



**Q: Can February  
March?  
A: No, but April  
May!**

# PUTNAM VILLAGER

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Friday, March 7, 2025

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## Community bids farewell to “Voice of Thompson Speedway”



Courtesy

Dowd served around 58 years with the Muddy Brook Fire Department, including ten as chief.

BY JASON BLEAU  
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

WOODSTOCK — The Woodstock and local racing communities said goodbye to a legendary leader and voice in February with the passing of Russell “Russ” Dowd. The former chief of the Muddy Brook Fire Department and “the Voice of Thompson Speedway” passed away on Feb. 16 at the age of 76.

Dowd was a graduate of Woodstock Academy and an Army veteran from the Vietnam War era who served in the Pentagon’s Defense Department where he earned a Joint Service Commendation medal. His military service also led him to a career in broadcasting as he worked for WPIX and WXRA while in Washington. He returned home to Woodstock and joined WESO and WQRV in Southbridge serving as Operations Manager for more than 25 years.

Dowd was also an avid racer starting with go-karts and moving up to modifieds racing at Stafford, Thompson, Waterford, and Pocono Raceway. But his most impactful contributions to motorsports came from his voice.

His deep, unmistakable tone and his knowledge of the sport led him to becoming a prominent track announcer eventually service 27 years as General Manager and announcer at Thompson Speedway and served as a mentor for numerous prominent broadcasters who serve the speedway and the motorsports community today. He was inducted into the New England Auto Racers Hall of Fame in November of 2024.

Officials at Thompson Speedway honored Dowd in the wake of his passing posting pictures from both his driving and announcing days as part of a tribute of social media.

“Thompson Speedway staff and family are saddened by the loss of one of the true New England Racing legends. Russ was a kind soul with a huge heart and will be missed by all who knew him. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his immediate family and close friends during this difficult time. Rest in Peace Russ, we have it from here,” the Speedway wrote.

Aside from racing, Russ was also very active in his community serving on Woodstock’s

Sesquicentennial Committee, the Board of Directors of the Central Cemetery Association, the Woodstock Library Board, was a lifelong member Benson-Flugel American Legion Post 111, and booked entertainment for the Woodstock Fair where he also contributed his voice as a race announcer. Possibly

his biggest contribution was his commitment to the Muddy Brook Fire Department where he served as Chief for 10 years, and a fireman for around 58 years. The department posted its own tribute to Dowd after the announcement of his passing.

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## Students and staff at Thompson Public Schools hospitalized

CAUSE UNDETERMINED, BUT SYMPTOMS MIRROR CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

BY JASON BLEAU  
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

THOMPSON — Several individuals from the Thompson Public Schools were hospitalized on Feb. 27 after reporting symptoms consistent with carbon monoxide poisoning, although school and emergency officials have yet to determine an exact cause of the illnesses.

At around 9:30 a.m. on Feb. 27, Community Fire Company and other departments and ambulances reported to 785 Riverside Dr., the address of Thompson Public Schools. According to Quiet Corner Alerts, a Web site dedicated to chronicling the efforts of first responders in the region, emergency crews evacuated the building and located patients in the Bradley School section of the facility. Twelve individuals, including both staff and students, were transported to a local hospital for evaluation but none of their conditions were noted to be life threatening. The patients were reported to be experiencing symptoms similar to carbon monoxide exposure.

Thompson Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Melinda Smith sent out a letter to parents that day acknowledging the situation including confirming the evacuation of the school buildings.

“This morning, Bradley staff members complained of health symptoms that caused them to speculate that there was an environmental issue in their classroom at Thompson Middle School,” Smith wrote. “The ambulance was immediately called, and all three schools were evacuated to a level 2 area. Twelve staff member and students were transported to the hospital for evaluation. Thanks to the response of our first responders, it was quickly determined that carbon monoxide was not detected in the Bradley classrooms. Students then returned to the school and classrooms.”

A follow-up letter later that day expanded on the situation confirming that the town’s Fire Marshall determined that an exhaust fan and ventilation unit had failed and both were being repaired, but did not confirm if that contributed to the health scares. The Fire Marshall provided continued examinations of the affected classroom after the event. On Feb. 28, the Thompson Fire Marshall, assisted by specialized equipment from the Muddy Brook Fire Department, conducted metering through the entire school complex testing for several gases but all tests came back within normal levels. The Fire Marshall recommended that carbon monoxide detectors be installed in each classroom in the area of concern as a precaution.

