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Friday, October 9, 2026

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Members of various faith traditions stand by the GPIC Peace Pole with the words "Let peace prevail on earth" in eight languages at the recent Peace Day celebration at the Daughters of the Holy Spirit offices.

PUTNAM — The Greater Putnam Interfaith Council and community members gathered at the Daughters of the Holy Spirit offices on September 24 for the annual celebration of International Peace Day. Sr. Michele Bisaillon welcomed the attendees to a "time of peace and togetherness to raise our hearts to

God who gives us so much." Rev. Ross Johnson of Living Faith Methodist Church emceed the evening. Members of various faith traditions offered prayers, music and readings. Pam Rosenlund prayed that we might "see each other as one family and live in perfect harmony." Diane Lavallee shared Pope Francis's

Prayer for Peace, asking God to "open our eyes and hearts, and teach us peace." Cher Kapelner-Champ brought her "Pup for Peace," Maxie, thanking God for animals, that often bring us peace in our hearts. Musician Leslie Sweetnam played a dulcimer offering with the refrain, "You got to put one foot in front of the other and lead with love." Susan Lamb played

"All the World is One" and "How Can I Keep from Singing?" And Jim Starr shared a song he had written about hope as the answer to the question "What is peace?" Keynote speaker and Putnam Poet Laureate Aubrey Waz-Grant asked us to complete the sentence, "Someone like me doesn't get to experience peace because ..." She noted that the negative beliefs we hold from our life experiences often work against

Thompson Rec, NECONN renew focus on Bull Hill assessment

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

THOMPSON — The Thompson Recreation Commission and NECONN have renewed their joint interest in exploring the revitalization of the field at Bull Hill, even as financial limitations continue to hold back progress. The NECONN Soccer Club issued a letter to the town earlier this year urging the town to pursue a resolution for the Bull Hill recreation area which once served as the town's primary location for youth soccer programs but was closed due to drainage issues in the late 2010s. While the Recreation Commission has shown interest in pursuing repairs, the town's budget situation makes town funding unrealistic, meaning that substantial fundraising would be essential for the project to proceed. The Bull Hill area was the subject of a review by students of the UConn Department of Civil Engineering in 2017, and at the time the cost of fixing the drainage issues was estimated at \$800,000. With inflation, it's likely that prices have only increased over time. On Sept. 24, Micro-Coordinator for NECONN Soccer Missy Caisse met with the Recreation Committee to discuss options for proceeding with the repairs acknowledging that \$800,000 is unrealistic for either party but that NECONN would still like to establish a field for 11 versus 11 soccer in Thompson. She proposed an updated assessment, maybe exploring fixing only parts of the field complex to make them usable. "I know we had stepped away

Killingly School District mourns loss of longtime employee Diane Peterson

Diane Peterson
BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

KILLINGLY — The Killingly School District is mourning the loss of a longtime educator and paraeducator who committed 50 years of service to local schools. Diane Peterson passed away at the age of 70 on Sept. 25 after a battle with cancer, leaving behind a legacy rivaled by few in the Killingly Schools. Peterson spent a combined 50 years in the district serving in one capacity or another. She was a math teacher at Killingly High School for

much of her career until her retirement prior to the 2016-2017 school year after which she took on a new role as a paraeducator and a tutor and served as a long-term substitute as Killingly Intermediate School and Killingly High School. Peterson's entire life was dedicated to education. Every year she would post on social media about her "first day of school" counting not only her years as an educator but also those as a student as well. According to her obituary posted by Gagnon & Costello Funeral Home, Peterson was educated in Union, and at Woodstock Academy before she received her undergraduate degree in mathematics education from Eastern Connecticut State University and her master's degree from Bryant University. She completed her student teaching experience at Killingly High School alongside Al Messier and eventually joined the mathematics department in 1978 as a full-fledged teacher and never looked back. In many ways, her career and passion

for education were rooted in the tri-state area, and she made her home in the Quiet Corner in Woodstock. Peterson's dedication and impact on the district was acknowledged and celebrated in a letter of excellence and dedication posted by Board of Education Chair Susan Lannon and Superintendent of School Dr. Paul Haughey. They commended her for making a massive difference in the lives of students across generations. "Throughout her teaching career, Diane earned the respect and admiration of colleagues, students, and families alike. She approached every aspect of her work with professionalism, precision, and a commitment to doing things the right way. Whether developing lessons, supporting students, or collaborating with colleagues, Diane consistently gave her best effort and expected the best from herself," reads the letter. A Celebration of Life is scheduled for Sat., Oct. 24 at 2 p.m. at the First Congregational Church in Woodstock.

KILLINGLY — As America celebrates its 250th anniversary, the Killingly Historical and Genealogical Society is taking the opportunity to look closer to home. History is not only found in textbooks or famous landmarks—it is also found in the people, places, documents, and everyday objects that tell the story of our own community. The Society has recently refreshed the display cases in the lobby of Killingly Town Hall with an America 250 exhibit featuring "Tidbits About Killingly." The two displays offer visitors a glimpse into both Killingly's connection to the American Revolution and the everyday lives of generations who came before us. One display case honors the men from Killingly who answered the Lexington Alarm in April 1775, joining the response to the opening events of the American Revolution. Their names are listed along with short biographies of several participants, photographs of the men, and photographs of their homes and gravestones. These were

Killingly residents whose lives became part of a much larger chapter in American history. The second case takes a different look at the past, featuring everyday objects from various eras. Among the items are a tabletop butter churn, a plug-in portable vacuum, a percolator, and a metal lunch box. Each item includes information about when it was used and how it worked, offering a reminder of how much daily life has changed. The Society has been creating displays at Town Hall for a number of years. Past exhibits have featured Boy Scouts, schools, fire departments, promotional items from local businesses, and the history of the Town of Killingly itself. One exhibit included old dog license

fees, assessments, tax bills, and changes in local street names—including Potter Street, once known as Fitch Street, and Broad Street, once called Summer Street. These exhibits demonstrate that history can be found everywhere—even in objects sitting on a shelf or in an old street name we pass every day. The next time you visit Killingly Town Hall, take a moment to stop and explore the America 250 displays. They offer a small but meaningful look at how the history of Killingly connects to the larger story of America. The Killingly Historical and Genealogical Society invites residents to discover, share, and help preserve the history of our community.

Building grit!

As a kid, I was painfully shy and quiet. I hated my lack of confidence and had no idea how to change it, and it took me many years to learn the skills I will share in this article. Once I decided to tackle success, I learned that teaching traits like grit, perseverance, an indomitable spirit, and a non-quitting attitude isn't easy.

How many of us have started something, couldn't follow through, and gave up too early? The answer: all of us.

Here are my tips for building emotional and mental strength in your children (and yourself).

1. Believe it's not failure; it's a learning opportunity: Reframe mistakes, not as signs of weakness or lack of ability, but as natural, essential steps in the learning process. When children realize that failure is temporary, they become less afraid to tackle challenges. Thomas Edison's most famous quote on failure is, "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."

2. If you can't praise the skill, praise the effort: Focus feedback on hard work, strategy, and perseverance rather than fixed traits like intelligence or natural talent. I believe kids who fail and come back are stronger in the long run. Compliment children with phrases like "I love how hard you tried to solve that problem" or "super effort" to foster a growth mindset and help build internal motivation.

3. Create a safe space for mistakes: Parents must resist the urge to immediately step in and solve every problem for their child (look up "lawnmower parenting"). Encourage them to brainstorm solutions, explore options, and experience the natural consequences of their choices within safe boundaries. It's not if you fail; it's what you do with it after.

4. Model perseverance in your own life: Children learn more from what parents do than what they say. Share your dreams



TIPS FOR SUCCESS

MIKE BOGDANSKI

and setbacks, talk through how you handle stress or frustration, and show constructive ways to bounce back when things don't go as planned. Take a minute to pause and teach methodical thinking. It's like searching with a grid—you just take it one step at a time.

5. Teach emotional strength: Grit requires managing tough emotions like frustration, anxiety, and disappointment. Help children identify these feelings with active listening, teach calming techniques, using slow, deep breaths or counting the seconds to refocus --("breathe in 1-2-3-4-5. Breathe out 1-2-3-4-5."). And strive to separate emotional responses from actions.

6. Encourage "The Power of Yet" (I love this one):

Help kids reframe negative self-talk by adding this one magic word: "yet." Transforming "I can't do this" into "I can't do this yet" instills the belief that abilities develop over time with practice, perseverance, and patience.

7. Promote long-term commitments and planning: Parents, encourage involvement in activities that require sustained effort over time. When I taught a martial arts introductory class for a new student, I would tell them, "This is your first day on your journey to becoming a black belt," setting them on a multi-year long-term mission. Crossing the finish line on a multi-month or multi-year goal teaches the value of delayed, long-

term gratification. Setting and achieving short- and long-term goals is important and essential to everything in life. That is why, as an instructor, I would set monthly check-ins and quarterly tests for students. A person on a journey has to check the map regularly to make sure they are on course. When a pilot sets off from New York to LA, even a slight deviation can put you in San Diego or San Francisco.

8. Foster strong, supportive relationships: Resilience isn't built in isolation; it thrives when your team supports you. One of my favorite sayings is: "Champions don't always need to be told what to do, just reminded what to do." Kids with an unconditional emotional safety net at home have the confidence to step out of their comfort zone and take healthy risks. Teach kids you never truly fail until you quit.

9. Break down intimidating goals into small steps: Complex challenges can overwhelm a child and make them quit before they start. Teach them to break big tasks into manageable, bite-sized goals so they can celebrate small wins along the way. (Do you know how to eat an elephant? One bite at a time.)

10. Build physical and mental stamina:

Physical well-being directly impacts emotional strength. Ensure that kids get adequate sleep, regular movement, and healthy nutrition, while guarding against overscheduling, so they have time to recharge and reflect. The goal is "everything in balance."

I recommend this book wholeheartedly: Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance by psychologist Angela Duckworth, who tells us that the secret to outstanding achievement isn't natural talent, but a combination of passion, perseverance, and future focus. Duckworth describes the following traits as being essential:

Talent vs. Effort: Talent counts once, but effort counts twice—making persistence the ultimate driver of success.

Growth: Grit is not a fixed trait; you can learn and grow it regardless of your IQ or background.

Real-World Examples: Duckworth examines high achievers from West Point cadets and National Spelling Bee finalists to business leaders and coaches to communicate some profound conclusions.

It's time to build some grit!
Mike Bogdanski is a locally-based martial arts Grandmaster and anti-bullying activist.

Hometown Heroes Edward G. Bonosconi — an "Iron Man of Metz"



Edward Bonosconi

BY MICHAEL ROCCHETTI
COMMANDER
MAYOTTE-VIENS AMERICAN LEGION
POST #13
PUTNAM

When Edward George Bonosconi entered the Army in February 1944, he was not a young man. He was a 37-year-old textile worker, husband, and father of three school-age children. Less than a year later, the Putnam native had fought through some of the most bitter combat of the European campaign, suffered wounds from a German artillery shell, and earned the Silver Star, Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, and Combat Infantryman Badge. His extraordinary courage under fire made Staff Sergeant Edward G. Bonosconi one of Putnam's most highly decorated soldiers of the Second World War.

