's name is also permanently inscribed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., at Panel 19W, Line 1. There, his name stands among those of more than 58,000 American service members who died or remain missing as a result of the Vietnam War.

The circumstances of Freeman's death illustrate the extraordinary dangers faced by American soldiers defending isolated fire support bases in Vietnam. Even behind sandbagged positions and defensive wire, they remained exposed to sudden mortar attacks, rocket fire, and determined enemy assaults. For the infantrymen of the 1st Cavalry Division, there was often little distinction between the dangers encountered on patrol and those faced inside their own defensive perimeter.

Private First Class David Michael Freeman was one of the young men from Connecticut's Quiet Corner who answered his country's call during the Vietnam War and never returned home. His life ended far from the small northeastern Connecticut communities where he had grown up, but his service and sacrifice remain part of their enduring history.

The story of David Michael Freeman will be included in an upcoming edition of the Hometown Heroes book series, 2027 Volume 8, the Vietnam War Edition. If you are a military veteran from Northeastern CT, who served during the years of 1955 through 1975, and would like to have your name and service record included in this book, please contact the author at this email address: alegionpost13@gmail.com.

The Hometown Heroes Books can be purchased on-line at this website:

https://hometown-heroes-of-the-quiet-corner.myshopify.com/.

They can also be purchased at the Pourings & Passages Bookstore in Danielson.

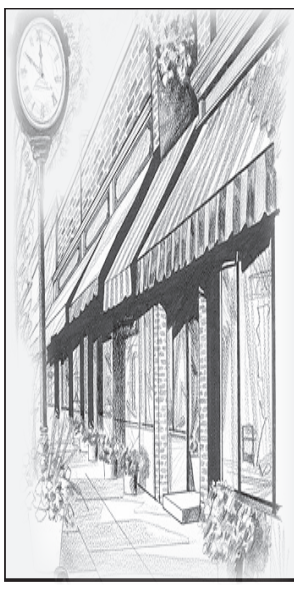
All proceeds from the book sales support American Legion programs in the local area.



Courtesy

Putnam Rotary Club recently donated $2,500 to the Danielson Veterans Coffeehouse. From left, club President Martha Paquette, Coffeehouse President Fred Ruhlemann and Coffeehouse CFO Bruce Hay. The coffeehouse serves veterans from a wide area in many ways. One of its crucial missions is feeding those in need. Every month the coffeehouse, with the help of volunteers, holds a free drive-through Food Share that serves more than 300 cars each time. And all are welcome. No one is turned away.

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Kristy Altongy-Magee elected to membership in the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi

BATON ROUGE, La. — Kristy Altongy-Magee of Woodstock was recently elected to membership into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective all-discipline collegiate honor society, at MCPHS University.

Altongy-Magee is among approximately 20,000 students, faculty, professional staff and alumni to be initiated into Phi Kappa Phi each year. Membership is by invitation only and requires nomination and approval by a chapter. Only the top 10 percent of seniors and 7.5 percent of juniors are eligible for membership. Graduate students in the top 10 percent of the number of candidates for graduate degrees may also qualify, as do faculty, professional staff and alumni who have achieved scholarly distinction.

Phi Kappa Phi was founded in 1897 under the leadership of undergraduate student Marcus L. Urann who had a desire to create a different kind of honor society: one that recognized excellence in all academic disciplines. Today, the Society has chapters on more than 300 campuses in the United States and its territories. Its mission is to "cultivate a community that celebrates and advances the love of learning."

About Phi Kappa Phi

Founded in 1897, Phi Kappa Phi is the nation's oldest and most selective collegiate honor society for all academic disciplines. Phi Kappa Phi inducts approximately 20,000 students, faculty, professional staff and alumni annually. The Society has chapters on more than 300 select colleges and universities in the United States and its territories. Membership is by invitation only to the top 10 percent of seniors and graduate students and 7.5 percent of juniors. Faculty, professional staff and alumni who have achieved scholarly distinction also qualify. The Society's mission is to "cultivate a community that celebrates and advances the love of learning." For more information, visit www.PhiKappaPhi.org.

Friends of Assisi announces 36th annual Thanksgiving Food Drive

DANIELSON — As Thanksgiving approaches, Friends of Assisi Food Pantry is preparing for its 36th annual Thanksgiving Food Drive, inviting residents throughout Northeast Connecticut to help ensure that local families have food on their tables for the holiday.

The annual effort will take place over three days, Nov. 21-23, with donations of traditional Thanksgiving foods, grocery store gift cards and monetary contributions welcomed.

The food drive will begin Saturday, Nov. 21, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and continue Sunday, Nov. 22, from noon to 3 p.m. at the Friends of Assisi Food Pantry, located at 77 Water St. in Danielson.

A third collection opportunity is scheduled for Monday, Nov. 23, from 3 to 5:30 p.m. at St. James Gym.

Organizers have provided a wish list of items needed for the holiday effort, including apples, broth, canned yams, dinner rolls, boxed potatoes, gravy, fresh squash, turnips, pickles, olives and sweet potatoes.

Monetary donations and grocery store gift cards are also welcome, providing additional flexibility in meeting the food pantry's needs.

Now in its 36th year, the Thanksgiving Food Drive offers an opportunity for residents, families, businesses and community organizations to contribute to a longstanding local holiday tradition.