While that section of the building has suffered numerous furnace problems over the years, Superintendent Smith confirmed that the town’s building inspector found no issues with the boiler area of the school and that a carbon monoxide detector near the boiler also was not triggered. The Fire Marshalls Office also revealed that a mechanical room containing vehicles and equipment adjacent to the impacted classroom showed normal gas levels as well. A report from Smith on Feb. 28 stated that an unauthorized non-calibrated CO detector was monitoring the effected room, but both that device and a properly calibrated CO detector used by the Fire Marshal did not report elevated levels of carbon monoxide. The district scheduled examinations of fans and the ventilation system over that weekend as a precaution to ensure everything is working properly.

As of this writing school and emergency officials have not announced a specific cause of the health issues and no additional health scares were reported after students reentered the building for the remainder of the school day and the following school day.

Community Fire Company was assisted by the Quinebaug Volunteer Fire Department, Thompson Fire Engine Company, Putnam EMS, KB Ambulance, Webster, Dudley and Southbridge EMS.

## Survey to narrow down options for new mascot

BY JASON BLEAU  
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

KILLINGLY — It will be a bit longer before we know the new name of the Killingly High School athletic teams, but there are options out there that will soon be making the rounds to help finalize the mascot.

After several years of

controversy and debate, the Killingly Redmen and Redgals were officially retired for good in late 2024 leaving the high school sport teams without an official moniker. An ad hoc committee of the Board of Education have worked to bring town historians and community stakeholders to the table to determine

a new mascot. Several months into the new year and options have yet to officially be announced.

However, Superintendent Susan Nash revealed the process is getting closer to determining a name with plans to bring students, staff, and others from within the school community into the decision.

During a meeting of the Board of Education on Feb. 26, Nash confirmed the focus will be on deciding the name and not the logo.

“We reviewed the Historical Committee’s request for not putting out the imagery with the historical significance when

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## Spectrum to award \$1,000 to Muddy Brook Fire Department

WOODSTOCK — Spectrum announced a donation of \$1,000 to the Muddy Brook Fire Department through the company’s national

community philanthropic program, Spectrum Employee Community Grants.

This donation will support the purchase

of Personal Protective Equipment for the Muddy Brook volunteer firefighters, helping to ensure the safety of the Woodstock community.

“On behalf of the Muddy Brook Fire Department, I would like to extend our heartfelt

Turn To **MUDDY BROOK** page **A10**



Courtesy

Spectrum awarded the Muddy Brook Fire Department in Woodstock, a \$1,000 donation through the Spectrum Employee Community Grants program to purchase Personal Protective Equipment. Pictured, left to right: Deputy Chief Tom Gugliotti, Muddy Brook Fire Department; Steve Costen, Director of Field Engineering, Charter Communications-Spectrum; Tom Converse, Construction Manager, Charter Communications-Spectrum and Captain, Muddy Brook Fire Department; State Representative Pat Boyd; Life Member Scott Stevens; Chief Travis Blair, Muddy Brook Fire Department; Cadet Abi Stevens; Muddy Brook Fire Department President Amanda Stevens; and Pete Eng, Past Chief of the Muddy Brook Fire Department.

# Woodstock Academy welcomes Dr. Lawrence Filippelli as new Head of School



Dr. Larry Filippelli

WOODSTOCK — The Woodstock Academy Board of Trustees is proud to announce the unanimous appointment of Dr. Lawrence Filippelli as the next

Head of School beginning July 1.

Filippelli brings more than 22 years of educational leadership experience, having served in various teaching and administrative roles, most recently as the Superintendent of Lincoln Public Schools in Rhode Island since 2018. He also serves as adjunct faculty at Providence College in the Graduate Program in Educational Administration and in the Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership at Johnson & Wales University, and is a member of the Board of Trustees at LaSalle Academy.