Edward was born in Putnam in November 1906, the son of Eli and Georgianna (Bibeault) Bonosconi. Edward grew up in a large French-Canadian family on Church Street, alongside his two brothers and four sisters. Like many young people raised in Putnam during the early 20th century, Edward found employment in the textile industry. He completed three years of high school and became a skilled weaver. In 1928, he married Evelyn Henrietta Lamoureux. By 1944, they had three children: Rose, Edward, and Raymond.

Edward's draft registration described him as a relatively small man, standing approximately five feet four inches tall and weighing about 130 pounds. His physical stature, however, gave no indication of the boldness, skill and courage he would later display on the battlefield.

On Feb. 17, 1944, Bonosconi joined 28 other local draftees leaving Putnam for military service. Although separated from civilian life by the draft, he would distinguish himself as thoroughly as any career soldier. After training at Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, Bonosconi became an infantryman in the 379th Regiment of the 95th Infantry Division. He eventually served as a rifle platoon guide, a demanding position requiring him to help keep the platoon organized, properly directed, and moving toward its objective amid the confusion of battle.

The 95th Infantry Division arrived in France in September 1944 and entered combat the following month. Assigned to General George S. Patton's Third Army, the division fought in the campaign to capture Metz, an ancient fortified city in northeastern France on the German border. Metz was protected by an extensive belt of forts, artillery positions, concrete bunkers, trenches, and underground passages which were part of the vaunted Maginot Line. German troops occupying these defenses were determined to delay the American advance toward Germany.

The fighting around Metz was so severe that the soldiers of the 95th Infantry Division became known as the "Iron Men of Metz." Beginning on November 14, 1944, the 379th Infantry attacked German fortifica-

tions in the sector around Fort Jeanne d'Arc, one of the largest and most formidable strongpoints west of Metz. The assault formed part of the 95th Division's effort to eliminate the remaining German bridgehead west of the Moselle River. It was during this desperate fighting that Bonosconi performed the act of gallantry for which he received the Silver Star.

His company's advance had been stopped by a German machine gun. The weapon was inflicting heavy casualties, and every soldier who attempted to move forward risked being cut down. Bonosconi nevertheless began crawling toward the enemy position. The official citation recounted what happened next: "Under heavy small-arms and machinegun fire he approached to within a few yards of the position and, although the Germans fired directly at him, he threw two grenades which killed four of the enemy. Advancing closer, he killed the sole surviving German with rifle fire."

By destroying the machine-gun position, Bonosconi silenced a weapon that had pinned down his company and enabled the American attack to continue. He had deliberately exposed himself to almost certain death to press the attack and protect his fellow soldiers.

The Silver Star is the US military's third-highest decoration for valor in combat. Bonosconi's award placed him among an exceptional group of soldiers whose gallantry went far beyond the ordinary requirements of duty. His courage at Fort Jeanne d'Arc did not bring his combat service to an end. The 95th Division captured Metz in late November and continued its advance toward the German border. On Nov. 28, its soldiers entered Germany. During the first days of December, the division crossed the Saar River and fought its way into Saarlautern, today known as Saarouis.

There, the "Iron Men of Metz" encountered another heavily fortified city. The battle involved savage house-to-house fighting, artillery bombardments, German counterattacks, and prolonged struggles to maintain the American bridgehead across the Saar. Bonosconi earned the Bronze Star Medal for heroic achievement during the fighting around Saarlautern.

During the fighting near Metz in November 1944, fragments from a German 88-millimeter artillery shell struck Bonosconi in the face, both knees, and one hand. He received treatment in the field and returned to duty. Bonosconi received the Purple Heart.

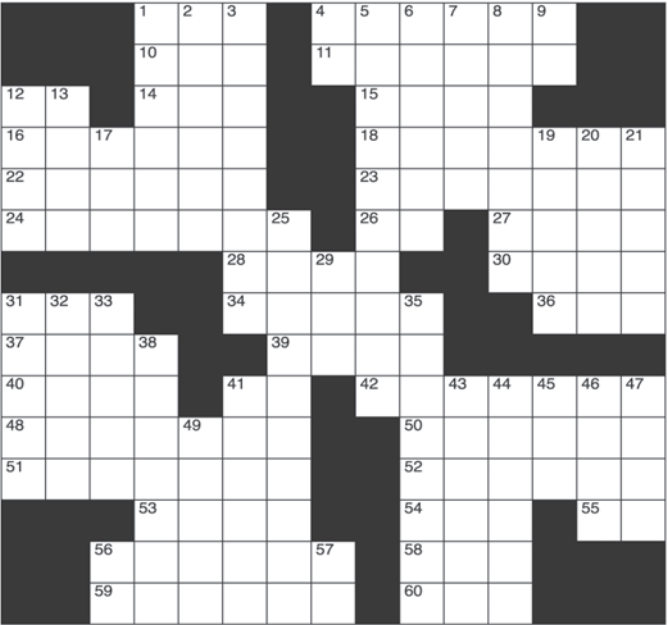
In January 1945, he was promoted to staff sergeant. By March 1945, Bonosconi had returned home on furlough. A War Department release described him as a Western Front veteran who had "given a good account of himself in combat, as his decorations attest." He spent his furlough at home on Green Street in Putnam with his family.

The War Department initially expected him to return overseas. Instead, by July 1945 he was stationed at the Army Ground and Service Forces Redistribution Station at Camp Butner, N.C. Bonosconi was honorably discharged on Oct. 4, 1945. In less than 20 months of military service, the middle-aged textile worker from Putnam had risen from private to staff sergeant, led infantrymen in battle, survived wounds from enemy artillery, and earned three of the nation's most respected combat decorations.

After the war, Bonosconi returned to civilian life as a textile weaver. By 1950, he was living in Philadelphia with his second wife, Lucy. Despite the honors he had earned, his later years appear to have been lived quietly, like those of so many veterans who returned home and resumed the ordinary responsibilities of work and family.

Edward George Bonosconi died in Philadelphia on May 9, 1977, at the age of 70. He was laid to rest in Beverly National Cemetery in New Jersey. His government marker identifies him simply as a staff sergeant in the United States Army during World War II. That brief inscription cannot convey the full measure of his service.

Edward Bonosconi was a father approaching middle age when his country called him into uniform. He exchanged the textile mills for the battlefields of France and Germany and proved himself an exceptionally brave and capable infantryman. At Fort Jeanne d'Arc, with his comrades suffering beneath the fire of a German machine gun, he crawled forward alone and destroyed the position. Later, although wounded by artillery fragments, he remained in action. Staff Sergeant Edward G. Bonosconi earned his place among the "Iron Men of Metz", and among the Hometown Heroes of Putnam and Northeastern Connecticut.

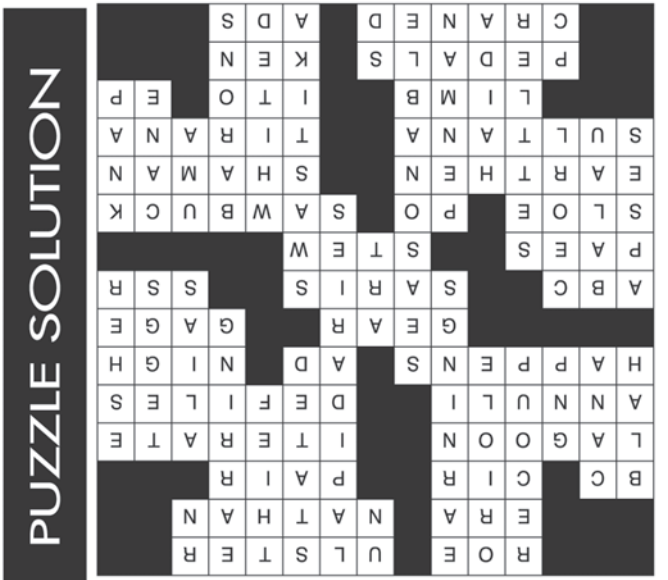


CLUES ACROSS

1. Small Eurasian deer
4. Province in Northern Ireland
10. A major division of geological time
11. Broadway actor Lane
12. Canadian province (abbr.)
14. Human gene
15. Two
16. A notable one was "blue"
18. Utter repeatedly
22. Ring-shaped objects
23. Sullies
24. Occurs
26. Commercial
27. Near
28. Tools you may need
30. A pledge
31. They start the alphabet
34. Silk garments
36. Soviet Socialist Republic
37. Longtime mayor of Rio
39. Hot meal
40. A type of gin
41. Atomic #84
42. \$10 bill
48. About ground
50. Medicine man
51. Seedless raisin
52. National capital of Albania
53. Appendage
54. Of trial judge
55. European government entity (abbr.)
56. Bike parts
58. Friend to "Barbie"
59. Stretched to see or hear
60. Commercials

CLUES DOWN

1. Make up for
2. Baltimore ballplayer
3. Wages
4. International organization of countries
5. Engravers of gems
6. Declared as fact
7. One who steals
8. Jewelry
9. Hospital worker
12. Nonsense (slang)
13. Town in Galilee
17. Value
19. Alternative identity
20. Sheep in their second year
21. Town in Surrey, England
25. Appropriate to a time of year
29. Creative work
31. Recesses
32. Largely forested municipality in Germany
33. Rider of Rohan
35. Ancient symbol co-opted by Nazis
38. Pioneer
41. Scribe
43. Painted a bright color
44. Member of British nobility
45. "Pulp Fiction" actress Thurman
46. Helps people walk
47. Crest of a hill
49. People of southeastern Alaska
56. One's own device
57. The Mount Rushmore State



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Veterans, legislators gather in Putnam to advance regional veterans’ initiatives

PUTNAM — Veterans, veterans-service organizations, municipal officials and state legislators gathered at Putnam Town Hall on Tuesday evening, Sept. 29, for the latest Quarterly Veterans & Legislators Meeting, continuing a regional effort to identify challenges facing veterans in Northeastern Connecticut and develop practical solutions through cooperation among local, state and federal partners.

The meeting included legislative updates from State Senator Mae Flexer and State Senator Dr. Jeff Gordon, along with extensive discussion of veterans health care, housing, transportation, organizational sustainability and plans for new regional veterans programs.

Expanding local nursing home options for veterans

Sen. Flexer reported that a working group has been established to examine ways to increase the number of VA-approved nursing homes in Eastern Connecticut. The effort is focused on identifying and reducing barriers that prevent nursing homes from obtaining VA approval, with the goal of allowing more veterans to receive rehabilitation and long-term care closer to their families and communities.

Veterans and local nursing facilities are being encouraged to provide feedback about obstacles they have encountered and possible solutions. An update is expected at a future quarterly meeting.

Sen. Gordon, Ranking Member of the Connecticut General Assembly’s Veterans’ and Military Affairs Committee, discussed preparations for the January 2027 legislative session. He said lawmakers are reviewing veterans-related proposals that did not advance during the previous session and awaiting reports from working groups and state agencies as priorities are developed.

Sustainability of local veterans’ organizations

A major topic was the growing difficulty veterans organizations face in maintaining their facilities and membership. The situation involving American Legion Post 67 in Thompson, which is in receivership and facing possible closure, served as an example of the challenges confronting many veterans organizations. Participants discussed approximately \$40,000 in debt, continuing operating expenses, limited income, and a shortage of active members and leadership. Post 67 members are scheduled to vote Oct. 11 on the organization’s future. One option discussed would involve selling the Post building, satisfying outstanding liabilities, retaining the Post charter and potentially sharing facilities with the Thompson VFW.