The drive comes at a time of year when families are preparing to gather around their Thanksgiving tables, but when the cost of purchasing ingredients for a holiday meal can present challenges for households already managing everyday expenses.

By contributing even a few items from the organization's wish list, donors can help make the holiday season a little easier for neighbors who need assistance.

In announcing this year's collection, Friends of Assisi expressed gratitude for the community's continued generosity and encouraged residents to participate once again.

The organization hopes to build on the support it has received throughout the years as it prepares for another Thanksgiving season.

Residents interested in contributing are encouraged to bring donations during any of the three scheduled collection periods.

For additional information about the Thanksgiving Food Drive or ways to contribute, contact Friends of Assisi Food Pantry at 860-774-2310 or email directorfoodpantry@gmail.com.

Putnam Rotary's Interact Club keeping busy



PUTNAM — October was been a busy month for the Putnam Rotary Interact Club, starting with the TEEG Halloween costume give-away Oct. 12 at TEEG. The club had collected donated costumes at the Hale YMCA Youth and Family Center and brought them to TEEG for the event.

Elizabeth Perry, TEEG Prevention & Recovery Programs coordinator, said that 28 families came to TEEG and the Interact Club helped the children find a costume. Advisor Rotarian Roberta Rocchetti thanked Calleigh Levesque, Mabel Perreault, Sam Hachigian, Amelia Hachigian and Matthew Rybacki who volunteered their time.

At the Oct. 13 Interact meeting, the club created Halloween cards for the elderly shut-ins. They created more than 50 cards which were well received. Rocchetti thanked Alyssa Daniels, Mabel Perrault, Calleigh Levesque and Nicko Castro.

At the recent Great Pumpkin Fest, the club also raised money for the international African Library Project. The Tourtellotte Memorial High School culinary department donated three dozen cookies for the club's table. They received $125 in donations. Rocchetti thanked Calleigh Levesque, Mabel Perreault, Nina Truong, Penny Dang and Alyssa Daniels.

The club made Thanksgiving greeting cards at its Nov. 8 meeting.

The Interact Club meets the second and fourth Tuesday of the month. For information, call 860-933-8603 or robertarocchetti4@gmail.com.

Tourtellotte announces honor roll

NORTH GROSVENORDALE — Tourtellotte Memorial High School has released its honor roll for the first quarter of the 2026-2027 school year.

9th Grade

High Honors: Stephen Andrews, Kiley Audette, Jacen Beaudreault, Matthew Chrzanowski, Gracie Greene, Maya Khaomongkhoun, Ceolin Peckham, Alison Phav, Allison Rivers

Honors: Jordyn Aponte, Gage Cady, Yvonne Clavette, Jack Gustafson, Phoenix Khaomongkhoun, Michael Kingsbury, Samiah Lafleche, Liam Maliff, Emma Mandeville, Ashley Martin, Logen McJohnson, Annabella Miner, Jayden O'Connor, Dominic Paquette, Rylee Parkin, Ava Plaza, Amelia Senkhamtar, Logan Wedda

Recognition: Russell Chrabaszcz, Caiden Gagnon, Coby Gagnon, Landen Horniak, Saulo Mayorga

10th Grade

High Honors: Shyla Beckett, Payton Bolte, Deegan Bryniarski, Braeden Carlson, Hazel Clavette, Logan Delicata, Jeylia Denham, Mateus Ferreira, Emma Fournier, Sadie Houle, Sophia Kus, Alexis Light, John Lowe, Andrew Marquette, Danika Minarik, Gia Reynolds-Rankin, Shawn Sinni, Cameron Snow, Adylin Stewart, Levi Tucker, Jayden Watkins

Honors: Trent Gardner, Christopher Herlihy, Kimberly Joslyn, Brendalis Labonte, Paris Lowe, Parker Smith, Lilah Spearin, Mason Wolf

Recognition: Ari-lynne Brunelle, Saylem Kratzer

11th Grade

High Honros: Payton Butler, Jeremi Helwig, Gabriella Santos, Brody Vincent

Honors: Timmothy Beaudion, Henry Lotter, Fenny Patel, Brookelynn Pearson, Landon Perry, Madison Perry, Naisha Ruiz-Aquino

Recognition: Mallory Chubka, Ayden Perry, Ryan Walsh

12th Grade

High Honors: Dylan Axtell, Juan Calvo, Jr., Maddison Carlson, Nicko Casto, Estela Freitas, Thomas Kenadek, Calleigh Levesque, Billie Lewis, Tanisha Patel, Mabel Perreault

Honors: Gabriel Bourget, Ty Chausse, Kaleb Laporte, Nicholas Lavallee, Ella Martin, Sarah Melnick, Samantha Podgorni, Jordyn Poplawski, Chyanne Rock, Matthew Rybacki, Alyssa Yanis

Recognition: Alexis Andrews, Jordan Burns-Studley, Tyler Bushey, Anthony Machado, Deyone Masterson, Haley Russell

Thompson Middle School announces honor roll

THOMPSON — Thompson Middle School has released its honor roll for the first quarter of the 2026-2027 school year.