Filippelli was named the 2023 Rhode Island Superintendent of the Year and is recognized for his commitment to academic excellence, student success, and school safety. His tenure in Lincoln saw a complete curriculum overhaul, increased enrollment, and significant infrastructure advancements, including the supervision of \$107 million in school construction projects. His work supporting multi-language learners and fostering diversity through programs such as the Minority Business Enterprise initiative highlights his dedication

to inclusive education. "I am incredibly excited to join The Woodstock Academy and make an impact on a strong and distinguished educational institution," said Filippelli. "The Academy's unique independent school model, its passionate faculty and staff, and vibrant student body make this an extraordinary opportunity that aligns with my skill set. My goal is to build on The Academy's foundation by increasing enrollment, expanding and enhancing student programs, and promoting excellence in all facets of The Academy." "Selecting a Head of

School is the most significant responsibility of the Board of Trustees, and we are thrilled to welcome Larry to WA," said Christine Swenson, President of the Board. Chosen from a highly qualified pool of candidates from a national search, Filippelli brings a wealth of experience, fresh perspectives, strategic insights, and a strong commitment to shaping the future of education. His leadership philosophy—rooted in collaboration, integrity, and accountability—aligns with The Woodstock Academy's mission to provide an exceptional,

well-rounded, and inclusive learning experience for all students to prepare them for the future. "This leadership transition marks an exciting new chapter for our school. We are deeply grateful for Christopher Sandford's exceptional leadership over the past 11 years that have guided tremendous growth and look forward to a bright future with Larry as the Head of School," said Swenson. Please join us in welcoming Larry Filippelli to The Woodstock Academy!

## Joe Blanchard named Thompson's Veteran of the Month

THOMPSON — Joe Blanchard, of Pasay Road in North Grosvenordale, has been chosen by the nominating committee to be honored as the March 2025 Thompson Veteran of the Month.

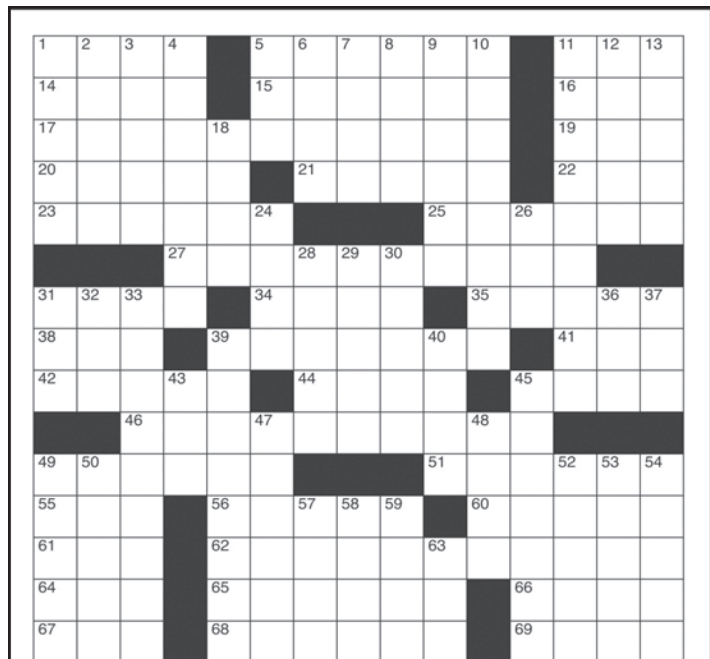
Blanchard served in the United States Air Force from 1966 to 1970, and in the Air Force Reserve. Mr. Blanchard was an Airman 2nd Class. He joined the Air Force in 1966, and was assigned to Lackland Air Force Base in Texas for

basic training. During his Air Force tenure, he was assigned to various bases around the Country due to the sensitive nature of his work. Among those stops Joe was stationed at Otis Air Force Base, Westover Air Force Base, Dover Air Force Base, and Rantoul Air Force Base, among many others. His primary and longest stint was at the Niagara Falls Missile Site in Up-State New York, where he was Air Police for

the Office Intelligence Corps Enhanced Security Division. There, Airman Blanchard had oversight of 48 Nike Missiles as part of our country's Air Defense and Air Strategic Command Program. As part of that mission, he was responsible for the guarding and safety of numerous bomb shelters as well as radiation waste material. After leaving the service, Blanchard received a degree in Engineering from the Norton Company in Worcester, Mass. For the next 35 years, he traveled the world as a Senior Service Engineer for Mattison Machine Works based in Rockford, Ill.