Participants noted that these challenges extend beyond one Post. Veterans organizations throughout the region are dealing with rising utility and insurance expenses, regulatory and liquor-permit costs, state fees and declining volunteer participation. Greater cooperation and shared facilities among organizations were discussed as potential solutions. Participants also emphasized developing more family-oriented activities to attract younger veterans and their families.

Review of liquor licensing and nonprofit regulations

Hans Lowell, Commander of VFW Post 1523 in Putnam, agreed to compile concerns involving liquor licensing, nonprofit fundraising restrictions, event permitting and associated compliance costs. Sen. Flexer agreed to explore having a representative from the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection attend a future quarterly meeting to discuss the regulations directly with veterans organizations and identify possible solutions.

Pet Pals Northeast to hold low-cost rabies clinic

DANIELSON — Pet Pals Northeast, a local animal welfare organization, is holding a low cost rabies clinic at the Quinebaug Valley Veterinary Hospital, Rt 12, Danielson/Plainfield town line on Oct. 17 from 2 to 3 p.m. Cost is \$15 cash per animal. Pre-registration and appointment is required. No walk-ins, please.

For information, registration and appointment contact PET PALS at 860-317-1720. This is the last clinic this year.

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.

Regional veteran wellness retreat proposed

Lowell also presented a proposal to establish a Veteran Wellness Retreat in Northeastern Connecticut serving veterans from Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts. The concept is modeled on the Semper Fi Odyssey program in Pennsylvania and would initially involve a three-day retreat combining mental-health resources, VA benefits assistance, employment services, wellness and resiliency programs, and veteran-to-veteran peer support. A planning meeting is scheduled for October 16 at Putnam Town Hall, bringing together representatives from the VA, VFW, American Legion and other veterans organizations and potential partners.

Affordable veteran housing identified as regional priority

Putnam Veterans Services Officer Rob Challinor, a member of the Putnam Veterans Advisory Committee, outlined the need for affordable veterans housing in Northeastern Connecticut. Participants noted that veterans sometimes decline housing placements in distant parts of the state because relocation separates them from family members, friends and established community support networks. Two potential Putnam locations were discussed: the former St. Mary’s property and 55 Gilman St.

The concept could provide housing for homeless and transitioning veterans as well as older veterans and their spouses, with access to counseling, employment assistance and veterans services.

Challinor will continue evaluating the properties, assembling demographic and needs information, preparing potential Community Investment Fund grant applications and exploring federal funding opportunities. Coordination with the office of U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney was also suggested. Courtney represents Connecticut’s Second Congressional District, and his office has previously worked on federal funding for housing projects in Eastern Connecticut.

Putnam Armory could become regional veterans & youth center

Participants also discussed the possibility of transforming the former Putnam Armory into a regional Veterans & Youth Center, modeled in part on Rally Point in Norwich. The facility could potentially bring veterans services, recreation, community activities and youth programs together under one roof. Significant ques-

tions remain regarding environmental remediation, restoration of utilities, renovation costs, ownership and long-term funding. Challinor will continue gathering information about the condition of the building and potential public and private funding sources.

Expanding veteran transportation

The Putnam Veterans Advisory Committee also discussed expanding its existing veteran transportation program. Possible expansion could include service to surrounding communities, transportation to VA medical facilities in Providence and Worcester, and the acquisition of wheelchair-accessible transportation. The committee will obtain insurance estimates, evaluate vehicle options, determine demand in neighboring towns and continue discussions with legislators about regional transportation needs.

The quarterly meetings are intended to give veterans and veterans organizations a direct opportunity to communicate with elected officials while also bringing together organizations that historically may have worked independently.

Participants emphasized that cooperation among the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, Veterans Coffeehouse, municipal veterans organizations and other community partners will become increasingly important as the veteran population changes and traditional veterans organizations confront declining membership and rising operating costs.

The meeting concluded with several concrete assignments intended to ensure that the issues discussed continue moving forward before the next quarterly session.

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FRANK G. CHILINSKI
PRESIDENT/PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

A lifetime measured in school years

There are careers, and then there are callings. For Diane Peterson, education clearly belonged in the latter category.

The Killingly School District lost one of its most enduring figures with Peterson’s death Sept. 25 at the age of 70. Her 50 years of service to Killingly schools is remarkable on its face. Yet the number becomes even more meaningful when considering what those five decades actually represent.

Fifty years means generations. It means teaching students and remaining in the district long enough to encounter their younger siblings, their children and perhaps even their grandchildren. It means watching classrooms change, technology transform education and teaching methods evolve while the fundamental responsibility of an educator remains the same: Help young people learn and give them a better opportunity to succeed.

Peterson began her career in Killingly after completing her student teaching at Killingly High School alongside Al Messier. She joined the mathematics department in 1978 and built the kind of career that becomes part of the institutional memory of a school.

Then came retirement — at least, technically. After retiring as a teacher before the 2016-17 school year, Peterson did something that says perhaps as much about her commitment to education as anything she accomplished before it. She returned.

She served as a paraeducator and tutor and worked as a long-term substitute at Killingly Intermediate School and Killingly High School. After spending decades in education, she apparently was not interested in putting the classroom completely behind her.

Schools depend upon people who view education as more than a job description. They need experienced educators willing to share what they know, paraeducators willing to provide individual attention and substitutes capable of stepping into classrooms when needed. They need adults who understand that sometimes the difference for a struggling student is simply having someone nearby who refuses to give up on them.

Peterson’s own tradition of counting her “first days of school,” including both her years as a student and educator, offers a fitting glimpse into how thoroughly education was woven into her life. She was educated in Union and at Woodstock Academy before studying mathematics education at Eastern Connecticut State University and later earning a master’s degree from Bryant University.

She could have taken that education and built a career in many places. Instead, Killingly became the place where she invested most of her working life.

Board of Education Chair Susan Lannon and Superintendent Paul Haughey described Peterson as someone who brought “professionalism, precision, and a commitment to doing things the right way” to her work. They also noted that she gave her best and expected the best of herself.

Those qualities deserve recognition, particularly at a time when retaining experienced educators has become a challenge for school systems across the country.

But Peterson’s story also reminds us that the impact of a teacher is extraordinarily difficult to calculate. Test scores can be recorded. Graduation rates can be measured. Years of service can be counted. Influence cannot.

There is no spreadsheet showing how many students gained confidence because a difficult math problem finally made sense. There is no official record of every encouraging conversation, every extra explanation after class or every student who discovered that an adult at school believed in them. That is the invisible legacy educators leave behind. For Peterson, that legacy stretches across half a century in Killingly.

Her Celebration of Life is scheduled for Oct. 24 at the First Congregational Church in Woodstock. It will provide an opportunity for family, friends, former colleagues and students to remember the person they knew.

The broader community should remember something as well. Buildings, programs and curricula are important, but people are what give a school district its character. When someone devotes 50 years to educating the children of one community, that service becomes part of the community’s history.

Diane Peterson spent a lifetime counting first days of school. Killingly should count itself fortunate that so many of them were spent there.

OPINION

Opinion and commentary from the Quiet Corner

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Faith and doubt in a time of extremism

To the Editor:

I see many young people asking what we’ve all asked at some point in our lives: What is the purpose of living? Why am I here? What do I do next? For some, religion offers answers to these questions that fill in the gaps and offer reassurance. Something precious is lost when the search for understanding becomes instead belief in religious doctrine.

Science keeps the search open. Religion, not so much. In a sense, science begins and proceeds as an act of faith: faith in a world that can be understood by the human mind. None of this is rigid doctrine because every discovery remains open to re-examination, even scientific laws. Our understanding of the world grows over time. Scientific understanding must change when the evidence requires it. Religious fundamentalism treats revealed truth as beyond questioning. Science discovers explanations that remain accountable to evidence, even as time and culture shape the questions we ask.

It’s difficult to talk to one another these days because once we believe we possess the whole truth, anyone who has a different truth represents a threat. And from here one might conclude that if it makes one uncomfortable, then it must be bad. I’m afraid we’ve already lost our footing on this slippery slope and slid to the bottom. We live in an era when attacks on science and appeals to religious tradition serve authoritarian power and control. American freedom was born from the shared doubt and courage of the Founding Fathers, none more accomplished than Benjamin Franklin.

Long before Benjamin Franklin helped win

To the Editor:

When we think about the people who represent the Quiet Corner in Hartford, I believe one of the most important things to consider is who has shown up, stood up, and taken the time to understand the issues facing our communities.

Over the past year, something important has been happening in Killingly. People who may not agree politically have found themselves in the same rooms, attending the same meetings, asking many of the same questions, and working toward a common purpose.

We have always loved this town for reasons that have little to do with politics—the land, rivers, farms, history, back roads, and the people who call it home. Yet political narratives and pressure to choose a side have sometimes made it too easy to see our neighbors as opponents rather than people who may share many of our concerns.

Throughout these conversations, I have seen Lina Wagner, State Senator Mae Flexer, and Samantha Derenthal show up for Killingly and for the Quiet Corner in different ways.

Lina Wagner has become a familiar presence in community conversations surrounding Old Killingly Pond, large-scale development, water resources, and the importance of residents having accurate information before decisions are made. Her focus on informing people, asking questions, and encouraging community participation has helped bring people with different viewpoints into the same conversation.

Mae Flexer has represented our region in the General Assembly for nearly two decades, first in the House and then in the State Senate. Her record includes work on protections for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, veterans and military families, education, and environmental issues. She currently chairs the Government Administration and Elections Committee and serves on committees dealing with appropriations, education, higher education and veterans’ affairs. Her environmental work was recognized

American independence, he investigated the natural world, including the ocean and the atmosphere. His experiments helped establish that lightning was electricity and could be explained through natural processes. His lightning rod put that understanding to work protecting homes and lives. Knowledge changed the world and made it that much more livable.

Thanks to the scientific approach, what was once a terrifying force, perhaps even the voice of the gods, could be studied and made less dangerous. Franklin’s example connects the search for understanding with service to others. What we learn can help us protect and care for one another.

It’s distressing that science is currently under attack. It’s no coincidence that the U.S. Constitution is also under attack even as authoritarians offer religious certainty as a substitute for the uncomfortable revelations of scientific inquiry and the democratic process.

The attack on science is part of a larger attack on public education, higher education, and secular education in general. In the end, the goal is control, and an uneducated, superstitious population is easier to control. The only question we ask is: Who are we to question authority? But unless we do, and soon, life may become measurably more difficult.

Finally, why are we here? What is the purpose of it all? For Franklin, we find purpose by building it, one block at a time, in a life of service to others, sustained by faith in reason, evidence, and understanding.

JOSEPH ZORNADO
DANIELSON

For the love of Killingly

again this year by the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters, which named her a 2026 Environmental Champion.

Samantha Derenthal brings another kind of experience to the conversation. As a member of the Plainfield Board of Education and Plainfield’s representative to the EASTCONN Board of Directors, she has been directly involved with the challenges facing schools in northeastern Connecticut. She has also taken those concerns to Hartford, testifying about rising education costs, special education expenses, insurance increases, and the burden those costs can place on local property taxpayers.

We need to break the wall and return to collaboration with Hartford!

What stands out to me is not that these three people have identical backgrounds or experiences. They do not. It is that all three have been willing to participate in the difficult conversations happening here and to engage with the people affected by them.

I have seen firsthand how valuable that can be. People who never expected to stand together are finding common ground. I have found friends in unexpected places and had conversations with people I might not otherwise have known.