Grade 5

High Honors: Westley Kimball, Anderson Provost, Jacob Valby, Ryan Valdes, Louella Whitt

Honors: Arielle Delicata, Daniela Delicata, Elijah Desjarlais, Adele Desmarais, Abraham Estabrook, Nora Kinsella, Klaudia Krupa, Lydia Kus, Carter Nolle, Jameson O'Clair, Dominic Rocha, Jordan Schofield, Lincoln Streich, Autumn Tilton, Courtney Valby, Evan Walker, Parker Ward, Gabriella Wilcox, Cali Wuensch, Sheyla Zaimoff

Recognition: Aleesa Barbosa, Zaylee Bestis, Adalyn Beaudreault, Theodore Boland, Jaxson Clark, Henry Desjarlais, Levi Fournier, Madison Gilchrest, Adelynn Hibbard, Shaelyn O'Dell, Gunner Reynolds, Katherine Rivers, Ava Rogers

Grade 6

High Honors: Sonya Apley, Margaret Axtell, Rose Black, Annabelle Chrzanowski, Charlotte McGlynn, Bordy Nichols, Jessa Perron, Nathan Rybacki, Noah Staszek, Henry Tilton, Molley White, Clayton Young

Honors: Adinkrah Apraku, Bohdi Aubin, Bradley Bond, Aria Fairbanks, David Greene, Reed Hoenig, Louise Kennedy, Aubrey Maliff, Lillian Miller, Maeve Murzycki, Pranshu Patel, Izabela Sarto Barros, Beckett Thorstenson

Recognition: Ann Brosious, Jonathan Fagan, Macie Freeman, Noah Horniak, Zachery Mayer, Waylon Mead, Keena Parent, Andee Pease, Colton Ross, Oriah Sherburne, Jude Travinski, Brody Zabka

Grade 7

High Honors: Maica Abrajano, Kyleigh Akana, June Bardellini, Sophia Benoit, Callan Bolte, Lance Burden, Quinn Cooney, Chloe Faucher, Sierra Henault, Amelia Hendrickson, Jeffrey Kuras, Heaven Labonte, Isabella Leveille, Emma Moriarty, Patrick Paquette, Visv Patel, Ava Tremblay, Alanah Tsouridis, Sierra Vallee, Jessie Wuensch

Honors: Peyton Aguirre, Montonio Alvarez, Austin Auger, Sadie Beaudreault, Isaiah Blaise, Christian Burns, Avan Cady, Mason Caya, Brielynn Fijol, Reis Mailloux, Jacob Racine, Emmett Salvas, Jase Tsouridis, Jonas Tucker, Julia Varney

Recognition: Psylah Bonefont, Nathan Holmes, Paige House, Maximus Johnson, Dmetri Labby, Leonard Mornecy, Trent Plaza, Jack Violette

Grade 8

High Honors: Kasandra Beckett, Joshua Boss, Emily Cabral, Ella DiCicco, Piper Kus, Kinslie Stewart, Julianne Valby, Elizabeth Vescera, Bailey Yong

Honors: Parker Beck, Cole Benoit, John Clarke, Selena Curry, Jezarya Denham, Annabelle Estabrook, Chloe Gillon, Jakub Krupa, Jasmine McCutcheon, Jason Opuni-Mensah, Jacob Poirier, Jaeda Rose, Grace Roy, Tanner Saad, Amelia Smith, Kaylee Valdes, Lilly Wolf

Recognition: Alexande Apley, Ashel Aubin, Alyzah Brousseau, Hailey Caverly, Kileigh Comptois, Lucas Dodd, Joshua Freitas, Kyle Frenier, McKenzi Hamilton, Ezerik Johnson, Damyen Lowe, Savanah McKiernan, Bailey Vose

Eastern honors American heroes on Veterans Day

BY KYLE BERSON '26
EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

WILLIMANTIC — Eastern Connecticut State University honored the nearly 20 million United States active and retired military personnel during its annual Veterans Day ceremony on Nov. 11. The event featured remarks from campus dignitaries and a keynote address by Air Force veteran, entrepreneur, and Eastern alumnus Andrew DiSilvestro '11.

Willimantic's First Congregational Church Minister Paul Doyle, pastor at Eastern's Interfaith Campus Ministry, opened the ceremony: "We are who we are (as a nation) due in large part to those who gave their lives in service," he said.

Eastern President Karim Ismaili recognized that the family members of veterans and active service members share in that burden as well: "Service is rarely carried out by one person alone. ... A family shares in the time apart, the uncertainty, the transitions, and the sacrifices that come with that commitment."

Shifting to Eastern specifically, he drew parallels between the purpose of Veterans Day and the goals of higher education.

"Veterans Day asks us to pause and reflect on the meaning of service, and on the sacrifices made by those who have chosen to serve something larger than themselves," said Ismaili. "A university education challenges us to consider not only what we hope to accomplish in our own lives, but what responsibilities we have to one another, and to the communities of which we are a part."

Senior Michael Hemmings, a student leader and Marine recruit, introduced keynote speaker DiSilvestro, an Air Force veteran and CEO of AmeriTech Contracting. He described the 2011 Eastern alum as embodying "calm and confidence in the face of complexity."

"Coming back to this university is special," DiSilvestro began. "Returning on Veterans Day - the opportunity to recognize the men and women who have served this nation - brings a different kind of meaning."

He shared a moving story about a fellow service member and dear friend, Mike, whom DiSilvestro met in 2014 at UConn's Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans, a transitional resource that helps veterans apply their skills to entrepreneurship and business ownership. DiSilvestro credited him as one of the most driven, resilient veterans he had ever met.

"The desire to serve doesn't end when the uniform comes off," DiSilvestro said. "After his service, Mike dedicated himself to protecting veteran benefits. If you've ever dealt with that system, you know it's not easy."