His work took him to 5 foreign countries including stops in Sweden, Brazil, India, Puerto Rico, Canada and Mexico City. Additionally, his work had him traveling to 40 different states in the U.S. He was also a Senior Member of the Manufacturing Engineers of America and earned a degree in Warehouse Management and Material Handling from Spartanburg Technical College in South Carolina. Blanchard is married to the former Tina Wilson, whom he met when living in Illinois. They have seven children, 12 grandchildren and five great grandchildren, and a very hectic life.

He has been awarded the National Defense Medal for his time in the Air Force. He also was awarded the Vietnam Service Medal, and an honorable discharge medal from the Air Force. He has also received numerous ribbons and awards for his extraordinary service to our Country. He has a beautiful and moving display of his awards and service-related memorabilia displayed in his office at home which he proudly showed me. Thank you for your service to our country from a very grateful community, Joseph Blanchard.



### CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Cut a little bit off
- 5. State with confidence
- 11. River in NE Scotland
- 14. Not narrow
- 15. Lacking social polish
- 16. Amount of time
- 17. Frame
- 19. Automobile
- 20. Toadstools
- 21. High school dances
- 22. Utilize
- 23. Challenged
- 25. One-sided
- 27. Showing extreme greed
- 31. Potted plants
- 34. Everyone has one
- 35. Lake in Botswana
- 38. E.T. rode in one
- 39. Juniors' parents
- 41. Small amount
- 42. Mother of Perseus
- 44. Ornamental box
- 45. Gov't investigators
- 46. Uncertain
- 49. A cotton fabric with a satiny finish
- 51. The vast grassy plains in S. America
- 55. Your consciousness of your own identity
- 56. Noted consumer advocate
- 60. Spanish sports club
- 61. Body part
- 62. Tractability
- 64. Woman (French)
- 65. Ready and willing to be taught
- 66. Muslim ruler title
- 67. Depressed
- 68. Gradually gave way
- 69. Clear-thinking

### CLUES DOWN

- 1. Brushed aside
- 2. Water sprite
- 3. Ones to look up to
- 4. Monetary units
- 5. A number everyone has
- 6. Marine invertebrate
- 7. One who takes you to court
- 8. Indicates outer
- 9. Parallelograms
- 10. Strains
- 11. Cross
- 12. A way to remove
- 13. Some pages are dog-\_\_
- 18. Ukraine city
- 24. A citizen of Denmark
- 26. Summer month (abbr.)
- 28. Hindu queens
- 29. Jewelry brand
- 30. Fictional rider of Rohan
- 31. Wet dirt
- 32. Russian city
- 33. Observed
- 36. Furious
- 37. Drivers' licenses
- 39. Musical composition
- 40. Auction
- 43. They \_\_
- 45. Women
- 47. Inspire with love
- 48. Japanese ankle sock
- 49. Appears
- 50. Old World lizard
- 52. The leading performer
- 53. Type of protein
- 54. Pennsylvania town
- 57. Art \_\_: around 1920
- 58. \_\_ Blyton, children's author
- 59. Abnormal breathing
- 63. A place to sleep

## Poet Laureate of Plymouth, Mass. to read at Vanilla Bean Café

POMFRET — Poets at Large begins year six which will include spoken word readings at The Vanilla Bean Café, 450 Deerfield Rd. in Pomfret, and at Roseland Park, 205 Roseland Park Rd. in Woodstock. Dates for the events will be March 29, April 26 and May 31 at The Vanilla Bean, and June 15 and Sept. 7 at Roseland Park. Poets at Large is a part of non-profit group Windham Arts and this year PAL is sponsored in party by Linemaster Switch, Charter Oak FCU and WHZ Financial Advisors. March 29, the series gets underway with the voices of

two Massachusetts poets, Carol Hobbs and Miriam O'Neal. Hobbs is an educator whose work has appeared in journals and anthologies throughout the United States and Canada. Her recent book New-found-land, available through Main Street Rag in North Carolina, received honorable mention for the Sheila Margaret Motton Book Prize with the NEPC, and a New England PEN Discovery Prize. Miriam O'Neal is the current Poet Laureate of Plymouth, Mass. Her work has appeared in North Dakota Quarterly and The Galway Review among many other magazines.