We still disagree about plenty of things, and that is okay. We do not have to share the same politics to care about Killingly, protect our water sources and forests, support our schools and families, or ask hard questions about development that could permanently change the rural character of our town.

Thank you to all the neighbors, community members, candidates, and elected officials who continue to show up and participate. Whatever our political differences, I hope we continue to build on what we have discovered—that there is still a great deal we care about together.

For the Love of Killingly!

LORI ZORNADO
KILLINGLY

one. This is \$38,281 a week. Yes, you are reading this right. Town Hall is betting the voters give up or give in. How much are these referendums costing Thompson taxpayers? I can’t make this stuff up. Vote no.

Where is the Republican leadership? Thompson taxpayers should be asking for a 10 percent decrease in the 2025/2026 budget. Thompson was built on the backs of many who remain in Town. Thompson voters must do better for our seniors.

Best to all.

LEE LANDRY
THOMPSON

Trump and his lackeys need to go

be elected president was laughable at best. Fast forward to where we are now — Trump has aged like sour milk, getting worse by the minute. He represents the greatest threat from within that our country has ever faced.

The solution is obvious — Trump and all his lackeys need to go. It won’t happen overnight, but the midterms are a good place to start.

TODD PATRIE
POMFRET

September is for storms

Walktober, sponsored by the Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor is underway. There are events and walks for people of all ages and physical ability. Calendars of events (258 this year) are available at local town halls and libraries. The brochure encourages use of the calendar “in conjunction with our website, TheLastGreenValley.org, to ensure you have the most up to date information. You’ll find additional Walktober experiences, weather updates and more on the Web site.” For additional information, call 860-774-3300.

America 250. Oct. 10. 12:30-1:30 p.m. Walktober Walk #134. Fashions of the Colonial Period with Ren Antonowicz of Spirits of Fashion. Putnam Municipal Complex. 200 School Street Putnam. Sponsored by the Putnam Public Library and the Aspinock Historical Society. Free and open to the public.

Saturday, Oct. 17. Killingly Grange #112. 801 Hartford Turnpike Dayville, CT. Roast Turkey Dinner. 4:30-6:30 p.m. Roast turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, gravy, cranberry sauce, butternut squash, rolls, & slice of pie. \$17per meal. Dine in or take-out. \$1.00 discount if you bring a non-perishable item for the Food Pantry. Whole apple & pumpkin pies \$16. To reserve a dinner call or text Terry at 860-884-1813 or Penny at 860-230-7367. Pay at the door by cash, credit card or check.

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.

September seems to be a month for severe storms. I recently spoke about the September Gale of 1815 in my Mary Kies presentation. Have you heard of that storm and about some of the damage it did here in Northeastern Connecticut? The circa 1745/6 meetinghouse on Killingly Hill (now Putnam Heights) was so structurally damaged as to be unusable. In her History of Windham County, Connecticut Windham County historian Ellen Larned noted that the meetinghouse was not in good shape to begin with, and the congregation had voted not to repair in 1815, but raising the necessary funds was proving difficult. “The September gale so damaged the old building that repairs were no longer practical.” It was replaced by the present edifice in 1818 (Swordsmith ed., Vo. 2, p. 358). Larned wrote, “The September Gale,” so famous in New England meteorologic annals, swept with great violence through Plainfield and Canterbury, damaging and destroying many buildings, and uprooting fruit and forest trees. The accompanying rain, which fell in torrents, was said to be as salty as the distant ocean. The special mission of this tempestuous visitant to Windham County was apparently the demolition of dilapidated meeting-houses, three at least yielding to its fury. Plainfield’s Congregational church edifice was entirely prostrated, and the materials for a Friends meeting-house then collected on Black Hill (Plainfield) were scattered and in part destroyed. Those losses were repaired with great

Turn To KILLINGLY page A10

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Make your voice, and your vote, heard

To the Editor:
Town of Thompson voters! Vote Yes to approve the upcoming budget referendum of Oct. 14. Put this date on your calendar, go to the polls and make your vote count.
There are two questions on the ballot — one for the town budget and one for the school budget. Vote yes on both. If one fails, they both fail. This is a fact, not an opinion.
It is essential that we put the town on a good financial standing, for now and into the future. This means supporting critical services such as the DPW, Town Hall, Public Health, Fire Department, Wetlands, and the Library, among other important areas of local government. Invest in our schools and the education of our young people. Be a

strong advocate for their future. Your vote counts more than you may know.
Sadly, voter turnout for previous budget referendums has been less than 20 percent. This means a small minority of voters has had an outsized impact on the financial future and security of our town - and they have voted no for our budget to fail time and again. The proposed mill rate (property tax rate) for the Oct. 14 referendum is 19.6. This rate is significantly lower than the average mill rate in Connecticut of 28.22. The proposed budget is responsible, reasonable, low, and supports our critical services. Be a motivated Yes voter. Make your voice heard.

STEVE NICKERSON
THOMPSON

Tony Emilio will represent us with honesty and hard work

To the Editor:
I would like to write a letter to you about my experience with Anthony J. Emilio, who is running for State Representative in Connecticut’s 50th District — Ashford, Brooklyn, Eastford, Hampton, Mansfield, Pomfret & Woodstock.
I have also had the opportunity to go door to door with him and speak directly with local residents. Tony takes the time to listen to people’s concerns, answer their questions, and hear what matters most to them. He is a person who works hard and

follows through. When Tony sees something that needs to be done, he does not just talk about it—he works to get it done in an efficient manner.
Tony has also been a leader in business and understands the importance of being fiscally conservative. At a time when families, seniors, farmers, and small businesses are dealing with higher costs, rising property taxes, and expensive electric bills, I believe Tony will be a strong voice for common sense in Hartford. He understands that Connecticut needs to stop wasteful spending, protect local control, and make sure state government does not keep placing unfunded mandates on our towns.
Tony cares about preserving the rural way of life that makes our area special. He supports our farm community, local businesses, law enforcement, and the volunteer fire departments and emergency services that are so important to our towns. I believe he will represent the people of the 50th District with honesty, hard work, and a focus on results— not politics as usual.
I believe Tony would help make our state more fiscally responsible and more affordable for the people who live and work here. I hope your readers will join me in voting for Tony Emilio on or before Nov. 3. Thank you
Sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER D. BOWEN
CHAIRMAN
EASTFORD REPUBLICAN TOWN
COMMITTEE

Tony Emilio should be our voice in District 50

To the Editor:
Tony Emilio should be our representative in District 50.
Tony is running to be our voice here in the Quiet Corner, and he understands that CT families and taxpayers are facing serious challenges. He intends to address the issues that affect all of us—issues that have too often been ignored or pushed aside.
Energy costs are one example. Connecticut families continue to pay some of the highest energy costs in the country, and these costs are not simply something we have to accept. They can be addressed through better policies and responsible decisions.
We also need to confront the growing burden of unfunded mandates that contribute to rising property taxes. At the same time, Connecticut receives millions of dollars in casino-related revenue, yet too much of that money is directed into the state’s General Fund rather than being used in ways that directly benefit our communities and help support the education of our children.
There are also serious questions about state spending, financial accountability and transparency. Taxpayers deserve to know where their money is going and whether every state agency is properly accounting for the funds entrusted to it. Whistleblowers who have information about problems

should be heard, and legitimate concerns about state finances should be investigated—not ignored.
The people of CT need representatives who will follow the money, ask difficult questions and demand accountability. We need someone willing to look closely at waste, questionable spending and policies that continue to place more pressure on taxpayers.
That is why I believe Tony Emilio is the right choice for District 50.
But electing good representatives requires more than simply supporting a candidate. It requires voters to show up. Every vote matters—whether the election is local, state or federal.
Brooklyn has hundreds of unaffiliated voters who have not been participating in recent elections. I urge everyone to talk with your friends, family and neighbors and encourage them to make their voices heard.
Early voting begins Oct. 19 and runs through Nov. 1. Election Day is Nov. 3.
Please get informed, get involved and get out to vote. CT taxpayers deserve a representative who will stand up for them.
Tony Emilio will be that voice in District 50.

JR EILER
BROOKLYN

Why I love Pomfret

To the Editor:
This past Saturday, I volunteered for the food pantry collection point at Pomfret’s Community Center. When that ended at 11 a.m., I went over to Pomfret’s Recreation Park and sold popcorn during the America’s 250 Revolutionary War reenactment celebration.
While I was busy with these events, there was Bulky Waste at the Nora Lane facility and We-Li-Kit was hosting their Fall Festival. By dinner time I missed the “Ham and Bean” dinner that was prepared by Pintail’s and served at the church in Abington. Anyone who was able to focus on just the 250 Celebration had the opportunity to take part could witness the battles, the speeches, the bivouac area, the Abington burial grounds (which has 60 Revolutionary soldiers final resting place. The headstones represent some of the earliest and finest representations of early American art in this

country.), the debate, and the dinner.
All of this combines to make Pomfret and this entire area a great place to live, thrive, and raise a family. There is so much good happening in the area that it’s unfortunate when folks get critical but offer no solutions to help make things better. In the last 250 years, if we’ve learned nothing else, we’ve learned that democracy is not a destination, but a journey. The journey is designed to “make a more perfect union.” It’s easy to get folks to jump on negativity, but my hope is that, even though it may take longer and garner less comments on social media, that we can find our differences and solve our local issues together. As we move forward, let’s do it critically and constructively, without being derisive.
CHARLIE TRACY
POMFRET CENTERS

Stephanie Thomas is a fine Secretary of State

To the Editor:
I encourage us to re-elect Stephanie Thomas as Connecticut’s Secretary of State. She keeps our elections accessible, secure, and transparent. She has managed the changes with early voting and no-excuse absentee ballots, which is particularly helpful to our citizens who cannot easily get to the polls. She consistently communicates with the state’s town clerks and town registrars through monthly zoom meetings so we can be confident that, in our state, our election processes are in order. And Secretary Thomas protected our citizens’ sensitive personal data by refusing to hand over Connecticut’s voter rolls to the DOJ. She is a leading voice in national conversations about election procedures.
Secretary Thomas also champions business-friendly legislation and encourages business civic engagement. But that is another story. Keep our State moving forward with Stephanie Thomas. And Exercise your Right to Vote!
KAREN RYKER
WOODSTOCK

Additional Letters to the Editor, See Page A8-9

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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Courtesy

On Wednesday, Sept. 30, Putnam Cub Scout Pack 21 hosted the Kosmic Kevin Sound and Light Extravaganza, where the Pack 21 Cub Scouts and their friends experimented with musical instruments and special sound and light machines. Pack 21 is guided by trained and experienced adults and is chartered to the Albert J. Breault VFW Post 1523, 207 Providence Street in Putnam. Pack 21 is actively looking for boys and girls ages five through ten to have fun with us, so please call Pack 21's John Ryan today, at (860) 928-5873 and leave a message.

Do you know someone with a hoarding disorder? Would you like to learn how best to help?

DANIELSON — Hoarding disorder is a mental health condition that affects millions of Americans. People with this disorder have a strong need to acquire and keep many unnecessary items and then experience intense distress when asked to get rid of them. Like most mental health disorders, it can range from mild to serious, depending on the impact the disorder has on one's life. At its most serious stages, it can result in increased risk of falls and injuries, family conflicts, loneliness and social isolation, unsanitary conditions, fire hazard and legal issues, such as eviction.