DiSilvestro described his friend's commitment to helping his fellow veterans fight denied claims, secure proper disability ratings, and navigate systems that often complicate veterans' access to health care and benefits. More importantly, Mike sought to ensure veterans didn't lose their sense of self.

"He wasn't fighting for disability ratings, but for dignity for those who served," said DiSilvestro.

While crusading for his brothers and sisters in arms, Mike struggled with mental health until his death in 2020.

"Sometimes the people fighting the hardest for others are the ones who need some help themselves," said DiSilvestro, noting that mental health struggles remain a prevalent challenge within the veteran community.

"I want his life, commitment, and service to others to define his legacy," he said. "The most meaningful mission you can ever undertake is one that improves the lives of others."

The veteran and CEO concluded with a call to the Eastern community.

"Continue creating opportunities for veterans to grow, lead, serve, and, most importantly, continue building a culture where they know they belong. We never know how much those connections might mean to someone," he said. "Mike's service mattered. His life mattered. His legacy deserves to live on in the actions we take."

Eastern's Veterans Day ceremony also featured a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance and a performance of the National Anthem by Eastern Chamber Singers.

Christmas on the Hill offers "Something for everyone!"



Courtesy

Volunteers from the 2025 Christmas on the Hill Holiday Bazaar. This year›s event will be held on Saturday, Nov. 21 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the First Congregational Church of Woodstock at 543 Route 169 in Woodstock.

WOODSTOCK — The First Congregational Church of Woodstock has been hosting their Christmas on the Hill fundraiser for well over 50 years. The tradition continues this year—with two components: The indoor/outdoor holiday bazaar on Saturday, Nov. 21, which is preceded by a week-long online auction.

The online auction opens at 5 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 13 and runs online for a full week until 9 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 19. The auction features over 200 items—antiques, collectibles, sporting equipment, and handcrafted artwork, not to mention homemade raspberry and blueberry pies prepared by the baking pastor, Rev. Dr. Kevin Downer! Bidding information can be found on the church website or through https://new.biddingowl.com/COTH.

The Indoor/Outdoor Holiday Bazaar will be held on Saturday, Nov. 21 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

"Shoppers will find gifts in all price ranges. There is something for everyone," said Debby Kirk, fair coordinator. "From heirloom and costume jewelry, to unique handcrafted treasures, to new and gently used items for all ages. The Penny Social includes gift cards and merchandise donated by dozens of local vendors and artisans."

During the fair, the kitchen will be serving corn chowder, butternut bisque, and hot chili for lunch. There will be a bake sale with pumpkin rolls and a variety of cookies. Shoppers can select from an array of greens arrangements, porch boxes, and balsam wreaths to prepare for the holidays.

The public is invited to pick up pre-orders and auction items at the bazaar.

"Our signature dish is a delicious ready-to-bake chicken pot pie with homemade cranberry relish. These sell out quickly so pre-order is recommended by Nov. 15," continued Kirk.

"Christmas on the Hill captures the very best of the holiday season: joy, generosity, and community," Pastor Kevin Downer shared. "As a long-standing tradition for many in the region, it offers a chance to gather with neighbors, discover unique gifts, and bring home favorite holiday treats ahead of Thanksgiving. More importantly, it reflects the spirit of giving, with proceeds helping support the church's outreach ministries and local nonprofit partners including TEEG, Community Kitchens of Northeastern Connecticut, CROP Hunger Walk, The Last Green Valley, and Covenant Soup Kitchen."

The First Congregational Church of Woodstock is an Open and Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ. The church is located at 543 Route 169, Woodstock, just south of the Woodstock Common. For more information about the auction and the November 21 bazaar, go to www.firstchurchwoodstock.org or call the church office at 860-928-7405.

Holiday pies available through Senexet Grange

WOODSTOCK — As the end of 2026 approaches, the holidays include happy family celebrations. One of the many cherished forms of celebration is the family meal. Whether you enjoy a turkey, ham or other family meal tradition, there is always room for dessert. It is also a tradition for the members of Senexet Grange in Woodstock to bake and sell handmade pies using their time-tested recipes. These pies will remind you of meals at your grandmother's house. The ingredients are simple but blend deliciously.

Pies available

Our apple pie is the most popular with our customers. Skip peeling and cutting the apples and rolling the dough! We will do it for you! We also offer traditional pumpkin and hearty blueberry pies.

Try something new and join our dedicated customers return year after year to buy our pork pies. These savory pies are baked and frozen before sale so that the customer can warm them in the oven whenever they want. Many buy more than one pie to store in the freezer for later.

Please consider including a Senexet Grange pie (or several pies) in your holiday plans. Look for our ad in the Shopper's Guide and on our Facebook page—Senexet Grange|Facebook. You can also send an email to grange40ct@gmail.com or call Lillian at 860-974-1053. Please order Thanksgiving pies before November 20th and Christmas pies before Dec. 19. Let us make your holidays happy!

Quiet Corner Al-Anon group meets Wednesdays

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

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

EDITORIAL

continued from page A4

allow generosity to reach families throughout the region.

As the holiday season approaches, it is easy to become distracted by shopping lists, crowded schedules and the pressure to make everything perfect. Events such as Woodstock's toy drive offer a welcome reminder that the most meaningful parts of the season have little to do with elaborate decorations or expensive gifts. They have much more to do with recognizing that the happiness of our neighbors matters, too.