Her poetry collections include "We Start With What We're Given" (Kelsay Books, 2018), "The Body Dialogues" (Lily Poetry Review Books, 2020), and "The Half-Said Things" (Nixes Mate Books, 2022) and she hosts Poetry the Art of Words, the longest continuously running poetry reading series in Massachusetts south of Boston.

All Poets at Large events are ADA compliant. Roseland Park events are free and are held from 2-4 p.m. All Vanilla Bean events are held from 7-9 p.m. with an admission fee of \$15, which includes a raffle. Contact karen.warinsky@gmail.com to sign up for the open mic. Five-minute max as time allows.

## 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.

## VILLAGER ALMANAC AT CT AUDUBON

Bird sightings at the Connecticut Audubon Society Center at Pomfret and Windham Land Trust properties for the week of Feb. 24: Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Great-horned Owl, Barred Owl, Common Grackle, Red-winged Blackbird, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Mockingbird, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, and Red-tailed Hawk.

## Art Guild Northeast featured at Putnam Gallery

PUTNAM — An exciting art exhibit featuring the works of 21 local artists from Art Guild Northeast is currently on display at The Corridor Gallery in the Putnam Municipal Complex, 200 School St., Putnam. The show, entitled "Art Guild Inspirations," will be running until March 30.

Visitors will see a wonderful variety of artwork with subjects ranging from local scenes to nature to the human experience. Mediums include oils, watercolors, photography, pastels, and more. The gallery is filled with pieces of all sizes and most are available for purchase.

The Art Guild Northeast, founded in 1985, is dedicated to fostering the artistic growth of its members. It strives to further the artistic understanding and appreciation of art throughout Northeast Connecticut. Their involvement in and promotion of the arts inspires creativity and artistry in our communities every day. Established, emerging, returning, or supporters of visual artist in any medium are all invited to join them. Meetings are currently held at the Putnam Town Hall the second Thursday of the month from 6-8pm, with 5:30pm social time. Meetings are open to the public and new members are always welcome.

A Closing Reception, sponsored by the Putnam Arts Council, will be held on Thursday, March 13 from 5-7 p.m. with free refreshments and a chance to speak with the artists. The reception is free and open to the public. For hours and more information, please visit PutnamArtsCouncil.com.



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### PUZZLE SOLUTION



# Eastern advocates for increased state funding at legislative breakfast

WILLIMANTIC — Eastern Connecticut State University hosted a legislative breakfast on Feb. 20, advocating for increased state funding as lawmakers work to finalize Connecticut's upcoming two-year budget. The ongoing legislative session, which spans five months, will conclude on June 3, with the new budget taking effect on July 1, marking the start of the 2026 fiscal year.

Connecticut's public higher education institutions are preparing for a significant funding shortfall as federal pandemic relief from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) phases out-\$300 million in FY 2026 and \$278 million in FY 2027. This reduction will impact operating funds for Eastern, the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) system, the University of Connecticut, and UConn Health.

To bridge the funding gap, higher education leaders are seeking increased state appropriations to avoid tuition hikes or program cuts. State Representative Greg Haddad noted that the legislature is working to "correct" the governor's proposed budget by allocating additional funds for higher education.

"The constitution requires us to have an excellent post-secondary system," Haddad said. "We take that requirement seriously. Right now, my colleagues at in the general assembly are trying to decide the appropriate level of support."

Eastern President Karim Ismaili underscored the university's significant role in Connecticut's economy, noting that 92 percent of Eastern students hail from the state and 86% of alumni remain in Connecticut after graduation.

tion to build careers, raise families, and contribute to the local economy.

While Ismaili praised Eastern's scenic campus and strong academic programs, he emphasized one of the primary reasons students choose the university: "It's affordable."

Several Eastern students shared their experiences, illustrating the university's impact on their lives and futures. CSCU Chancellor Terrence Cheng highlighted their stories, stating, "They're the reason we do what we do. As a system, we're striving to be stronger and more efficient without placing the burden on our students."

