

THOMPSON VILLAGER

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Friday, May 3, 2024

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Paquette appointed as Woodstock's First Selectman

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

WOODSTOCK — Following the passing of First Selectman Jay Swan, the Woodstock Board of Selectmen were tasked with choosing a new leader to fill out Swan's term. At a special meeting on April 23, the two remaining selectmen agreed that Swan's longtime running mate Chandler Paquette would be promoted to the seat.

After the announcement of Swan's passing earlier in April, the remaining selectmen, Republican Chandler Paquette and Democrat Kate McDonald, had 30 days to fill the vacancy. A lifelong Woodstock resident, Paquette has served 17 years and nine consecutive terms as a selectman running alongside Swan in 2019, 2021, and 2023.

In a statement released by the town, Paquette called his promotion bittersweet after the loss of Swan.

"Jay was a tremendous member of the community and always worked to make Woodstock a better place. He loved this town, and it was an honor to call him a friend," Paquette said, promising to continue Swan's legacy of "doing what's best for Woodstock."

Paquette's fellow select-



Chandler Paquette, a longtime and current selectman, is sworn in as First Selectman to succeed Jay Swan, who passed away in April.

man Kate McDonald said she fully supports Paquette's promotion in a statement also released by the town.

"I strongly believe that (Paquette's) years of service on the Board of Selectmen for the town has provided him with

the knowledge and experience he will need to lead Woodstock in this new role. Chandler and I have worked well together over the last year and a half, and I look forward to continuing our commitment to serve the citizens of Woodstock,"

McDonald said.

Paquette brings an extensive list of accomplishments and credits to the position of First Selectman having been an active member of feasibility and building committees for a new Public Works Department

building and several school roofs projects. He has also been active in the Republican Town Committee and the Board of Selectmen's representative on the Open Space Land Acquisition & Preservation Committee. Along with Swan, he was the only selectman to serve the entirety of the pandemic years to date on the board and as such helped guide the town through recovery and management efforts in that time. Paquette said he is looking forward to the new challenge and continuing to help Woodstock progress.

"I have worked hard to be in touch with the concerns and needs of the citizens of Woodstock" stated Paquette. "My number one priority always has been and will continue to be public safety. I look forward to serving the town in my new position and will continue to strive to complete the work started by my friend and colleague Jay Swan."

Paquette was officially sworn in on April 24, less than a day after he was selected for the position. The Board of Selectmen have 30 days from his appointment to fill his vacancy on the board. Paquette will serve the remainder of Swan's term and will be up for re-election in November of 2025.

Arrests announced in connection to Eastford church fire

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

EASTFORD — A year has passed since a fire destroyed the Congregational Church of Eastford and not only is the church thriving, but the community has received some closure as State Police announced arrests in connection to the incident.

In a press release, the State Police Eastern District Major Crime Squad revealed that two young suspects, a juvenile male and female whose identities have been withheld due to their age, were arrested in September in connection to the fire which took place on April 23, 2023. Although the cause of the blaze was initially suspected to be lightning due to storms occurring that night, the Eastern District Major Crime Squad teamed with the Connecticut State Police Fire & Explosives Investigation Unit, Violent Crimes Task Force, South Windsor Police Department, and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms to determine what actually took place that night. Eventually authorities connected the Eastford fire with another incident in South Windsor and a later incident at Camp Nahaco in Woodstock along with other church break-ins in the area. Authorities were able to apprehend the unnamed suspects during the April 30, 2023 incident at Camp Nahaco, where they attempted to set fire to a lodge. Both suspects confessed to the crimes and were charged with arson, burglary, criminal mischief, and reckless endangerment.

While the arrests bring closure to a year of recovery for the Congregational Church of Eastford, Pastor Michael Moran said there is no animosity towards the culprits. He said he and his church practice the forgiveness and kindness expressed through their faith and that extends to the young individuals as well.

"The idea of arson, somebody intentionally doing it, does give you a catch in your spirit. We did talk and pray about this, about what if it was arson, and we as Christ followers believe that he died for our sins that we might be forgiven. We've all done a lot of stuff that's not okay and we feel that as far as our relationship with God that slate has been cleaned by one who loves us so much, he'd give his life for us. So, we have to offer our unconditional love and forgiveness for these two young people. That's our heart. We forgive you. We acknowledge there are consequences when people do things like this and we are entrusting that with the authorities, but our heart is forgiveness," said Moran.

As for the church itself, the congregation has only grown in the year
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Killingly allocates ARPA funds for Senior Center projects

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

KILLINGLY — The Killingly Town Council has allocated extra ARPA monies to help support seniors in town as well as neighboring Brooklyn.

The money was provided through a state act to provide extra ARPA funds specifically designated for senior centers and related services. Each community received a base amount of \$5,000 with additional money determined through an equity formula. Killingly received \$36,674 in total

with guidance from the State Department of Aging on how to properly allocate the funds to qualified projects.