Twenty-one years is a remarkable achievement for any volunteer undertaking. Maintaining that commitment through changing economic conditions, busy schedules and the countless demands placed on emergency responders speaks to the dedication of everyone involved.

The Woodstock Volunteer Fire Association, the participating students, the donors and the organizations distributing the toys all deserve recognition for making this tradition possible.

A toy may seem like a small thing. But to a child who might otherwise go without, it can mean the world. And after 21 years, the people behind this remarkable Quiet Corner tradition continue to demonstrate that the spirit of Christmas is measured not by what people receive, but by what they are willing to give.

FOOD BASKET

continued from page A1

will provide about a dozen student volunteers to help us prepare the boxes of food for distribution on Tuesday, Nov. 24 at Brooklyn Cares Community Center, 31 Tiffany St., Brooklyn.

We are so proud of the youth of our community and know that their kindness and generosity comes from the adults at school and their families at home! Brooklyn Public Schools did not hesitate to jump on the request to collect food items for the boxes and have already been filling boxes at the school. We are grateful to Superintendent Raynor who did not hesitate to assist when asked! Her schools are top notch with wonderful staff and students! Please feel free to reach out to us or visit our Facebook Page and learn more about us. You can reach us at Brooklyncares@brooklyncares.org or leave a message at (860)779-3411, ext. 311.

TOY DRIVE

continued from page A1

their annual calendar.

Russ Downer Woodstock Volunteer Fire Association President, talked about the overwhelming success and impact the toy drive has had over the past two-plus decades.

"This has grown into one of the biggest annual toy events in the region. It sets the tone for the rest of the season. In 21 years, we've collected over $150,000 in monetary donations and over 50,000 toys all staying in the local community for those in need," said Downer.

The event is staffed by members of the Association but also employs the help of local school students who volunteer their time to be part of one of the region's most iconic holiday staples. Whether it's their first year or they've been a part of the drive from day one, Downer said everyone understands the magnitude and impact the toy drive has on providing for those in need.

"It means a lot to us to give back and to see these students paying it forward and taking their time to be a part of something like this," said Downer. "As firefighters and EMS workers, we're called during people's worst moments, so this is a nice time for us to give back, and the community always stops by to say high and support us. There's a lot to appreciate here."

The toys will be distributed between TEEG, the Putnam Resource Center, and the Town of Eastford School District to distribute the toys appropriately to local families.

BOOT DRIVE

continued from page A1

protects against frostbite, it protects against potential nerve damage and wet feet that can cause skin breakdown that leads to wounds that get infected and can be life-threatening. Keeping our community warm and safe this winter is our priority," said Duquette.

Throughout the day on Nov. 7, Grange volunteers gathered outside the Putnam Municipal Complex collecting footwears for all ages and sizes. Duquette noted that community turnout was tremendous.

"In our community, we are very strong in collecting things like coats, scarves, hats, and mittens. It's phenomenal that our community can come together and collect those very important winter essentials, but a gap we still have is boots and socks and, as anyone who has lived through a Connecticut winter knows, that cold can really get you right down to the bone," Duquette said.

Notable contributions included a major donation from Linemaster Switch, which provided boots in every standard size. Several area churches also contributed, while the day opened with a local couple donating a container filled with footwear and socks. All collected items are set to be distributed through TEEG.

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We'd Love To Hear From You!

Day Kimball Health's Hospice & Palliative Care earns 2025 SHPBest™ "Premier Performer" Caregiver Experience Award



Courtesy

Members of the Hospice & Palliative Care of Northeastern Connecticut team pose for a group photo outside their office in Thompson.

PUTNAM — Hospice & Palliative Care of Northeastern Connecticut, a service division of Day Kimball Health, has been recognized by Strategic Healthcare Programs (SHP) as a "Premier Performer" for achieving an overall caregiver and family experience score that ranked in the top 5 percent of all eligible SHP clients for the 2025 calendar year.

The annual SHPBest™ award program was created to acknowledge hospice providers that consistently provide high-quality service to families and caregivers of patients receiving hospice care. The 2025 award recipients were determined by reviewing and ranking the overall CAHPS Hospice caregiver experience score for more than 1,800 hospice providers. With one of the largest CAHPS Hospice benchmarks in the nation, SHP is in a unique position to identify and recognize organizations that have made the family and caregiver experience a priority and have been rewarded for their efforts with high marks on the CAHPS Hospice survey.

"Providing excellent patient care takes relentless effort, and our SHPBest award winners embody that every year. This program lets us recognize the organizations that never settle, that keep improving the patient and caregiver experience even when they're already performing at a high level. That kind of commitment deserves to be celebrated," said Jason Ballet, President of SHP.

This is the first time Day Kimball Health's hospice program has been recognized by Strategic Healthcare Programs (SHP) as a top 5 percent performer nationally for caregiver experience, an achievement that reflects the compassion and dedication of the hospice team and the experiences of the patients and families it serves.

The recognition builds on a history of strong patient and caregiver experience results. In 2022, the program received a five-star rating from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), which includes measures related to caregiver experience. In 2018, the program also received an Award of Distinction from Fazzi Associates, our CAHPS administrator at the time, recognizing performance among the top 25 percent of hospices nationally.