Olivia Gardner '24, originally from Rhode Island, came to Eastern for its smaller campus experience. After earning her English degree last year, she enrolled in the university's secondary education master's program.

As a student leader with the Center for Community Engagement, she emphasized the university's close-knit atmosphere.

"Through volunteering, I learned that Eastern isn't just a school-it's a community. I couldn't be happier with my decision to attend. Eastern has become my home."

Senior psychology major Sadie Blackwell, a student-athlete, resident assistant, and student orientation counselor, echoed similar sentiments. "I've always been drawn to roles where I can make an impact, and Eastern has allowed me to do just that. The reason people stay and graduate is because of the community."

Blackwell, who aspires to be a mental health counselor, added, "Eastern has given me the tools, experiences, and connections to grow."

Senior history major

Emma McCormack, who transferred from CT State Community College Manchester, highlighted the mentorship she received from Professor Tom Balcerski, which helped her secure conference presentations and acceptance into American University's graduate program in international affairs and foreign policy.

"Eastern's liberal arts education isn't just about academic exploration-it's about preparing for a complex world," McCormack said.

Senior psychology major Miles Lovell, a lifelong Willimantic resident with several family members who attended Eastern, described how the university has shaped him. "Eastern has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember."

He's found many opportunities through his job with the Office of Equity and Diversity and says

the principles of the office permeate the university.

"It's not just a mission statement," he said. "Eastern has shaped who I am."

When asked how Eastern prepared them, students pointed to the university's academic flexibility, diverse extracurricular opportunities, on-campus jobs, and close faculty relationships. Some credited study abroad programs and community engagement with personal growth, while others cited theater and campus events as transformative experiences for personal growth.

Special guests of Eastern's legislative breakfast included Rep. Susan Johnson, Sen. Cathy Osten and Rep. Haddad, as well as Chancellor Cheng and Windham Town Manager Robert Zarnetske.

## Know Your Farmer Fair marks decade of strengthening local ties

WILLIMANTIC — The Know Your Farmer Fair returns for its 10th anniversary on Saturday, March 8 at the Windham Community Center, continuing its mission of connecting local farmers with the community.

Since its inception, the fair has become a fixture in the region, offering residents a direct link to those who cultivate their food. The event features an expanded farmers' market, activities for kids, and a variety of food vendors.

Though all these are a draw for attendees, the vital connections that community members create with farmers are at the heart of this event. Each farmer comes prepared to talk about their farm and their approach to farming, so fair goers can explore farm's Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs, understand why certain farmers choose different farming methods, and how to best connect with area farmers that are an integral part of our local food system.

Chelsea Cherrier, one of the lead orga-

nizers of this year's 10th Anniversary event, is excited that her organization can participate in this monumental celebration of food and the community.

"As the Food Access Manager of CLiCK, Inc. and a member of the Know Your Farmer Fair planning committee, I've seen firsthand the power of this event. For ten years, it's been pivotal in connecting our community with the farmers who sustain us, truly embodying CLiCK's mission to create a locally based, just, sustainable, and healthy food system. The Fair fosters vital relationships, strengthening our local food economy and ensuring access to fresh, healthy food for everyone," Cherrier said.

For farmers, the fair has been an invaluable platform to forge relationships with consumers.

Libby Tarleton, one of the founders of the Know Your Farmer Fair and farmer at Russo Roots in Canterbury, says, "The annual Know Your Farmer Fair is an important piece of our mar-

keting program here at Russo's Roots farm and after 10 years, it keeps getting better and better. We have the opportunity to interact with not only the 'foodies' of eastern Connecticut, but also those who are getting their first taste of what our farming community has to offer. This event is all about networking, education, inspiration and a whole lot of fun."

For the community, it's a beloved tradition.

Alice Rubin, a regular attendee of the event over the years, shares why she enjoys the experience, relating, "The Know Your Farmer Fair is one of my favorite events! I am always impressed with the variety and the number of local producers that we have in our community. We are so lucky to have them."

The free, family-friendly event will offer more special ways to celebrate the 10th year of neighbors connecting with their local agricultural community that will be revealed closer to the

date. Whether a long-time advocate of local farms or a newcomer, the Know Your Farmer Fair offers something for everyone.