On April 9, the Town Council allocated the full allotment of senior center ARPA money between two projects that expressed interest through communication with Town Manager Mary Calorio's office. The town's fiscal subcommittee examined both requests but sent them to the Town Council with no specific recommendations. The first application was for the Quinebaug Valley

Senior Center, owned by and located in the town of Brooklyn, for replacing a heat exchanger for their HVAC as supporting a roof replacement. The second was from Killingly's own Recreation Department to purchase a new projector and a larger screen for use with senior movies and other functions. While there was debate over how much should be allocated to each project, Calorio stated she felt it was essential to provide at least some money to the Quinebaug Valley Senior Center.

"I think that there would be some concern at the state level if the town did not allocate any funds to our QV Senior Center given that the town has funded and subsidized that as a senior center for decades," Calorio said.

With that in mind, several Town Council members stressed the importance of keeping much of the money in town and supporting the Recreation Department's request first. The state has confirmed that the town of Brooklyn allocated the entirety of its senior center ARPA monies to the

Quinebaug Valley Senior Center while Eastford provided a quarter of its funds to the center.

A motion was made to allocate \$6,674 of Killingly's money to Brooklyn, roughly 20 percent, and keep \$30,000, or roughly 80 percent, for the town. That motion was later amended to allocate \$9,000, or 25 percent, to Brooklyn and \$27,674, or 75 percent, for the new projector and screen. The amended motion was approved unanimously by the Council members present.

Ringling with laughter ... and now music

POMFRET — The playground at the Pomfret Community School rings with children's laughter — and now it will ring with music.

Some members of the Putnam Rotary Club last week installed two musical instruments at the playground area used by students and the public. No one told the students the instruments were going to be installed.

Principal Susan Inschwiler said, "The instruments were a big hit today at recess!"

The instruments installed after school last Friday included a Metallaphone (simi-

lar to a xylophone) and a trio of Bongo Drums.

The Music Garden at Pomfret Community School was funded through a Rotary Foundation District 7890 grant of \$2,375 plus \$1,200 from the Putnam Rotary Club. The concrete work was donated by J.B. Concrete Products.

District Grant Committee Chair Karen Osbrey said there are 350 children enrolled in Pomfret Community School but the playground serves as a public playground during non-school hours.

The Putnam Rotary Club has five service towns: Putnam, Woodstock,

Eastford, Thompson and Pomfret. A larger musical instrument installation is already delighting people on the River Trail in Putnam. Osbrey said the club hopes to install

instruments in all five of its service towns. She added that Thompson is building a playground and so a Rotary touch of music for that playground is likely the

next one on the list.

Helping Osbrey install the instruments were Rotarians Doug Porter and Wayne "Woody" Durst.



The Putnam Rotary Club installed some musical instruments at the Pomfret Community School and these kids, at the playground after hours, gave them a try.

Please complete and mail the card in today's paper.

Thompson VFW and Auxiliary recognizes professionals, students and volunteers

THOMPSON — Community Recognition Night sponsored by the Thompson Memorial VFW Auxiliary to Post 10088 was held on Monday, April 15 at the Quinebaug Volunteer Fire Department according to an announcement from Commander Elmer Preston, President Virginia Livernoche and Program Chairman Linda Szyrka. The annual event is held to honor volunteers and citizens in the Town of Thompson who distinguish themselves in service to others.

Since 1990, the Auxiliary has been recognizing the five Fire Departments in Thompson with the "Unpaid Professional" Award. Each department is asked to nominate one of their own for this award. Honored this year were:

- Kelli Langer - Thompson Fire Engine Co. Inc.
 - Peter Faucher - Community Fire Co. Inc.
 - Sarah Duquette - East Thompson Volunteer Fire Department
 - Robert Chalinor - West Thompson Fire Department
 - Lorne Lee - Quinebaug Volunteer Fire Department
- The "Youth Volunteer of the Year" goes to an adult who volunteers with youth or to a youth who volunteers in the community. Melissa Ericson was the recipient of this year's award for her work with and promoting the Scouting Program in Thompson. "Citizen of the Year" Award

went to Sr. Janine Blanchard for volunteering and overseeing the St. Joseph Food Pantry for many years and making sure anyone in need gets help not only at the holidays but throughout the year.

The VFW and Auxiliary sponsor several contests in the Thompson School System. Auxiliary Scholarship Chairman, Carol Preston recognized Thompson Middle School Students who participated in the Patriot's Pen Youth Essay contest. This contest encourages young minds to examine America's history along with their own experiences in modern American society by expressing their views based on a patriotic theme. Winners were: Braeden Carlson, 1st place; Drew Marquette, 2nd place; Logan Wedda, 3rd place.

Tourtellotte Memorial High School students participating in the Voice of Democracy audio essay contest were: Eric Levesque, 1st place; Maddison Carlson, 2nd place; Jordyn Butler, 3rd place. The Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest also sponsored for high school students recognizes young artists and encourages patriotism in youth. 1st place winner was Eric Levesque.