This latest achievement reflects the collective efforts of the interdisciplinary hospice team, under the leadership of hospice program manager Kim Durand. The team is committed to supporting not only our patients but also their families and caregivers. In recent years, the program has placed an increased emphasis on caregiver support through its bereavement program and the dedicated services of its social workers and chaplains.

Hospice & Palliative Care of Northeastern Connecticut is honored to receive this national recognition, which affirms its commitment to providing compassionate, high-quality hospice care and supporting patients and their loved ones during one of life's most important transitions.

"Every day, I am inspired by the compassion, skill, and tenacity of our hospice team," said Jennifer LeDuc, RN, MSN, executive director, Homecare & Hospice. "For them, this work is more than a job, it is truly a calling, and I could not be prouder of what they have accomplished. Over the past several years, we have worked to expand our hospice and palliative care programs while remaining focused on what matters most: ensuring patients and families feel supported, heard, and cared for during an incredibly important time in their lives. Hospice is not only about providing excellent end-of-life care. It is also about helping people share their stories, preserve their legacies, and write this important chapter of their lives with dignity, meaning, and as much joy as possible."

For more information on Hospice & Palliative Care of Northeastern Connecticut, visit daykimball.org/athome

Read more about the SHPBest awards program, including methodology and award recipient lists, at https://www.shpdata.com/hospice/shpbest-cahps-hospice/.

Liam Wilcox of Woodstock Valley appointed to Nichols College Senior Advisory Council

DUDLEY — Liam Wilcox of Woodstock Valley is one of 14 students appointed by Nichols College President Bill Pieczynski to the 2026-2027 Nichols Senior Advisory Council (NSAC).

The students selected are accomplished seniors who bring a range of experiences, perspectives and contributions to the Nichols community. They will meet monthly with the president and members of the President's Council, serving as an advisory group as the College plans for the future.

"The Nichols Senior Advisory Council is one of the opportunities I look forward to most each year. What makes NSAC particularly valuable is that it gives students a seat at the table while challenging them to think about Nichols beyond their individual experiences," said Pieczynski. "Their perspectives help inform our decisions and strengthen the College. At the same time, we're giving these students a firsthand look at leadership and decision-making. It's a two-way learning experience, and I'm excited to work with this year's cohort."

Upcoming NSAC meetings will include discussions on the College's new initiatives as well as broader trends and issues in higher education. In addition to helping Nichols enhance the overall experience for all members of its community, the meetings are also intended as an opportunity for students to further strengthen their communication and presentation skills, which are critical to career advancement.

Each year, one NSAC member also has the opportunity to be selected to serve a two-year term on the Nichols College Board of Trustees following graduation, providing an important continuation of student leadership at the College's highest level of governance.

About Nichols College

Nichols College has earned business accreditation from the prestigious Association of 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

OBITUARIES

Ernest L. Barrette, 81



Ernest L. Barrette, 81, of Danielson, CT, passed away on Sunday, November 15, 2026, at Hartford Hospital in Hartford, CT. He was born on January 29, 1945, in Putnam, CT, son of the late Romeo and Irene (Mailhot) Barrette.

Ernest was the beloved husband of Diane (Rzepa) Barrette, with whom he celebrated 55 wonderful years of marriage.

A graduate of St. James School, Ernest continued his education at La Salette Seminary for nine years before attending Merrimack College, where he earned his bachelor's degree in Philosophy. He later earned a degree in Business Administration from Quinebaug Valley Community College.

Following his education, Ernest was drafted into the United States Army, proudly serving his country for two years before returning home to Danielson. He went on to work for the State of Connecticut, where he was employed with the Department of Administrative Services until his retirement.

Known affectionately as "Mr. Cubs," Ernest was a lifelong and devoted fan of the Chicago Cubs and Montreal Canadiens. He was especially thrilled when the Cubs finally won the World Series in 2016, a moment he had waited a lifetime to witness. He was fortunate enough to attend a game during that historic World Series with his daughter, Jennifer, creating a cherished memory they shared together.

Ernest enjoyed spending time with his family and especially treasured family vacations to Cape Cod. He was also an avid music lover, with Johnny Mathis being his favorite singer. One of his fond memories was seeing Johnny Mathis perform at Foxwoods, a place Ernest enjoyed visiting.

In addition to his loving wife, Diane, Ernest leaves his daughter, Jennifer Trainor of Holliston, MA; his sons, Christopher Barrette and Jonathan Barrette (Michelle Barrette); his grandchildren, Noah Trainor, Owen Trainor, Kaci Hill, and Alannah Chappell; and nine nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his brothers, Norman Barrette and Fr. Eugene Barrette, M.S.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the St. James School, 120 Water Street, Danielson, CT 06239, or to the Alzheimer's Association, 10 Executive Dr Ste 202, Farmington, CT 06032.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be Monday, November 23, 2025 at 11:00 AM at St. James Church, 12 Franklin Street, Danielson, CT, burial will be in Holy Cross Cemetery, Danielson, CT. Share a memory at Gagnonandcostellofh.com