NAMI Windham County is offering a free workshop about hoarding disorder, led by Beth Markowski-Roop of ServiceMaster by Mason, on Oct. 13 at Connecticut State Community College at Quinebaug Valley, 742 Upper Maple St., Danielson. The presentation will be in the college Auditorium, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

This workshop will provide tips for interacting with hoarders and discuss resources available. The presentation will benefit first responders, emergency management personnel, town administrators, zoning enforcement officials, social service agencies, senior services providers, real estate agents and those concerned about family members or other hoarding residents in their community.

NAMI Windham County, an affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is a volunteer-led nonprofit organization that provides support, education and advocacy throughout Windham County for individuals and families affected by mental illness. For information, find us on the internet at <https://namiwindhamct.org/> or email us at info@namiwindhamct.org.

bankHometown to host three free shred days

REGION — bankHometown invites customers and members of the community to three free Shred Days. The second will be held on Saturday, Oct. 10, from 9 to 11 a.m. at the bank's 9 Sack Blvd. location in Leominster.

The third event will be on Saturday, Nov. 7, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. at the bank's 148 Route 171 location in Woodstock, Conn.

Local residents can reduce their risk of identity theft by bringing old mail, receipts, statements or bills, cancelled checks, pay stubs, medical records, or any other unwanted paper documents containing personal or confidential information and shredding them safely and securely for free. Bay State Shredding, a professional document destruction company, will be on site in the bank's parking lot and can accept up to two boxes of documents per car. No appointment is necessary.

About bankHometown
Headquartered in Easthampton, Massachusetts, TruNorth Bank and its bankHometown and TruNorth Mortgage divisions have more than \$6.9 billion in assets and offer consumer and business banking in 54 locations throughout Massachusetts, northeastern Connecticut, and southern New Hampshire. We're proud to fulfill our community banking mission—providing individualized financial support, a suite of comprehensive products and services, and banking tools and technology—all to ensure our customers can unlock their potential and build a successful future.

Through our sponsorship and charitable giving program, The Giving Tree, TruNorth Bank supports non-profit organizations and causes throughout the communities we serve. In 2025 alone, we donated more than \$2.2 million and over the last decade, more than \$13 million. We were named a Corporate Citizenship Award winner by Boston Business Journal, reaffirming our status as one of Massachusetts' most charitable companies.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Death, taxes and tariffs

To the Editor:

Benjamin Franklin wrote that nothing is certain but death and taxes. With health coverage slipping away from Americans, tariffs adding to costs, and the tax system allowing billionaires to pay lower tax rates than most Americans, Ben Franklin’s statement feels truer than ever under this Republican administration.

There is another quote — “those who forget history are condemned to repeat it.” It is clear the U.S. has not learned from the economic lessons of its past. In 2017, Trump inherited a strong economy that was expanding from President Obama. Trump tanked it with trade wars and a botched pandemic response. In 2025, he inherited an even stronger economy from President Biden; 16 million jobs were created, more than any single presidential term on record. The American economy was recovering and growing faster than the rest of the world after the pandemic. (Inequality Media) Inflation under Biden’s last month in office was 2.9 percent. Under Trump, the Bureau of Labor Statistics put it at 3.4 percent in August 2026, well above the Federal Reserve’s 2 percent target. Wage and job growth is down, while inflation, mortgage interest rates and unemployment claims are up. Income inequality has reached its highest level in modern U.S. history. (Economics Insider) Trump and the Republican administration have entangled the U.S. in a war of choice with Iran resulting in a growing affordability crisis. According to recent polls, voters overwhelmingly oppose the war and believe Trump is hurting the economy.

According to the Congressional Budget

It takes a community

To the Editor:

We have all heard the phrase, “It takes a village to raise a child.” Here in Putnam and our surrounding communities, I want us to embrace that idea as a call to action: It takes a community.

A community that values education. A community that expects children to participate in their learning. A community whose adults understand that preparing the next generation is a responsibility we share.

The urgency is real. Technology, artificial intelligence, and changing workforce demands are reshaping the world our children will enter. Education cannot afford to spend decades catching up. The children in our classrooms today need us to respond now.

When I was growing up, the message seemed relatively straightforward: go to college or develop a trade, work hard, and you had a reasonable opportunity to buy a home, raise a family, and enjoy a good quality of life. Without furthering your education or training, that financial security could be much harder to achieve.

College and the trades remain valuable paths. But both are evolving. We cannot assume that the preparation that served one generation will be enough for the next. People of all ages will need to keep learning as their work changes. Research on artificial intelligence and employment reinforces the growing importance of critical thinking, collaboration, and continued learning.

In Putnam, our vision for students reflects that responsibility. We want every student to become a strong communicator, critical thinker, explorer, learner, leader, and citizen. We want young people who ask thoughtful questions, evaluate information, explain their reasoning, consider different perspectives, and contribute to their community.

Those abilities require a solid educational foundation. Reading, writing, mathematics, science, history, and the arts give students knowledge to think with. A child needs both the confidence to ask a question and the skills to investigate the answer. The value of education has never been greater.

As superintendent, I have a responsibility to make sure our schools continue to improve. Our priorities include stronger literacy and mathematics instruction, teachers working together to examine student learning, and additional support when students struggle. Our recent grant applications pursue tutoring, family literacy, and community partnerships that strengthen student engagement and belonging. Our community engagement proposal seeks deeper connections with organizations such as the YMCA, TEEG, and Putnam Recreation to expand opportunities and help families access support.

These efforts reflect a shared purpose: children should feel connected to school, challenged by their learning, and supported by adults who believe in them.

That work needs to extend throughout our community.

Start with attendance. If your niece, neph-

Office, the Republican One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) adds \$3.4 trillion to deficits, and more than 10 million people in the U.S. are projected to lose health insurance because of it. According to Access Health CT, more than 22,000 people enrolled in Affordable Health Care Act health plans in Connecticut lost coverage in the first six months of 2026 after no longer being able to afford their premium payments. (CT Mirror) No one should have to choose between healthcare, lifesaving medication or food. Soon seniors, low-income individuals and people with disabilities will feel the impact of the Medicare and Medicaid rules that Republicans have scheduled to take effect in January 2027 after the midterm election. If the rule changes are so great for America, why delay them until after the election?

Legislators create health, tax, and tariff laws that impact our lives. Our votes decide who will represent us. Research the candidates and vote for Democratic candidates who will stand up for us rather than corporations and billionaires.

Early Voting runs from Oct. 19 through Nov. 1. Same-day registration is available during Early Voting, and on Election Day, Nov. 3. Check your voter registration status at MyVote.CT.gov and verify your polling location before heading to the polls.

“Every election is determined by the people who show up.” Consider bringing a friend or senior who may need a ride to the polls. Massive voter turnout will ensure the midterm election is too big to ignore in Connecticut and Washington.

LISA ARENDS
BROOKLYN

ew, or grandchild is treating school as optional, say something. Ask questions. Reinforce that showing up and making an effort matter. When illness, anxiety, transportation, or other challenges interfere, help the family connect with the school. High expectations and practical support belong together.

The same is true of reading. This year, only 15 percent of our students completed their summer reading and/or math challenge. That level of participation is unacceptable, and improving it is a shared responsibility. It does not tell us everything children read over the summer, but it tells us we need to strengthen our expectations and follow-through.

Students can lose academic ground during the summer, although the amount varies; for many it is significant. Access to books, enrichment, and adult support also varies, and cost can put opportunities out of reach for families. We can help close those gaps. If children in your Cub Scout pack are not doing their summer reading, help them make it a priority. Ask what they are reading. Set aside time. Help them find a book that interests them or visit the library.

We can also build thinking skills in ordinary moments.

At lunch, ask an elementary school child to read the receipt. What did the food cost? What is the tax? What are taxes used for? Ask an older child to calculate 10 percent of the food cost and explain how they figured it out.

While watching television with a grandchild, ask how the background music affects the scene. Does it make the moment feel hopeful, tense, or sad? During a commercial, ask who the intended audience is and what the advertiser wants people to believe.

When reading together, go beyond asking whether a character is happy or sad. Could the character be disappointed, relieved, embarrassed, or proud? What in the story supports that answer?

These conversations help children observe, interpret, explain, and question. Give them time to answer. Ask, “What makes you think that?” Let them hear you say, “I don’t know. Let’s find out.”

We need to model curiosity and the enjoyment of discovery. We need to show children that asking why is valuable and that learning continues throughout life.

Whether we welcome artificial intelligence or worry about it, it is changing our future. Our response must include preparing young people to use knowledge, exercise judgment, and take responsibility for their choices.

This week, choose one way to help a child learn. Read together. Support attendance. Ask a thoughtful question. Share a skill. Connect a family with an opportunity.

It takes a community, and every one of us has a role.

One Putnam. Together. We’ve got this.

STEVEN RIOUX
SUPERINTENDENT
PUTNAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Anne Dauphinais is committed to addressing what matters to us

To the Editor:

I’m writing to you in support of our State Rep., Anne Dauphinais.

I have known Anne for many years, and she has always been extremely caring and supportive of the average working men and women in and around our town of Plainfield. She is committed to addressing the concerns families face and the financial challenges of today’s world. Anne also

Much more than ‘All hat, no cattle’

To the Editor:

If you haven’t yet had a chance to listen to or watch the September 22 debate on WINY (easily searchable) between 35th CT Senate District candidates Jeffrey Gordon and Ethan Werstler, you should probably do so pronto. If you care about the future of our quiet little corner of the world, it’s an absolute must. And, it’s really best to listen to the whole thing, just over 50 minutes long.

I was pretty sure before seeing it that it would be a draw: Werstler’s youthful enthusiasm pitted against what I expected to be Gordon’s seasoned maturity. It would be a debate we’d all seen some version of many times over the years, with other candidates, in other races.

What I actually witnessed was something else entirely: Werstler calmly and maturely articulating logical, thoughtful, and positive solutions to problems that have challenged the 35th Senate District of Connecticut for at least 30 years, as well as to newer problems that have cropped up over the last ten; Gordon spent most of his time asserting again and again that he’d “done the work,” “has a track record,” and insisting that Werstler “doesn’t show up to do the work,” which one might otherwise have thought to be a given since Werstler is the challenger, not currently in office.

Gordon used the word “I” 63 times in the debate and what was revealed over the 50 minutes was that a lot of what he has done in his four years in office is vote against things, and, when the relatively few things he actually voted for became law, he tended to magnify either his role in or the importance of the legislation. Off-putting, and distracting too, was a snarky condescension towards Werstler. Werstler was the grownup in the room.

The debate was expertly moderated with clear, pertinent questioning by WINY’s Gary Wilcox, and touched on most of the major issues facing NE Connecticut residents: energy affordability, artificial intelligence and data centers, special education funding, immigration enforcement, and the minimum wage.

A few issues seemed to encapsulate particularly well the two candidates’ approach to representing the 35th:

Wilcox’s first question concerned skyrocketing energy costs, especially for electricity and how the candidates would deal with that. Werstler answered directly that competition with Eversource in the form of a public utility company such as exists in Norwich, Bozrah, Jewett City, Groton, and other places around the state, would be the best way to bring Eversource to heel, and to bring electric costs down.