Teachers who promote civic responsibility, flag etiquette and patriotism are prime candidates for the Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Teacher Program. Nominated for this award and recognized by the local VFW were: Grade K-5, Jessie Duquette; Grade 6-8,

Judy Perkins; Grade 9-12, Cindy Ouillette. A special Teacher recognition award was presented to Erica Groh for the tremendous effort she puts into encouraging her students in honoring Veterans at the annual Veterans Day program in the Thompson Middle School.

A new contest introduced in the school this year was the Illustrating America Art Contest for Grades K-8 which encourages and recognizes young artists with patriotism through art. Winners in Grade K-2 were: Nolan Seney, 1st place; Katie Rivers, 2nd place; Arielle Delicata, 3rd place. Winners in Grade 3-5 were: Austin Grace Auger, 1st place; Jacob Racine and Henry Rivers, 2nd place; Jack Violette, 3rd place.

Sponsored for the second year was the VFW Auxiliary National Singing contest "Get Excited for the Red, White and Blue" which is a video solo vocal performance of the Star-Spangled Banner. Winners of this contest were students from Grade K-8: Carly Smith, 1st place; Elizabeth Lemay, 2nd place; June Bardellini, 3rd place. Grade 9-12: Jinalyse Denham, 1st place; Elizabeth Davis, 2nd place; Cassie McKeen Densy, 3rd place.

The Officers and members of Thompson Memorial VFW Post 10088 and Auxiliary Congratulate and Thank all of our Community Volunteers who keep us safe, educate our youth and work to make Thompson a better place to live. Well done!!! You make us proud.

VILLAGER ALMANAC AT CT AUDUBON

Bird sightings at the Connecticut Audubon Society Center at Pomfret and Wyndham Land Trust properties for the week of April 22: Blue-headed Vireo, Greater Yellowlegs, Black and White Warbler, Pine Warbler, Ruby crowned Kinglet, Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Tree Swallow, Bobwhite Quail, Kestrel, Hummingbird, House Wren, Hermit Thrush, Chipping Sparrow. Visit ctaudubon.org/pomfret-home.

Finance Director (24-30 hours per week)

Must have Bookkeeping/Accounting credentials and experience with accounting software. Preferably the candidate will have experience with not-for-profit organizations, especially in light of a religious congregation. Must have a "collaborative" personality who works well with others. The candidate will be responsible for planning and participating in the "ordinary" work of the Finance Department.

Send resumes to:
treadhs@gmail.com

Christ Church of Pomfret donates to Access Shelters

POMFRET — Christ Church of Pomfret recently presented a check to Access Community Action Agency, for the Emergency Shelter in Danielson. Christ Church has been a long-time supporter of Access. Over the past few years, they have donated more than \$12,500.

Several years ago, Christ Church partnered with Access and many other local organizations to support the opening of a Cold Weather Overnight Shelter. This shelter is located in the parish hall of the St. Albans Church on Broad St in Danielson. During the coldest months of the year, the shelter is open seven nights

a week from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. An average of 15 individuals spends the night at the shelter which is staffed by Access.

Homelessness prevention is not just about the Emergency Shelter and the Cold Weather Overnight Shelter. Rhiannon McCabe and her team provide housing support in the form of Rapid Rehousing (finding safe, stable housing for those in shelters), diversion support services (keeping people out of shelters to begin with), youth navigation services and case management for individuals and families seeking other resources.

Access is currently looking to raise significant funds to renovate the newly purchased St. Albans

campus. This will allow Access to better serve all of their customers with expanded food pantry programming, a partnership with the Killingly Community and to continue to serve those seeking shelter from the cold.

Access Community Action Agency is designated by the federal and state government as the anti-poverty agency in northeast Connecticut. Access provides food, affordable housing, job readiness services, and other pathways to economic self-reliance for vulnerable limited-income families and individuals throughout the region. Learn more about Access by visiting <https://accessagency.org>.

PUTNAM HIGH SCHOOL HONOR ROLL

PUTNAM — Putnam High School has released its honor roll for the third quarter of the 2023-2024 school year.

High Honors - Five eligible courses with all grades 80 and above and a 90 percent or better simple GPA for the quarter.

Honors - Five eligible courses with all grades 75 and above and an 85 percent or better simple GPA for the quarter.