For more information, visit <https://www.grownconnected.org/knowyourfarmerfair>, and for questions, reach out to them at their facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ctknowyourfarmerfair>.

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## \$180,000 in scholarships available to local students at Quinebaug Valley

PUTNAM — The Northeast Connecticut Education Foundation (NCEF) is proud to offer \$180,000 in scholarships for the 2025-2026 academic year. Scholarships are open to Northeast CT residents attending CT State Community College with Quinebaug Valley (Danielson & Willimantic) as their home campus. With over 115 individual awards ranging from \$300 to \$2,500, this is a great opportunity for current, incoming, and select graduating and transferring students to study at Quinebaug Valley.

"Scholarships are at the heart of the Northeast Connecticut Education Foundation," commented Joseph Adiletta, President of the NCEF. "On behalf of the entire board of directors, we are excited to continue to support students at Quinebaug Valley. NCEF scholarship funds can be used for direct educational expenses, including tuition, books, fees, technology, and/or other course requirements. This support is truly a hand-up for the students we serve."

To qualify for scholarships, students must be enrolled in two or more classes at Quinebaug Valley. Most, but not all, awards require a GPA of at least 3.0. Interested applicants should review the criteria for individual awards closely. To apply for scholarships, students must first complete the online application available at [neceducationfoundation.org](http://neceducationfoundation.org). Applicants must then submit an official transcript, personal statement, and two letters of recommendation. All supporting materials must be submitted together to the Student Success Center at the CT State Quinebaug Valley Danielson campus by noon on March 21. Applications will also be accepted at the

Quinebaug Valley Willimantic campus on Main Street.

All applications will be screened by an impartial committee from the NCEF board of directors.

Scholarship awards will be presented at the NCEF Scholarship Night on Wednesday, May 7 at 5 p.m. at Killingly Intermediate School in Dayville. Recipients will be notified in advance of the ceremony and are required to attend to receive their award.

The scholarship application as well as all information about the NCEF can be found at [neceducationfoundation.org](http://neceducationfoundation.org).

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

## Dinallo graduates from BSC

BISMARCK, N.D. — Chelsea Ann Dinallo, Pomfret Center, completed the coursework and graduated from Bismarck State College in Fall 2024 with an Associate in Applied Science in Electric Power Technology.

Fall 2024 graduates are eligible to walk in BSC's 85th commencement ceremony on Friday, May 16 at the Bismarck Event Center.

About Bismarck State College  
Bismarck State College (BSC) is North Dakota's Polytechnic Institution, offering high-quality, affordable education with more than 100 career pathways, including two-year Associate degrees, four-year Bachelor's degrees, and short-term program certificates. Dedicated to student success since 1939, BSC prepares students for high-demand careers through comprehensive advising, flexible in-person and online course options, industry-driven curriculum, and continuing education opportunities. Learn more at [www.bismarckstate.edu](http://www.bismarckstate.edu).

### TOWN OF POMFRET

#### PART-TIME ASSISTANT TOWN CLERK

The Town of Pomfret seeks to hire a pt (up to 25 hrs/wk) Assistant Town Clerk responsible to assist the Town Clerk in the administration and management of the municipal records of the Town, its minutes, agendas, licenses, and permits as required by CT General Statutes and to perform all duties for elections, primaries and referenda. Must assist the general public and work in cooperation with municipal officials. Must be able to work independently.

A minimum of a high school diploma required. Efficient knowledge of Microsoft Office including Excel and Word. One or two years of office or secretarial experience, or one year of office administration. Bookkeeping experience and previous CCMC certification or experience helpful but not necessary. CCMC certification would be required within 4 years of employment if not currently certified.

Salary commensurate with experience. Full job description available on the Town website: [www.pomfretct.gov](http://www.pomfretct.gov). Submit letter of interest, application and 3 letters of reference to: Selectman's office, 5 Haven Road, Pomfret Center, Ct 06259.

Application deadline March 24, 2025. EOE/AA

## Important upcoming dates in Danielson

DANIELSON — Residents of the Borough of Danielson are encouraged to mark these upcoming dates on their calendar.