Gordon, in his answer, referred again and again to his “track record,” but the only concrete examples he gave were some involvement in making energy bills transparent, in particular, the listing of public benefit charges on the bill, along with a modest role in helping to decrease those charges. (My September electric bill was \$146.74; the public benefit charge was \$2.93.) Left unaddressed by Gordon was actually how to reign in Eversource, a company which operates in Connecticut as a virtual monopoly making shocking amounts of money. (In 2024, Eversource reported earnings of \$811.7 million, or \$2.27 per share; in 2025, it reported \$1.69 billion in earnings, or \$4.46 per share. Still, they are now applying for a \$451 million revenue increase in Connecticut.)

Second, in response to a question from Wilcox about priorities for the next legislative session, Werstler brought up the fact that the current federal administration has done a lot of damage to the district and state with funding cuts, but that the State Senate and the Governor had responded to this in November of 2025 by creating a \$500 million emergency fund (the “Federal Cuts Response Fund”) which went on to support Medicaid benefits, SNAP benefits, and eventually farmers, which Gordon voted against. And yet, a few months later, in February of 2026, Gordon attended a ceremony at Mapleleaf Farm in Hebron to celebrate \$22.5 million being allocated from the Federal Cuts Response Fund to help farmers. He then sent out a press release touting the fact that, “earlier this year he (Gordon) joined Republican colleagues in proposing \$20 million in state funding to help farms stay afloat.” He did not mention that he had actually voted against the establishment of the Fund from which the money was obtained.

Other things: there was a long discussion about AI regulation and both candidates went on at some length about how they were in favor of carefully regulating AI. Yet Gordon in 2024 voted against a carefully

works to improve living conditions for our seniors who are facing medical and financial challenges.

I urge you to re-elect Anne Dauphinais because she is knowledgeable about our local community.

Sincerely,

NANCY OBREITER
PLAINFIELD

crafted bill, SB 2, which would have gone a long way toward addressing most of the issues now dominating headlines about AI.

And, Gordon talked about “doing things like reining in prescription drug prices,” but a review of his record reveals only a bill (H.B. 7192), which he co-sponsored, that is just a regulatory fix to how pharmacy benefit managers interact with pharmacies and insurers — in essence regulations dealing with a notoriously opaque middleman in the drug supply chain, which may or may not ever result in lower drug prices (given the rapacious, and endlessly creative, nature of the drug industry, I’ll believe it when I see it).

Out of all of the things discussed in the debate perhaps the most disturbing to me personally was both the fact of, and Gordon’s explanation for, his voting against Senate Bill 397, “An Act Concerning Democracy and Government Accountability,” which passed, was signed into law, and gave the state a legal path to sue federal agents, prohibited arrests without a warrant in schools, health care facilities, hospitals, churches, and playgrounds, instituted a ban on face masks used by law enforcement, placed limits on the use of “Flock” cameras, and issued rules mandating minimum training for all law enforcement officers. Gordon said he voted against it because “federal law supersedes state and local law and we need to be careful not to do things that are clearly illegal or get struck down in court.” Werstler’s response was unequivocal: “Immigration is a federal issue but it’s enforcement is really impacting the lives of Connecticut residents...I think a state senator needs to stand up to that regardless of the politics involved...I want fights like that in our legal system.” (Senate Bill 397 was in response to, among a number of similar cases, the abduction by ICE and imprisonment in a detention facility in Plymouth, Mass. of Rihan, a Cheshire High School student, the son of an American translator in Afghanistan who was here legally.)

Gordon’s explanation for the “No” vote was disturbing because, to me, it’s an example of “obeying in advance,” a refusal to take on a righteous legal battle regarding individual freedom because it might result in a court defeat. God help us. Even more disturbing was the fact that I could find no record of Gordon ever speaking out (or even commenting) about a single one of many such stories.

So, in many ways watching the debate was clarifying. Yes, Jeff Gordon voted against a number of things that would have helped our state. Yes, he probably took more credit for the few things that he voted for, and which passed, than he had a right to. Yes, overall his record is easily reduced to the vague mantra of “I’ve been doing the work.” But, in watching the debate, and combing through his record, I became aware of a much more concerning issue.

Our country is at a pivotal point: civil liberties are being eroded, the military deconstructed, the CDC and NIH gutted (one would have thought a physician would care), Congress sidelined, the economy is on shaky ground (worried about farmers? how about fertilizer and diesel prices, supercharged by a badly planned war, mystery meat from Brazil, etc., etc.?), we are alienating most of our allies, and there is no clear path forward.

How, precisely, did we end up in this place? “How” is, of course, multifactorial, but It could not have happened without silence. Hundreds of people like Jeff Gordon, in positions of responsibility both locally and nationally, have remained quiet. You might argue that these are not local issues but, clearly, what happens at the national level affects each and every one of us locally. This is a time, not for silence and cowardice and empty words about “doing the work,” it is a time to stand up with moral clarity and a positive vision. It is time to work and advocate not only for a healthy and prosperous 35th district and state, it’s also a time to stand up and speak out against policies which are hurting us throughout the country as well as in the 35th. After I had heard Ethan Werstler respond to debate questions with a forthrightness, clarity of vision, and keen intelligence that belied his youth, I had no doubt we have found someone who will listen closely, do that standing up, and not shy away from the hard stuff.

My initial thought while watching the debate was wrong. I thought we were dealing with an “All hat, no cattle” situation with the incumbent. It’s actually a whole lot more than that.

Watch the debate.

JOHN A. DAY, JR.
WOODSTOCK VALLEY

SEND US YOUR NEWS!!!

Email Us @

brendan@villagernewspapers.com



First-ever Layalaya Global Arts Festival coming to Woodstock Oct. 10

WOODSTOCK — On Oct. 10, Woodstock, in the northeast corner of Connecticut, will become a hub of artistic activity with the first annual Layālaya Global Arts Festival—a World Music & Cultural Dialogue Festival—featuring music, art, and dialogue from Argentina, China, India, Japan, Korea, Mali, and the United States.

Conceived and curated by artistic director Sandeep Das, the festival aims to create opportunities to engage with new ideas.global traditions, and diverse perspectives through artistic and cultural encounters, expanding perception and deepening community connection.

In its inaugural year, the festival theme is A World Unboxed: where cultural difference is a source of discovery and connection, revealing our individuality and shared humanity. The program centers around interdisciplinary excellence—arts and human performance side by side—

exploring what it takes to perform at the highest level, whether on stage or on the court.

“I’ve learned that curiosity isn’t just for conversation, it’s about being willing to experience new or unfamiliar things, as well,” said Sandeep Das, Guggenheim Fellow and founding member of The Silk Road Ensemble. “Every time I’ve sat across from a musician whose tradition I didn’t grow up with, I’ve found the same thing: the differences that seemed so wide from a distance become the very ground we meet on. That’s what I want Woodstock to feel like this October—not a stage where different cultures perform side by side, but a room where they actually talk to each other. In a world where cultural divides seem wide, the arts can create a source of discovery and connection where there may otherwise be none. This is a world without boundaries.”

In its inaugural year, the Layālaya Global Arts Festival will offer a multi-

day residency starting Oct. 7, with open rehearsals, speaker spotlights, master classes, and a local student showcase, with students being mentored directly by Grammy-winning and internationally acclaimed artists, and world-class learning opportunities & cultural experiences for community members. These activities lead up to October 10, the culminating full-day public festival, featuring keynote speakers; performances and original work by international world-class artists, including several Grammy Award winners; and global dialogue—a platform for nationally recognized educators and thought leaders together exploring the ideas shaping our world.

Events take place all afternoon and culminate in a special evening performance at the Loos Center for the Arts.

Participants include: Artistic Director, Tabla Maestro, GRAMMY® Award-winner Sandeep Das President of The Juilliard School, Damian Woetzel

UConn Women’s Basketball’s Director of Sports Performance Andrea Hudy Gaon Soloists, a specially abled Korean youth ensemble, performing with their families Kaylynn Cho, young nationally-renowned Korean poet Argentinian singer Solange Merdinian Indian sitarist Rajib Karmakar Malian balafon player Bella Kouyate American cellist Jake CharkeyChinese suona player Guo Yahzi Japanese taiko drummer Kaoru Watanabe

Tickets for Oct. 10 events at the Loos Center for the Arts in Woodstock are available for the afternoon session at 1:30 p.m. (\$25) or the evening performance at 7:30 p.m. (\$35-\$85). Tickets for both (\$55-\$85) can also be purchased; all are available online.

Layālaya is immensely grateful for federal, state, and community support

of the festival. The 2026 Layālaya Global Arts Festival is funded in part by the Connecticut Department of Economic & Community Development, Office of the Arts; CT Eastern Regional Tourism District; SBM Charitable Foundation; and the New England States Touring program of the New England Foundation for the Arts, made possible with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and the six New England state arts agencies. Festival community partners include Loos Center for the Arts and The Woodstock Academy.

About Layālaya Global Arts Festival Created in 2025 by international renowned tabla artist, composer and educator Sandeep Das, Layālaya Arts Initiative is a creative laboratory and cultural platform where global artistic traditions, diverse philosophies, and distinct perspectives come together in dialogue through artistic process, cultural exchange,

and experimentation. In a world that often reduces human complexity to simple categories, Layālaya stands for a world unboxed, embracing the richness that emerges when people engage deeply across differences. The Layālaya Global Arts Festival is the public expression of this mission: through an embedded residency model, artists work alongside students through mentorship, workshops, collaborative creation, and shared artistic process, then open this work to the broader community through conversations, rehearsals, performances, and cultural exchange.

Layālaya is a recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization (EIN: 39-3075557) based in Massachusetts. Contributions made to Layālaya are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Let’s send Pat Boyd back to Hartford

To the Editor:

This letter is offered in wholehearted support of Pat Boyd’s re-election campaign for state representative in the 50th district.

A lifelong resident of eastern Connecticut, Pat has proven throughout his life to be remarkably adept at prioritizing issues and keeping multiple balls in the air, both essential skills for an effective legislator. An active volunteer firefighter and President of the Pomfret Fire Company, Pat has always prioritized community service. As Chair of the House Public Safety and Security Committee, he has worked tirelessly and effectively to see that our emergency responders have the resources and respect they deserve. His work has been formally recognized through awards from the CT Farm Bureau, the CT State Firefighters Association, the CT Police Chiefs Association

and many others.

A former Eagle Scout and current Boy Scout Camp Director, Pat has a strong conservation ethic and is extremely knowledgeable about conservation issues. I have personally seen him work effectively to get things done with the Connecticut DEEP leadership as well as the Governor’s office.

Perhaps most importantly, Pat at his core is a practical, common sense and independent person. Rather than hewing to either party line, he takes the time to study each issue and form his own opinion based on the needs of those of us he represents. That is exactly the kind of representation we need, and it can be hard to find in today’s political world.

Please vote to send Pat Boyd back to the Connecticut State Legislature in November.

STEVE BRODERICK
EASTFORD

Dauphinais’ record speaks for itself

To the Editor:

I am writing to express my support for the re-election of Rep. Anne Dauphinais.

Throughout the time I have known Anne, I have had the opportunity to see firsthand her dedication, work ethic, and commitment to the people around her. She has consistently demonstrated a willingness to listen, get involved, and put in the work necessary to make a difference.

As a longtime union member, former union steward, and former Vice President of the Machinists Local Union at Electric Boat, I understand the importance of advocacy, accountability, and standing up for the people you represent. My years of military service have also shaped my belief in com-

munity, responsibility, and service to others.