Class of 2024
High Honors: Melodie Anderson, Lucien Canova, Lucas Carita, CoraRose Desrosiers, Brady Devlin, Robert Dion, Atiana Estes, Lily Goyette, Savannah Loisel, Brandon Marcelonis,

Pedro Ortiz III, Kaya Pernini, Jonathan Racine, Noah Rudman, Josephine Spalding

Honors: Ava Briere, Aysaiah Chavez, Travis Fredette, Grant Hart, Kylie Howe-Barnett, Sophia Ionkin, Gianni LaPorte, Draven Levesque, Colin Martin, Kai Rosé Raymond, Jack Seiffert, Adam Sekula, Delta Wagner

Class of 2025
High Honors: Anthony Cosentino, Melanie Garcia, Caden Gluck, Logan LaFrance, Madison Lamothe, Isabelle Magalhaes, Evan Mailloux, Kaylee Mayo, Isabel Porter, Hailey Summers

Honors: Sawyer Britt, Brooke Champagne, Aaliyah Daughenbaugh, Lillian Ennis, Antonio Furtado, Olivia Hetrick, Ava Morrison, Emily Olecki, Clara Souza

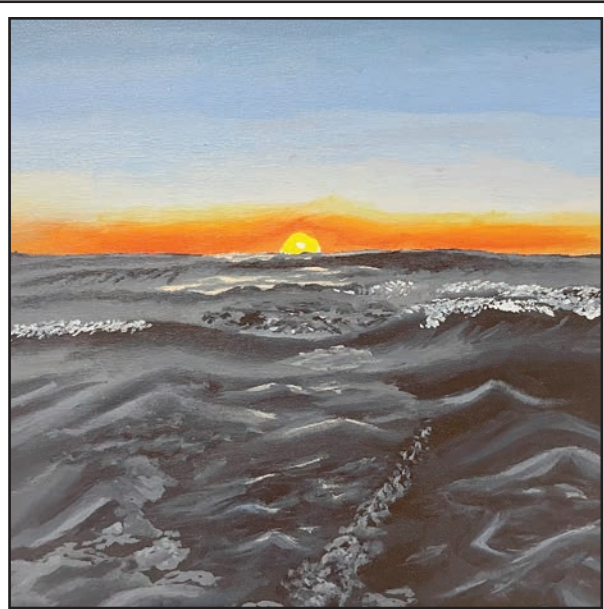
Class of 2026
High Honors: Leah Benzie, Audrina Buzanoski, Nicholas Devlin, Maeve Gabbard, Joselin Garcia Osorio, Evan Garvey, Benjamin Gustafson, Jayce Jodoin, Gavin Matte, Cali McCaughey, Miguel Morente Uz, Kaydence Morris, Paige Perry, Kasyn Robillard, Kaylin Rodrigues, Esteban Suarez, Madison Thomas

Honors: Kaylee Borders, Ella Carota, Gabriell Cerasiello, Brynn Dignam, Aidan Membreno,

Ana Carolina Oliveira, Madalyn Parquette, Joseph Vergoni

Class of 2027
High Honors: Delanie Bernier, Danny Boriboun, Victoria Cancel, Mia Cosentino, Ayla Daniels, Avah Grimshaw, Elieana Ionkin, Sidra Jahangir, Aubrey Paquette, Jay Patel, Nathaniel Ramos, Rebekah Robbins Ferreira, Iyanah Ruiz, Jillian Spalding

Honors: Sydney Barber, Sadie Lee Furtado, Rae Neal, Rockford Snow, Calvin Wormley, Savannah Zegarra



Courtesy

Thompson Public Library's Art @ the Library & Display Case is proud to display the annual Thompson Public Schools Art Showcase, exhibiting the artwork from the students of Tourtellotte Memorial High School and Thompson Middle School, on view May 2-22.

Please join us for the reception on Monday, May 13, 5:30-7 p.m. to celebrate our amazing student artists! Program generously supported by the Friends of the Library



Rectory School offers two summer programs to meet your child's needs. We have a traditional day camp for ages 3-13, and we have an academic program for 5th-8th graders. For information and to register, use the QR code or visit rectoryschool.org/summer.

POMFRET

POMFRET SCHOOL THEATER PRESENTS

RECKLESS

By Craig Lucas

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7:00 PM

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Trump's role in the Jan. 6, 2021 Capitol attack

To the Editor:
Many people believe that former President Donald Trump was behind the Jan. 6, 2021, US capitol attack. I am not so sure. I have questions that cause me to pause. Why was the committee that investigated the events of that day not made up of a mixture of democrats, independents, and republicans? There were no republicans on that committee. Yet I remember that some republicans wanted to be on the investigating committee but weren't selected. Why was that? It causes me concern. Having different points of view helps all of us keep ourselves in check. Committee members from various perspectives would have brought up a myriad of possibilities and would have wanted every concern and piece of information thoroughly checked out—whether democrat, republican, or independent.

Another question I have is that it was announced that prior to the Jan. 6 gathering, Mayor Muriel Bowser of the District of Columbia and her office had received information that there could be possible outside agitators at the rally. In addition, news media reported that President Trump had learned of it and was concerned as well. News media also reported that a member of Trump's staff called the mayor's office and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi to state that concern; this happened prior to the rally. This concern of Trump was covered by some news media but not others. Not once did I hear that the

investigating committee had investigated the claim of Nancy Pelosi and the mayor's office having prior knowledge to find out if the claim was true or false. Could it be that the committee did not even investigate it? In addition, I had heard on news media that prior to the rally, Trump's staff had asked the mayor and Nancy Pelosi to bring in the National Guard for safety reasons. But this did not happen.