Ethel A. Courtois, 91



Ethel A. Courtois, 91 of Danielson passed away November 6, 2026 at Matulaitis Nursing Home in Putnam, CT. She was born on December 2,1934 in Providence, RI, daughter of the late Francis and Catherine (Glynn) Smith. She was the beloved wife of the late Joseph Courtois. She enjoyed traveling around the world with her husband visiting Hawaii, Alaska and Europe. Ethel had a love for all animals especially dogs. She enjoyed the outdoors and spent much of her time gardening. Ethel worked at Day Kimball Hospital for ten years in the business office, for seven years at Provel Industries and was a Medical Coder for 13 years at the Veterans Hospital in Providence Rhode Island. She was a Communicant of St. Joseph Church. Ethel was a very independent and private woman and will be missed. She leaves her son Timothy McDougall of South Killingly, CT, her step-son Richard Courtois and his wife Jolene of LA, her daughter in law Ann Marie McDougall of Dayville, CT, her grandson Thomas M. McDougall, Jr. and his wife Lisa of FL, her great grandson Matthew McDougall; her siblings Frances Murray, Robert Smith, Francis Smith and Catherine Smith. Also, several grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her husband Joseph Courtois, her son Thomas M. McDougall, her step-son Rene Courtois and several siblings. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Saturday, November 21, 2026 at 11:00 AM at St. James Church, 12 Franklin Street, Danielson, CT. Burial will follow in St. Joseph Cemetery, Dayville, CT. Share a memory at Gagnonandcostellofh.com

Patricia J. Blain
1941 - 2026



Dayville – Patricia J. (Jamrogowicz) Blain, 85, of Ware Rd., formerly of Rachael Dr., N. Grosvenordale, beloved wife of the late Robert R. Blain, died Monday evening, November 9, 2026, at Westview Healthcare. Born in Webster, MA, she was the daughter of the late John J. and Stella M. (Duszlak) Jamrogowicz. She received her bachelor's degree from Annhurst College and her master's degree in education from Worcester State University.

Mrs. Blain taught for 35 years at Plainfield High School. During that time she became head of the Social Studies department and acted as the yearbook advisor, junior and senior class advisor, junior prom coordinator, and began a student advisory program. She loved making history come alive for her students in her classroom as well as giving them the opportunity to experience how our government works with yearly class trips to Washington D.C.

Patricia enjoyed learning about our world by traveling to Spain, Gibraltar, Morocco, all provinces of Canada, and 49 of our states with her late husband Robert. She was an active parishioner of St. Joseph Church in N. Grosvenordale where she was a member of the parish council, a eucharistic minister, coordinator for the blessing of the Easter baskets, and scheduler for the lectors, eucharistic ministers, and altar servers.

Pat was a member of the Red Hat Society, VFW Post 10088 ladies auxiliary, and Catholic Women's League for which she attended many annual conferences. She was also a past President of the ladies of St. Anne. She enjoyed participating in the residents' choir and theater programs at Westview Commons.

She is survived by her daughter, Nancy Berube and her husband Ken of Groton, CT; her grandchildren, Adam, Mitchell, and Natalie Berube all of Groton, CT; her sister, Judith Campbell of Stow, OH; her nephew, Scott Campbell and his wife Michele of Akron, OH; and her niece, Sandra Costa and her husband Domenic of Stow, OH.

Relatives and friends are invited to visit with Patricia's family from 5:00PM to 7:00PM on Thursday, November 19, 2026, in the Valade Funeral Home and Crematory, 23 Main St., N. Grosvenordale. A gathering will begin in the funeral home on Friday, November 20, 2026, at 10:00AM followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at 11:00AM in St. Joseph Church, 18 Main St., N. Grosvenordale, CT. Burial will follow in St. Joseph Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to St. Joseph's Church, P.O. Box 665, Putnam, CT 06260. For memorial guestbook please visit www.GilmanAndValade.com.