Those experiences have given me a particular appreciation for people who are willing to step forward and serve their communities. In my experience, Anne is someone who takes that responsibility seriously. She cares about the people around her and has demonstrated that through her involvement and accomplishments.

I am proud to share my personal experience with Anne, and believe her record of community involvement speaks for itself. I would encourage voters to consider supporting Anne Dauphinais for re-election.

Sincerely,

STEVE FRECHETTE
DANIELSON

If you want honest representation, vote for Anne Dauphinais

To the Editor:

I’m Liz Lavallee, and as a resident of Killingly, I am writing to express my strong support for the re-election of Rep. Anne Dauphinais.

One thing I have found out about Anne is that she is an independent thinker, who is not just concerned about the next election or what her party thinks. She truly cares about her constituents and the community she serves, and she fights for what is right for us.

Anne thinks beyond the headline or title of a bill. Rather, she reviews the long-term

impact it could have on all citizens—the unseen aspects of a bill that no one identifies or talks about, but that could either help or hurt us all in the long run. Anne has principles, and her oath is to the Federal and State Constitutions and to serve her constituents.

There is much to admire in her willingness to stand against the majority. Want an honest representative? Vote for Anne Dauphinais this November.

Sincerely,

LIZ LAVALLEE
KILLINGLY

And the beat goes on...

To the Editor:

And the beat goes on. Hegseth announced the creation of the Office of Religious Affairs. The Secretary of No Peace assured us that there would be no compulsory religious participation or favoring any religion. Right. When has anyone in Donnie Doofus’ administration ever limited themselves to the guardrails they first told us to trust? Oh, yes, let’s not forget this is a blatant violation of the First Amendment separation of church and state. Not that this is the first such criminal act — indeed it follows the justification of “Well someone else got away with it so it’s OK for me to defy the Constitution as well.”

On the same day, the birthright decision was handed down, Clarence Thomas said

it “devalues” American citizenship. It took him only 91 pages of legal minutiae and abstraction to “justify” his attempt to explain why the Constitution is a pile of trash. Donnie Dictator said that his “own morality” is the only limit on his power and “I don’t need international law.” Stephen Miller said the US has the right to take over any country for its resources. These are certainly ideals we all should hold dear.

The Midterms are crucial. We need an overwhelming turnout to nullify and demolish any illegal actions or claims by Donnie Dingbat.

STEPHEN ETZEL
PUTNAM

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.

Our voice has been quiet for too long

To the Editor:

I am Tony Emilio, and I am running to represent Connecticut’s 50th District—Ashford, Brooklyn, Eastford, Hampton, Mansfield, Pomfret, and Woodstock.

Our Quiet Corner of Connecticut deserve a stronger voice in Hartford. Too often, state policy is written without enough regard for how it affects the families, seniors, farmers, small-business owners, and working people who call northeastern Connecticut home.

After raising my family in Pomfret for more than 30 years, I know what makes this district special—and what is putting pressure on the people who live here. I have worked in large industry and finance, built and operated a small business, and traveled extensively.

But my most important perspective comes from living here, listening to neighbors, and understanding that the decisions made in Hartford reach our kitchen tables, farms, schools, and town halls. The message I hear is clear: Connecticut has become too expensive.

Residents are feeling the cost of groceries, fuel, electricity, housing, insurance, and taxes. Connecticut’s diesel tax is now 49.9 cents per gallon—an expense that does not stop at the gas pump. It is built into the cost of trucking, food delivery, home-heating deliveries, construction, and farm operations.

We need responsible tax relief when families are under real pressure. We also need a state budget that respects taxpayers and does not force towns to carry unfunded state mandates. If Hartford requires municipalities to take on new responsibilities, the state should fully fund them—or give local communities the flexibility to decide whether the mandate works for them.

I will stand up for local control. The towns of the 50th District are not interchangeable with Connecticut’s largest cities. Our communities understand their own roads, schools, conservation priorities, housing needs, and public safety concerns. Hartford should work with local officials and residents, not impose one-size-fits-all policies from the Capitol.

That includes housing. Connecticut needs more housing options, especially for young families and older residents who want to remain in their communities. But the answer

is not to strip towns of their ability to plan responsibly, protect natural resources, and preserve the character of their towns. We should reduce unnecessary barriers to appropriately priced housing without sending the costs and consequences down to local taxpayers. I will also fight for our farms. Recent concerns about the food supply should remind us that local agriculture is not merely part of Connecticut’s past—it is essential to our future. Family farms need to be part of state planning, not treated as an obstacle to be overcome by poorly designed mandates.

Education and municipal funding must be priorities as well. For decades, casino slot revenue was intended in significant part to support cities and towns. Today, municipalities are scheduled to receive \$52.5 million from casino revenue this budget cycle—about 14 percent of the \$365 million Connecticut expects to receive from video-slot revenue. Municipal leaders have called for a fairer share. Our schools and towns should not be left competing for scraps while state government retains resources that could ease property-tax pressure and strengthen local services.

Finally, Connecticut needs an honest energy plan. Families and small businesses cannot continue absorbing ever-higher electric bills without accountability. We need reliable generation, adequate transmission capacity, affordability, and consumer choice. Environmental progress matters, but it must be pursued with a realistic plan for dependable and affordable power—not mandates that get ahead of the infrastructure needed to support them.

The 50th District needs a representative who will read the fine print, ask hard questions, protect local taxpayers, and insist that Hartford listen to the communities it serves.

I am running to bring a practical, independent voice to the legislature: one that will fight for affordability, local decision-making, fair funding for our towns and schools, support for agriculture, and accountability in state government.

Our district’s voice has been too quiet in Hartford for too long. I intend to make sure it is heard.

Sincerely,

TONY EMILIO
POMFRET CENTER

KILLINGLY

continued from page A4

promptness.” (Swordsmith ed., p. 252).

Today, we would refer to this “Gale” as a deadly hurricane. Wikipedia summarized nicely, The Great September Gale of 1815 was a deadly and fast-moving Category 4 Atlantic hurricane in 1815 that became the second of five known major hurricanes to strike New England. At the time, it was the first hurricane to strike the greater area in 180 years. After striking on Long Island, the hurricane caused major damage in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island. Rhode Island suffered the worst damage, as the storm surge flooded towns along Narragansett Bay up to and including Providence.” I found additional information on the Rhode Island Historical Society site. On September 23, 1815 “A southeasterly wind, with gusts of up to 156 mph, swelled the waters of the Narragansett Bay to an unprecedented height. The storm surge carried ships, houses, and every sort of flotsam as it came. By noon, the weather had abated. Although it had damaged communities all along the coast of southern New England, nowhere was the chaos and destruction as great as in Providence. The Weybossett Bridge was washed away, some five-hundred structures were shattered, and approximately a quarter of the city’s taxable value was lost. There were two fatalities, both at India Point, the area hardest hit and until then the most prosperous.” (https://www.rihs.org/the-great-september-gale-of-1815/). If any of you know of damage in Thompson, Pomfret, and/or Woodstock from this Gale please email me. Unfortunately, Larned’s History of Windham County does not contain a topical index.

Also, if anyone has mem-

ories to share about the 1938 Hurricane, please let me know. I have found much in the local papers, but memories always add flavor to the story. When my late husband Charles and I purchased our property, we were told that the barn was destroyed in the 1938 hurricane, and pieces of it were found as far away as Massachusetts.

This Monday, Oct. 12, we celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day, so I thought I would mention a little about the Native Americans in Northeastern Connecticut in the early settlement of our state. Natural features such as rivers formed not only boundaries but also meeting places for the various people in the region. The Nipmucks, based in Massachusetts, inhabited the northern portions of the territory including what is now Killingly north of Whetstone Brook. Narragansetts held sway over territory towards the east and even utilized resources in eastern Killingly in the Whetstone Brook area. There the rocky ledges provided fine material for their projectile points. In fact, the name Whetstone Brook derives from the Native Manhumsqueeg (a place for gathering whetstones, i.e. stone for their projectile points. (Larned, Ellen D. History of Windham County, Connecticut 1600-1760, Swordsmith ed., p.1. See first chapter for more on the Native peoples). At the beginning of the 17th century, the Pequots were also present in Southeastern New England. All was not peaceful within that tribe. The Mohegan website summarized, “The early 1600’s was a critical time of change for Connecticut tribes. The pressure from rapidly expanding European settlements created competition for land and resources, while disease was decimating Indian populations at an alarming rate. Within the Pequot Tribe at that time, a dispute erupted between the Pequot Sachem (head

chief) Sassacus and Uncas. Uncas left with his followers, calling themselves Mohegan, or Wolf People, like their ancestors. Each tribe had its own idea of how to deal with European conflicts. Uncas (1598-1683) became Sachem of the Mohegan Tribe, which favored collaboration with the English. The Pequots under Sassacus chose to fight them, with other local tribes taking sides. Seeing the loss brought on by continued fighting, Uncas befriended the

European invaders. This controversial decision left Uncas and the Mohegans in an uneasy alliance with the English in an ensuring war with the Pequots. But staying true to their word, the Mohegans helped the English defeat the Pequots. Uncas settled his people in a village at Shantok, which the tribe defended from the Narragansett invasion sparked by European as well as Indian conflicts. Finally the Mohegan Tribe’s affiliation with the English kept its people relatively safe

during King Phillip’s war and beyond.” (Mohegan. nsn.us). For additional information on the Native Peoples in our area visit the various websites. For much on the earlier habitations see Lucianne Lavin’s Connecticut’s Indigenous Peoples.

Margaret M. Weaver Killingly Municipal Historian, October 2026. For additional information email me at margaretmweaver@gmail.com or visit the Killingly Historical Center at 196

Main Street Danielson Wednesday or Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. or call 860-779-7250. Like us at Facebook www.facebook.com/killinglyhistoricalsociety. For Windham County Transcripts visit 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 righthand column for links.

NCCN Forum to explore child care as essential economic infrastructure

HAMPTON — Childcare is more than a family need. Access to reliable childcare affects whether parents can work, whether employers can attract and retain employees, and whether communities can support a strong regional economy.

On Thursday, Oct. 15, the Northeast CT Childcare Needs Project (NCCN) will bring together leaders and partners from across sectors for its Fall Forum, Child Care as Essential Economic Infrastructure, at the EASTCONN Conference Center in Hampton.

The forum will explore the roles that state and municipal government, economic development, business, edu-

cation, early childhood, and families can play in strengthening the region’s childcare infrastructure and what can happen when those partners work together locally and regionally.

Through panel discussions and regional case studies, participants will hear different perspectives on the challenges facing Northeast Connecticut and examples of partnerships putting solutions into action.

“Childcare is not only an issue for families. It is a workforce and economic development issue for our entire region,” said Diane Gozemba, Director of Early Childhood Initiatives at EASTCONN. “This forum

is an opportunity to bring the people who experience the need, the people who make decisions, and the people working on solutions into the same conversation. Strengthening childcare in Northeast Connecticut will take all of us.”

The forum is designed for municipal and state leaders, business and economic development professionals, educators, early childhood providers, community partners, families, and others interested in strengthening childcare access and Northeast Connecticut’s workforce and economy.