A further thing that brings doubt that Trump was behind the tragedy was that the people who were violent at the rally and were captured were not registered to vote. If memory serves me correctly, none of them were. Isn't it curious that the agitators that supposedly were staunch Trump supporters wouldn't value our right as citizens to be registered to vote? Some speculation mentioned was that Trump hired thugs to agitate the crowd. But that is not Trump's mode of operandi (his MO) to create violent insurgencies in his rallies. In previous rallies of Trump, when people had created disturbances, they were immediately removed from the rallies. His past and consistent procedures regarding disruptive people included having security personnel to remove them safely and quickly from the premises. Trump asking for the National Guard to be present at the Jan. 6 rally is consistent with his past actions. Perhaps if they were thugs, someone else hired them to put the blame on Trump. Either possibility

could be true. There isn't enough proof with speculation alone that Trump was behind it. More investigation of the other points mentioned above from a committee of people who represented various political viewpoints would have been helpful.

I am concerned that our news media stifles important, critical information for us viewers to gather to make informed decisions of our own. I encourage all of us to search various media sources of various viewpoints to

broaden our understanding and assist us in asking thought-provoking questions. I encourage all of us to welcome and value different viewpoints so that we can learn from each other and be balanced as individuals, as a community, and as a country. If we consistently consider only one point of view, we run the risk of not working toward discovering the truth.

WENDY FUSCO
KILLINGLY

Please support the Education budget!

To the Editor:

As you may speculate, I have been learning my way through the budget process over the last few years.

This year, the district Superintendent and Administrative team worked tirelessly to present a budget that was fair to both the taxpayers and the school system. They budget process was "reinvented" from the ground up. The district leadership team and department leaders, per the direction of the Superintendent, started with a 0-based budget - meaning line by line, building administrators and department leaders were asked to justify every expense while linking the need to the Board of Education's Profile of a Graduate. Once this was presented to the Superintendent, building administrators and department leaders were asked to reduce their budgets even more - and they did.

After weeks of budget deliberation meetings with the Board of Education, Dr. Nash presented her recommended budget to the Board of Education. Careful consideration was given to many scenarios and ultimately, the budget was reduced and approved unanimously by the Board of Education: (I'm going to say this again!)...all nine members of the Board of Education support the budget presented to the Town Council.

At the Town Council meeting for budget deliberations in April 2024, the Town Council reduced the budget related to the Killingly Public Schools by \$703,722.22. It is important for the taxpayers to know that the vast majority of the Board of Education budget was contractual (salaries and benefits). Again: the budget presented to the town council was voted unanimously by the Board of Education supporting it because it was reasonable and supported, as each item had been reviewed, reduced and linked to KPS goals. Of note, the mill rate impact moved with the Town Council reduction from .78 to .39 percent.

Following the Town Council's decision to reduce the budget further, the Superintendent and her administrative team, again, worked tirelessly for a resolution.

With this, comes many options: Positions could be cut, programming - athletics and other - could be cut; and class sizes could be increased. It is noted that there will be "natural" reductions in the budget due to 1) hiring at lower steps, 2) benefits not taken, 3) reduction / adjustment of unfilled positions, 4) elimination of positions, 5) other funding sources, 6) increase in estimated percent of Excess Cost Reimbursement and 7) use of the non-lapsing fund for potential special education tuition overages.

Ultimately, it did not feel ethical or fair to the students, staff and community to commit to cuts that effect the student body and experience - so - the decision was made to "take a risk", knowing that monies will be saved in the process of hiring / refilling posi-

tions for employees that leave or retire (1, 2, 3 above), but, not enough to make up for the cut in the budget.

The budget cut by the Town Council will very likely cause the need to rely on the non-lapsing fund (#7) in the future. The risk is proceeding with the understanding the Superintendent may need to make a request to move monies from the non-lapsing fund at the end of the budget year.

I feel it's important to give the history of the non-lapsing fund (and additional information).

The non-lapsing fund was created in June of 2016 with a cap of \$1 million.

In May 2019, the Town Council approved the increase to the cap to \$1.75 million.

In May 2020, the Town Council approved an increase to the annual allowable contribution to the fund to 2 percent. Additionally, the cap was increased to \$2 million.

On April 9, the Town Council did not approve the Board of Education's request to contribute \$411,463 to bring the Non-Lapsing account to the \$2 million cap. Rather, they approved to send this matter to a Public Hearing / Special Town Meeting (June 4!) to add \$161,463 to the Non-Lapsing account. This will only refill the balance to \$1.75 million (not to the cap and it is not the requested amount).

I urge residents of Killingly to consider attending both Town Meetings / Hearings on Monday, May 6 and Tuesday, June 4.