Frank Grigarauskas, 76



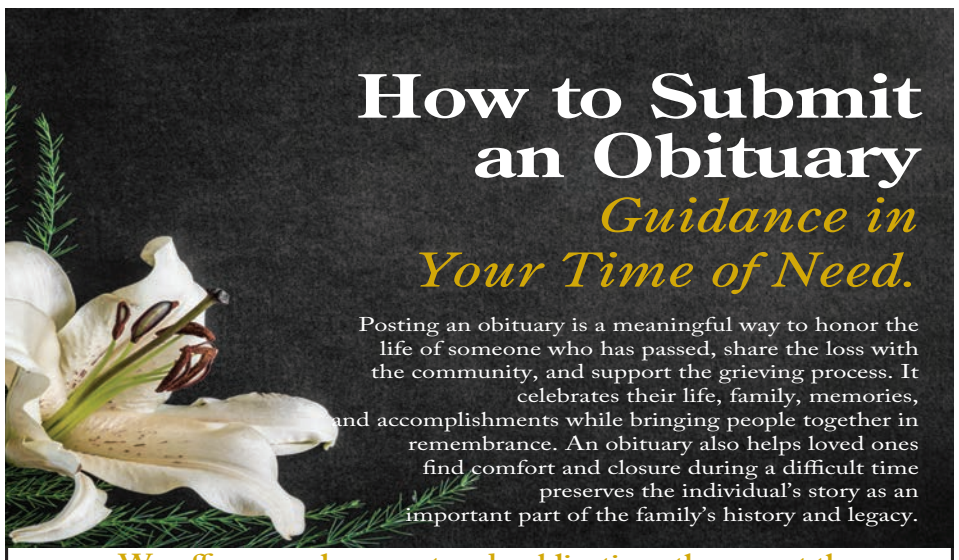
THOMPSON, CT – Frank Grigarauskas, 76, died Wednesday, November 11, 2026, Veteran's Day, at home surrounded by his family after an illness. His beloved wife of 38 years, Charlotte J. (Wagher) Grigarauskas, died in 2020. He leaves three sons, Adam F. Grigarauskas of Lake Charlotte, LA, Jason Grudzien and his wife Renee of Singer, LA, and Gerald S. 'Jerry" Grudzien, Jr. and his wife Leanne of Brooklyn; three grandchildren, Ty Grudzien, Hannah Grudzien and Riley Grigarauskas; and his cherished pets, mixed terrier Oliver and Tara "the cat". He was preceded in death by his brothers William, Walter and Richie Grigarauskas and by his sisters Shirley Liseno and her husband Barry and by Eleanor Murno and her husband Mike. He was born in Worcester on June 16, 1950, a son of William and Mary (Marcunis) Grigarauskas. He was raised in the Dudley-Charlton area, and lived in New York City after his military service. After his marriage to the love of his life Charlotte in 1982, he moved to Thompson. He was an Army veteran of the Vietnam War who earned the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palms. He was discharged as a result of injuries he sustained during battle. Mr. Grigarauskas first worked at General Spring and Wire in Oxford, MA and later worked at UPS in Shrewsbury, MA for 33 years, retiring in 2012. He enjoyed reading, walking, trips to the casino and was an avid NY Jets fan. His greatest treasure was the time his spent with wife and family. The family would like to thank the nurses and home health aides from Always Best Care Senior Services and Day Kimball Hospice for their exceptional care and compassion towards Frank during his illness. Calling hours were held on Tuesday, November 24, from 4:00 to 7:00 PM in the Sitkowski, Malboeuf & Hickey Funeral Home, 340 School Street, Webster. Military honors were performed by the Webster-Dudley Veterans Council Funeral Honor Guard at 6:30 PM in the funeral home. Burial be private. The family kindly requests that flowers be omitted and instead donations in his memory be made to the Wounded Warrior Project, P.O. Box 758516 Topeka, KS 66675-8516. www.websterfunerals.com



Linda Janet Albrecht, 79



WOODSTOCK VALLEY,CT-Linda Janet (Duval) Albrecht, 79, passed away peacefully, surrounded by love on Sunday, November 8, 2026, at St. Joseph's Living Center in Windham, CT. Born on September 18, 1947, in Webster, Massachusetts, she was the youngest child of Madeline (Livernoche) and Ernest Duval, and was a graduate of Bartlett High School. Linda lived a life rich in kindness, laughter, and unwavering dedication to her family and community. Linda's love for her family was boundless. Her greatest joy was having everyone together, surrounded by the love, laughter, and warmth of those who meant the most to her. She is survived by her devoted husband of 29 years, John Albrecht, her beloved son, Scott Bronczyk, and her cherished daughter, Kerry Cyronak and her husband Mark. She was an exceptionally proud grandmother to Ryan Cyronak, Lindsey Bronczyk, Mason Bronczyk, and Madeline Cyronak, each of whom held a special place in her heart and lit up her world. She also leaves her brother, Robert Duval and his wife, Louise, and the family she lovingly embraced when she married John: son, Steven Albrecht and his husband, Robert Thompson; daughter, Karen Albrecht and her fiancé, Steve Uzdarwin; and son, Kurt Albrecht. Grandchildren Laura and her partner Tim, Jason, Elizabeth and her husband Maxwell, Matthew and his wife, Morgan. Great-grandchildren Natalie, Jack, Daisy, Thumbelina, Hadley and Hudson. She also leaves many beloved nieces and nephews, whom she loved deeply and was immensely grateful for. She was predeceased by her parents, and her siblings, Elaine Duval and her companion Larry Behr, Alfred Duval and his wife, Pauline, Joanne Morgan and her husband Bernard. All are welcome to join the family for visiting hours on Sunday, November 22 from 2-5pm at Gilman Funeral Home, 104 Church St., Putnam, CT. A Funeral Mass will be held on Monday the 23rd, at 10:30am in St. Joseph's Church, 18 Main St, North Grosvenordale, CT. Interment of her ashes will follow at Sacred Heart Cemetery, Webster, MA. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Quinebaug Valley Special Olympics, ensuring her legacy of love and support for athletes continues to thrive. Checks can be made payable to SOCT-QV, with a note that it is in memory of Linda Albrecht, for Quinebaug Valley. Donations can be mailed to Special Olympics CT, 2666 State Street, Suite 1, Hamden, CT 06517-2232.



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LEGALS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ESTATE OF
Judith A Dennison (26-00441)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate,District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated November 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:
Penny A Dennison
c/o MARK R BROUILLARD, ST ONGE & BROUILLARD, 50 ROUTE 171, WOODSTOCK, CT 06281
November 20, 2026

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ESTATE OF
John N Wolchesky (26-00406)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate,District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated October 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:
KATHRYN GUINAN,
KATHRYN D. GUINAN,
10 PEARL STREET, 2ND FLOOR,
NEW LONDON, CT 06320
November 20, 2026

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ESTATE OF
Joan F Scandalito (26-00446)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate,District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated November 6, 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:
Laura A Andert
c/o THOMAS A BORNER, BORNER SMITH ALEMAN HERZOG & CERRONE,LLC,
155 PROVIDENCE STREET,
PO BOX 166,
PUTNAM, CT 06260
November 20, 2026

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