About the Northeast Connecticut Childcare

Needs Project The Northeast Connecticut Childcare Needs Project (NCCN) is a regional collaboration among EASTCONN, the Northeastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce, and the Northeast Early Childhood Council (NECC), funded by The Connecticut Project. Launched in 2024, NCCN brings together regional partners and stakeholders to address Northeast Connecticut’s unique childcare challenges and develop strategies to increase access to high-quality, affordable childcare that benefits both families and the businesses that employ them.

Poets at Large presents Arsego and Aeroelastic Flutter Oct. 24

POMFRET, Conn. — Poets at Large will continue its seventh season on Saturday night, October 24th with a wide variety of spoken word. The show begins at 7 p.m. at The Vanilla Bean Café, 450 Deerfield Rd. in Pomfret, Conn. and featured that night will be Sharon Arsego and performance artist duo Aeroelastic Flutter. Suggested donation is \$10.00.

Sharon Arsego is from Bristol where she works as a senior administrative assistant for the city. She has three published col-

lections including Scenes and Sonnets which is an ekphrastic collaboration with Massachusetts photographer Wendy Tobin. Arsego is an active participant in various arts and culture communities, has been a featured spoken word performer for two seasons of The Soul Session in Bristol, and also writes for The Bristol Magazine. Learn more at sharonarsego.com.

Aeroelastic Flutter is a spoken word and sound collaboration, combining the often-absurdist poetry of Jim Whitten with the guitar work and sound exploration

of Nicholas Pecsok. Their project experiments with lo-fi audio and borderline performance art, challenging audiences to reevaluate how poetry can be performed and defined.

Linda Blakesley will do an extended read in the open mic segment. Blakesley is a poet from Coventry, CT who hosts a monthly open mic in connection with the Coventry Arts Guild, providing a platform for new and veteran poets. Linda works in adult education.

Poets at Large has brought more than 150 pub-

lished and awarded poets to the area since 2020 and dozens of people have participated in the open mic portions during that time. Poets at Large is a project of Windham Arts. All events are ADA compliant and are recommended for ages 16 and up. Readings for the rest of the season are sponsored in part by donations from bankHometown, Charter Oak FCU, WHZ Financial and The Putnam Area Foundation. Contact karen.warinsky@gmail.com to sign up for the open mic; 5-minute max as time allows.

ASSESSMENT

continued from page A1

from Bull Hill, and it was more of our frustration because we can’t keep maintaining it when we can’t use the fields. So, we just said, look, we have to walk away at this point and try to keep the other fields up — I think I can speak for the board that we would like to try to move forward and see if we can get some type of assessment,” said Caisse.

Thompson Recreation Director Brian Lievense said he reached out to the Economic Development Commission do discuss possible funding sources on the town side, including potentially utilizing the services of Director of Planning & Development Tyra Penn-Gesek who he acknowledged was talented at procuring outside funds.

However, Lievense added another option to the mix -moving away from Bull Hill altogether.

“I don’t think the assess-

ment should be just Bull Hill. I do know there’s another plot of land in Thompson that could be developed,” said Lievense without specifying the exact location of the property. “It is flat. I don’t know anything about construction or this type of development. I don’t know if it would be cheaper, but I know that there’s another town owned property that could potentially be developed for fields. So, in that assessment, I would think it would be best to determine if it’s more cost effective to build new on a new location or try to revitalize Bull Hill.”

Lievense added that he would continue to seek money on the town side through capital requests, even though funding through the town budget is unrealistic. Caisse said NECONN was looking forward to working with Thompson Recreation on pursuing the assessment and exploring funding opportunities for the effort.

Caring Families brings clean comedy back for Second Annual Laugh for Life

HEBRON — Caring Families will host its 2nd Annual Laugh for Life comedy fundraiser on Friday, Oct. 16 at 7 p.m. at the RHAM High School Auditorium in Hebron.

The evening will feature three touring comedians: Gordon Douglas, Seth Knorr, and Jim McCue. McCue has a special connection to the area. McCue attended Eastern Connecticut State University “back in the 1900s” before going on to found the Boston Comedy Festival.

Laugh for Life offers an evening of clean, wholesome comedy while raising

funds to support the work of Caring Families, a nonprofit serving Eastern Connecticut. Through its Willimantic center and MobileCare unit, Caring Families provides free and confidential pregnancy-related support, including medical services, options counseling, parenting education, material assistance, referrals, and ongoing support.

“There are plenty of ways to support a nonprofit, but we think laughing for a good cause is a pretty great one,” said Jeremy Bradley, Executive Director of Caring Families. “You’re coming out for a great night of com-

edy, and you’re also helping bring help, hope, and healing to people right here in Eastern Connecticut.”

Laugh for Life is also receiving support from local businesses and community partners who are helping make the event possible. Backyard Shakespeare is serving as the event’s Presenting Sponsor, with additional local partners contributing through sponsorships, donations, and in-kind support. These include Hebron Church of Hope, AmpliSound Hearing Care Centers, Advanced Custom Decks, The Light House, The

Flour Girl Bakery I Cafe, Ted’s IGA Supermarket, and Sparrow Soaps.

The event begins at 7 p.m., with doors opening at 6:15 p.m. Tickets are \$25 in advance through October 4 and \$30 beginning October 5. A Date Night Bundle is available for two advance tickets for \$45, and groups of 20 or more can receive special group pricing.

Tickets are available at givebutter.com/laughforlife.

Killingly High School Weekly Sports Wrap-Up

Field Hockey Killingly battled NFA on Tuesday, Sept. 29, falling 5-0. Jaynie Macquarrie had a strong showing in goal with 13 saves, making several key stops throughout the game. Killingly continued to compete and create

opportunities while working hard defensively. The team will look to carry its hard work and progress into its next game.

Killingly put together a strong performance against Stonington on Thursday, Oct. 1, falling 4-1. Brianna

Souza scored Killingly’s lone goal, helping create offensive momentum for the team. Jaynie Macquarrie recorded five saves in goal. Despite the loss, Killingly played well as a team and showed continued improvement on both ends of the field.

Boys Soccer Killingly boys’ soccer battled back twice in a hard-fought 3-3 draw with Griswold on Oct. 1. The Trailblazers fought their way to a 3-2 lead but couldn’t hold on, as Griswold found the equalizer late. Liam Sierakowski scored two goals, with Kaiden Cayer adding one. Bryce Lemovitz recorded two assists and Christian Tremblay added one. Gab Covington made 5 saves in

goal. Great effort from the entire team.

Girls Soccer The Killingly Girls Soccer team traveled to Fitch on Sept. 30 and earned a commanding 5-0 shutout victory. Kezlee Morrarty led the offensive attack with a hat trick, while Adalyn Malarkey and Aislynn Hassett added goals of their own. The Trailblazers improved their season record to 5-1-1.

On Oct. 3, the Trailblazers fell to Bacon Academy 3-0 on the road. Despite a hard-fought second half, Killingly was unable to overcome a 3-0 halftime deficit. The team now sits at 5-2-1 on the season and is ready to bounce back in the next match.

PEACE DAY

continued from page A1

us. But, through building self-trust and nurturing our inner peace, we can gain the calm that also can help others. Further, her poem, “Unbidden,” spoke of how peace sometimes comes to our messy lives in unexpected ways.

A collection was taken for the Putnam Congregational Church, which suffered extensive damage when their ceiling recently collapsed.

This year the GPIC Peace Pole, with “Let peace prevail on the earth” written in eight languages representing local nationalities, was transferred to the Danielson Methodist Church. It was accepted by Rev. Zack LaCrone, who pray that God, “bottomless well of peace,” would “make us children of quietness and bind us to one another.”

The program ended with the group singing of “Let There Be Peace on Earth.”

International Peace Day was established in 1981 by the United Nations General Assembly as a day to promote peace within and between people. This year’s theme is “Invest in Peace - For Everyone, Everywhere, Every Day,” inviting us all to do our part for peace.



Lee Gendron

Local man becomes licensed funeral director

WEBSTER — Sitkowski, Malboeuf & Hickey Funeral Home and Scanlon Funeral Service are proud to announce that Lee A. Gendron, a recent cum laude graduate of Cape Cod Community College, has earned his Associate’s degree in funeral service, and has passed the state examinations to become a licensed funeral director in Massachusetts.

Gendron looks forward to becoming a productive member of our community. He is a native of Quinebaug, Conn., a son of Teresa E. “Tess” (Kowalewski) Gendron and the late James P. Gendron. He graduated with honors from Tourtellotte Memorial High School in 2015 and was a member of the National Honor Society.

He earned his Bachelor’s degree in communications from Eastern State CT University in Willimantic, Conn. in 2018 and was a member of the Lambda Pi Eta Honor Society.

Gendron is an Eagle Scout, and was active for many years in Boy Scout Troop 66 in Thompson. Previously he served as an altar boy at the former St. Hedwig Parish in Southbridge and is a current member of Saint Stephen’s Church in Quinebaug, Conn. He is also a Second-Degree Black Belt in Tang Soo Do.

Day Kimball Health names Alyssa Riel Employee of the Month for August

PUTNAM — Day Kimball Health (DKH) has named Alyssa Riel, RT(R) (M), mammographer and breast ultrasound technologist as Employee of the Month for August 2026 in recognition of her dedication to patient care and commitment to excellence.

Riel joined Day Kimball Health in October 2019, and is a valued member of the Diagnostic Imaging team. In her role, she performs screening and diagnostic mammograms, breast ultrasounds, and assists with breast biopsies and localization procedures. Her compassionate approach and technical expertise help ensure patients receive high-quality care during what can often be an anxious and challenging experience.

Riel began her healthcare career in 2013 as a radiologic technologist and spent five years working with an orthopedic hand specialist before transitioning to breast imaging. She completed a mammography program and has dedicated the past eight years to the specialty. Most recently, she expanded her expertise by cross-training in breast sonography and earning the designation of Breast Specialist, reflecting her commitment to advancing her skills and providing the highest level of patient care.

“Alyssa’s dedication to her patients and her profession is evident in everything she does,” said Randy Paquette, director of Diagnostic Imaging and NICS. “She approaches every patient interaction with compassion, professionalism and a genuine desire to make people feel comfortable during what



Alyssa Riel

can be a stressful experience. She has continuously sought opportunities to expand her knowledge and skills, most recently earning her Breast Specialist designation. We are incredibly fortunate to have Alyssa on our team, and this recognition is well-deserved.”

When asked what she enjoys most about her work, Riel pointed to the relationships she builds with patients.

“Breast imaging can be a very personal and sometimes intimidating experience,” Riel said. “I take pride in helping patients feel comfortable and at ease. Hearing someone say ‘That wasn’t that bad,’ or ‘Thank you for making that easy,’ reminds me why I love what I do.”

Riel said being named Employee of the Month is especially meaningful because it has been a long-standing personal goal. She credits her colleagues and the opportunities for professional development at Day Kimball Health for helping her achieve that recognition.

“Employees like Alyssa help define what Day Kimball Health stands for,” said Kyle Kramer, CEO of Day Kimball Health. “Her commitment to excellence, continuous learning and patient-centered care reflects our mission and our values. We are proud to recognize Alyssa for the meaningful contributions she makes to our patients, her colleagues and our organization each day.”

Riel earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Eastern Connecticut State University, completed the Windham Hospital Program of Radiologic Technology and received her Certificate in Mammography from Middlesex Community College. She holds credentials through the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT).

A Brooklyn, Connecticut, native, Riel lives in Canterbury with her husband and three children. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her family and can often be found at a local soccer field or playground cheering on her children.

About Day Kimball Health

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

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