On Monday, May 6, residents in attendance have the opportunity to question the Town Council on their adopted budget and also, perhaps more impactful, residents can make motions and vote on line item changes - including (but not limited to) making changes to the education line - possibly adding in the \$703,722.22!

On Tuesday June 4, residents have the opportunity to voice opinions on the reduction of funds being added back into the Non-lapsing fund; possibly allowing the transfer of \$411,463 to bring the cap to the allowed \$2 million.

To quote the Superintendent in her most recent (educational) budget-related presentation, "We are proud of the experiences our students receive in the Killingly Public Schools. Those experiences are made possible by our dedicated staff - ALL staff play a role in this experience. We will not impact our students' superior experiences..."

Killingly, please have your voices heard regarding the Education Budget. While Dr. Nash has produced a plan - with, in her words, "risk" - to operate under the Town Council proposed budget, it does not mean the risk is necessary, or, that it is the right thing to do.

Education is an investment, not a burden of expense.

Our children are watching.

In partnership,

SUSAN LANNON
KILLINGLY

If you don't like it here, take "Death to America" somewhere else

To the Editor:

I have to give Biden's Press Secretary, KJP, some credit because when asked about a recent incident in Michigan, she said that this administration will not tolerate people yelling "death to America"; however, Rashida "the rash" Tlalib (when questioned) only replied that she doesn't talk to Fox News. But of course, the likes of Maddow or Reid would never even ask her that question. My advice to those people shouting "death to America" would be if you don't like it here, go somewhere else and take the rash with you.

If I could give our President some advice, it would be: don't bring up your (supposed) personal experiences while talking about disasters like what happened to the bridge in Baltimore because making false and questionable claims will only lead to ridicule and it certainly doesn't help with those competency concerns - and don't the idiots associated with him know this? (And if I have to elaborate, he said that he rode in a train across that bridge, which in fact never had any railroad tracks on it, and I won't even go into the "Uncle Bosie" incident.)

In a dose of karma, Adam "Shifty" Schiff became another victim of soaring crime in San Francisco, California when his car was vandalized and his luggage was stolen before attending a fundraising event. Shifty didn't file a police report probably because he didn't want yet another "stat" on the books. And when he heard about it, one of the democrats there said: "Welcome to San Francisco." Imagine that - these morons are joking about the situation they helped create.

I sincerely doubt that the results of the 2024 presidential election will at all be influenced by Villager editorials. Furthermore, this is Connecticut, where Satan himself would get the state's electoral votes if he was running as a Democrat, but of course, the same applies if Satan was running as a republican in those red voting states. But I live in Connecticut, where my vote for

Donald Trump won't matter much, and to answer the "Why?" question - my answer is that even though he has more baggage than Amtrak, I'll be voting for Trump because I don't want an ineffective dimwit like Kamala Harris to ever become our President. Furthermore, do you really think that Joe Biden is even running the country? Yes he has advisors, but also "influencers," and in addition to Barack Obama, one of them is George Soros's son Alexander, who's visited the White House "at least" 17 times since Biden's taken office and reports say that he has "easy access to White House honchos." (In 2023, George Soros handed over the leadership of the foundation to his son, who soon announced layoffs of 40 percent of staff. (No doubt more money for him and the Democrats.)

For those of you who think that voter fraud is a non-issue, that it doesn't exist, or that it hasn't happened here in Connecticut, I suggest that you check the voter fraud database at: heritage.org/voterfraud. It will be well worth your time.

I'll forego "Illegals in the News" this week, and instead present my winners of the TDS award - I occasionally drive by this guy's house who has about 20 signs all over his front lawn, and most of them say: "Trump for prison in 2024." In the ultimate case, one person had the words: "I wish I had lived long enough to see Trump in prison" carved on his headstone. Yes, TDS is a sickness, but taking it with you to your grave is something else. (And I'll bet you thought I'd be mentioning some names?) But then there's those people showing profanity laced anti-Biden stuff. (Again, the coin.) And what derangement did that clown who lit himself on fire outside of a Trump trial have? Before the incident, he held up a sign that said "Trump is with Biden and they're about to fascist coup us."

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Courtesy
Akira Newall-Vuillemot, 17, of Woodstock competed in the USA Eastern National Gymnastics Championship April 28 in Cleveland, Ohio. He won the vault competition and placed 7th in high bar. He trains with Thames Valley Gymnastics Academy and is the first team member to win an event at Eastern Nationals.

Two heroic home caregivers selected for annual Healthcare Warrior Award

PUTNAM — Two exceptional home caregivers with Assisted Living Services, Inc. (ALS) earned the prestigious Hamden Regional Chamber of Commerce's fourth annual Healthcare Warrior Award. Phillis Fumme and Kimberly Woods-Amato both of Bristol were among the 17 honorees from the healthcare field, including doctors, nurses, homecare aides, and support staff from health agencies, as well as Hamden fire and police. The ceremony was held on April 11, 2024 at Cascade Fine Catering in Hamden with host Kathryn Hauser of WTNH Channel 8 News.

"We congratulate Phillis and Kimberly for this recognition and are grateful for their unwavering dedication to their elderly clients," said Mario D'Aquila, MBA and Chief Operating Officer of the family-owned homecare agency with offices in Cheshire, Putnam and Westport. "Each day, home caregivers make the decision to show up and be there for people who often don't have anyone else."

The Hamden mayor, fire

and police chiefs were among the more than 150 people who attended the breakfast. The honorees were nominated by their peers and their stories were read to the audience. Each Warrior received a framed certificate and heart shaped award.

D'Aquila shares a summary of Fumme's nomination: "Phillis has been with ALS as a live-in caregiver since 2020 and with her client for two years. The family of her client wrote a letter to us expressing gratitude for Phillis after her swift action led to her recognizing a severe health problem with her client, went to the ER with her and keep her calm all night."

Woods-Amato's nomination was also shared by D'Aquila; "Kimberly is an hourly caregiver with ALS and has an extremely difficult client who has been thru numerous caregivers. Kim stays with her because 'she needs me.' Kim even brought her Thanksgiving dinner on her day off and spent her own money on holiday decorations for the client's home. She helped get the client on Medicaid (not an easy task) so that she can continue to have

homecare services."

The Hamden Chamber of Commerce created the Healthcare Warrior award in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic to "celebrate and shine a light on our local healthcare and essential workers in our community." The event was held virtually the first year.

"We are thrilled that our valued employees were bestowed with this high-profile award," said D'Aquila. "Each month, ALS selects five caregivers for our own \$1,000 Platinum Caregiver Award because the service they provide is invaluable. External recognition further validates their commitment to excellence."

About Assisted Living Services, Inc.

Since 1996, award-winning home care agency Assisted Living Services, Inc. (ALS) in Cheshire, Putnam and Westport has provided quality care to residents across Connecticut. Its unique CarePlus program blends personal care by over 700 employees and caregivers with technological safety and monitoring devices from sister company Assisted Living Technologies,



Courtesy

Two home caregivers with Assisted Living Services (ALS) were honored at the prestigious Hamden Regional Chamber of Commerce's fourth annual Healthcare Warrior Award ceremony on April 11 at Cascade Fine Catering in Hamden CT. From left: Nick D'Aquila-ALS Chief Information Officer, Lynne Talbot-ALS Director of Hourly Services & Marketing, award winners Phillis Fumme and Kimberly Woods-Amato of Bristol, Kristin Mercadante-ALS Live-in Service Coordinator and Ingrid Narvaez-ALS Hourly Services Coordinator.

Inc. ALS was ranked on the 2020 Inc. 5000 list of fastest growing companies and recognized by Home Care Pulse® as

a "Best of Home Care Leader In Excellence", a designation given to the best home care providers in the nation. Learn more

by visiting www.assistedlivingct.com or calling 203.634.8668.

Weiss, Hale & Zahansky launches new tagline and campaign focused on impact of People-First wealth management



Courtesy

The WHZ advisory team meets at one of the firm's offices, in Tolland.

POMFRET CENTER/TOLLAND — Money is typically the immediate focus when people think about financial planning and wealth management firms but a refreshed brand and new advertising campaign launched today by Weiss, Hale & Zahansky Strategic Wealth Advisors (WHZ) is challenging that "money first" mentality.

Instead, WHZ is keying in on what it says is the ultimate goal that

is common to everyone when it comes to financial planning and wealth management: absolute confidence that they have an unwavering partner who is working to ensure their finances are on the best possible track toward what they want in life, no matter what life brings.

"Our strategic Plan Well. Invest Well. Live Well.™ process is the approach we use to help our clients get where they want to be, and that's

what our firm has been well-known for up until this point," said James Zahansky, Managing Partner and Chief Goals Strategist. "But after years of working with and talking to clients and continually enhancing that process, we realized that it has evolved into so much more. So now it's time to put the focus not on just the process, but on what that process is designed to ultimately deliver: Absolute Confidence. Unwavering Partnership. For Life."

And that's how our new tagline was born," Zahansky says.

"These phrases reflect the experience and outcomes that our clients repeatedly communicated to us that they value, and the ultimate outcome that we have always strived to achieve with our Plan Well, Invest Well, Live Well process," said WHZ Managing Partner and Chief Investment Officer Laurence Hale, AAMS®, CRPS®. "Now they will officially serve as the focus of our firm's brand, and we hope their power resonates with our clients and the community as strongly as it does with us."

WHZ's new multi-channel campaign focuses on the stories of real clients who share in their own words how the experience of working with the firm has shaped their finances and, by extension, their lives.

WHZ Associate Vice President of Client Experience and Relationships Kate Pitts says WHZ asks its clients about their experience with the firm, and what they want and don't want as part of their wealth management experience

in general, in both informal and formal ways all the time.

"It's something that's addressed in nearly every conversation and meeting we have with our clients. We also work with an objective third party to conduct an anonymous client satisfaction and preferences survey to ensure we're always keeping up with our clients' changing needs and preferences. We're really proud of our people-first approach," Pitts says.

Zahansky says that intense focus on people and relationships, along with a holistic approach to wealth management that considers each client's unique goals and personal circumstances as opposed to just their portfolio, is what sets WHZ apart from its competitors both big and small.

"The way we look at it, having the experience and skill to manage and invest wealth is just the price of admission for wealth management firms. It's the minimum requirement, and we are always aiming to go above and beyond," Zahansky says.

"And apart from that, we are keenly aware that wealth management isn't just about protecting and building wealth, it's actually much more about the very personal and often emotional dreams and goals people have for themselves and their loved ones that require money to achieve. The money is just a tool. Our job is to partner with our clients to build a roadmap that will leverage that tool as much as possible in order to get them where they want to be, and we're on that journey with them every step of the way."

WHZ was founded in Pomfret, Connecticut in 2006, and opened a second office in Tolland, Connecticut in 2023. The independent investment firm acts as a fiduciary in offering wealth management and customized financial planning services to individuals, families, business owners and executives, and not-for-profit institutions in 25 states, and is a partner of Commonwealth Financial Network®. To learn more, visit www.whzwealth.com.

Northeastern CT Chamber announces 2024 award recipients

WOODSTOCK — The Northeastern CT Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce the 2024 Annual Awards Recipients. The honorees will be recognized at the NECT Chamber of Commerce's Annual Awards Gala on Thursday, May 30 at 5:30 p.m. at the Mansion at Bald Hill in Woodstock.

The NECT Chamber Awards committee was overwhelmed by the number of remarkable nominations they received, each highlighting incredible achievements across our 23 towns the Chamber proudly serve. Each of the following award recipients have displayed immense dedication and passion for our community, making NECT a better place for all to live, work, and play. This year's recipients include:

Business Leader of the Year Award – Robin Deary Owner of Deary's

Gymnastics Civic Achievement Award – Willimantic Downtown Neighborhood Association on behalf of President, Chris McNaboe

Community Champion Award – Bethany Anderson Founder of Mission Moosup

Emerging Leader of the Year Award (NEW) – Tayler Sahzin of Northeast Opportunities for Wellness

George Racine Sr, Humanitarian Award – Jill Bourbeau of TEEG Gold Key Award – James Zahansky of Weiss, Hale, Zahansky Strategic Wealth Advisors

Non-Profit of the Year Award (NEW) – Northeast Placement Services, Executive Director Timothy Kettle

Business Leader of the Year Award – The Business Leader of the Year Award is presented to an individual for out-

standing business leadership and active participation in community organizations.

Civic Achievement Award – is presented to a person whose commitment and abilities have made a significant difference in the life of an individual or the community. The nominee should exemplify qualities of honesty, integrity, community service and an established broad-based involvement with clubs, civic groups, charities, etc. within the Northeastern Connecticut region.

Community Champion Award – is presented to an individual, couple or organization that has made a substantive yet unrecognized contribution to our community. The award recognizes recipients who have influenced our community from behind the scenes with a positive attitude, a willingness to help in a

variety of capacities, and a commitment to excellence.

Emerging Leader of the Year Award – is presented to a dynamic and visionary leader making a significant impact in Northeastern CT. Open to local leaders under the age of 40, the Emerging Leader of the Year award celebrates a young leader in our community for their innovation, professional achievements, and commitment to shaping a prosperous future for Northeastern CT.

George Racine, Sr. Humanitarian Award – is presented to a person in recognition of their dedicated involvement with a specific cause or activity; that which promotes concern for human welfare.

Gold Key Award – is presented to an individual or business for outstanding service to the Northeastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce.

organizations and 4. The use of creative or innovative approaches to achieve success.

Non-Profit of the Year Award – is presented to an outstanding local non-profit organization that has demonstrated exceptional service, dedication, and impact within the 23 towns we serve. This award celebrates a non-profits commitment to making a difference in enriching our community. The nominee for this award should be a local non-profit dedicated to

creating positive change, addressing community needs, and improving the quality of life for residents in Northeastern CT.

Award recipients will be formally recognized at the Northeastern CT Chamber of Commerce Awards Gala on Thursday, May 30 from 5:30 – 9 p.m. at the Mansion at Bald Hill. To register for this event, visit nectchamber.com/awards-gala.

Cub Scouts selling flowers and chocolate May 4

PUTNAM — Putnam's Cub Scout Pack 21 will be selling flowers and chocolate on Saturday, May 4, from 10 a. m. until 2 p. m., at the Putnam Farmers' Market on Kennedy Drive, next to the Putnam Dog Park. Please come and get something for mom for this Mothers' Day. Proceeds benefit Pack 21 and its Cub Scout awards program.

For information, call (860) 928-7241.