March 19 — Regular monthly meeting, 7 p.m. (budget approval by Council)

March 31 — Borough Caucus, 6:30 p.m. (any Borough residents interested in running for office should plan to attend this meeting)

April 7 — Annual Budget Meeting, 7 p.m. (taxpayers vote on the Council's budget)

April 16 — Regular monthly meeting, 7 p.m.

April 22 — Quarterly Fire Commissioners meeting, 6:30 p.m.

May 5 — Borough elections, Killingly Public Library, 6 a.m.-8 p.m.

May 21 — Regular monthly meeting, 7 p.m.

June 18 — Regular monthly meeting, 7 p.m.

June 25 — Quarterly Fire Commissioners meeting, 6:30 p.m.

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**BRENDAN BERUBE**  
 EDITOR

# Neighbors helping neighbors — why sticking local matters more than ever

The world feels overwhelming right now. Between national headlines, global crises, and a constant stream of bad news, it's easy to feel powerless. But the truth is, the biggest impact we can make is right in our own backyard. When times are tough, neighbors helping neighbors is what keeps communities strong, and nothing embodies that better than mutual aid.

Mutual aid isn't charity. It's not about "helping the less fortunate" from a place of pity or obligation. It's about people looking out for one another as equals, sharing resources, skills, and support in a way that builds real relationships and resilience. It's knowing that today you might have something to offer, and tomorrow, you might be the one who needs a hand. It's the reminder that none of us are in this alone.

When we stick local, we see real change in ways that big systems and distant politicians never seem to deliver. A neighbor plows another neighbor's driveway without being asked. A small business donates food to families who need it. A community pulls together to keep the heat on for someone who's struggling. This isn't a feel-good fantasy; it's how people survive and thrive when they realize the best safety net is each other.

Relying on each other isn't weakness it's power. Mutual aid cuts through red tape, bureaucracy, and the "not my problem" mentality that can leave people falling through the cracks. It's fast, direct, and built on trust. While big institutions debate solutions, neighbors are already making them happen.

And the best part? It's contagious. When people see their community stepping up, they want to be part of it too. They realize that helping doesn't have to be complicated. It can be as simple as sharing a meal, giving someone a ride, or just checking in.

So, while the world feels like it's spinning out of control, the best thing we can do is turn toward one another. Forget waiting on the big guys to fix things. Stick local, help your neighbors, and build the kind of community where people know they can count on each other.

## 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.

# OPINION

Opinion and commentary from the Quiet Corner

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Heartbroken

To the Editor:  
 I am heartbroken about the state of our nation. Democrats are behaving like a bunch of spoiled brats who cannot get their way. The endless whining in the Woodstock Villager is enough to make one want to throw up. You have had your way for four years, and where has it gotten us? It has gotten us DEI, a national debt in excess of \$35 trillion and exploding higher, men playing in women's sports and using women's bathrooms, unrestricted illegal immigration, untold billions mostly wasted on green energy scams, a fentanyl epidemic, and immigrant gangs taking, raping, and selling drugs. These gangs certainly see America as a land of opportunity.

I see a disaster unfolding, as do most Americans. Americans are sick and tired of being told they are bad people, racists, bigots, Nazis, to name just a few. Americans are tired of seeing their tax follars wasted on all sorts of government boondoggles such as USAID, to name but one.

Democrat strategist James Carville has castigated his own party for its stupidity in advocating for such things as gender balancing and pet bereavement. Carville now says Kamala Harris was a seventh string candidate. Democrats like to endlessly spout about Trump being a convicted felon. Seems like in their mind, he should have been quite easy to beat. After all, the Democrats had the White House, almost the entire press, and the levers of government power to go after Trump, and boy, did they do so. Whatever happened to the rule of law? The American voter wanted change.

Well, Trump has been in office now for a few weeks. How is he doing? A recent CBS poll released Feb. 9 finds 53 percent of American voters approve of Trump's leadership, and over 70 percent are saying Trump is

doing what he said he would do. Poll respondents described Trump as tough, energetic, focused, and effective.

I wish my worries were over, but they are not. Inflation is eating away at the ability of all Americans to live their lives. The United States is like the ocean-going ship Titanic. You cannot stop it or turn it around on a dime, but if we do not right our economy, we will endure the Titanic's fate. Our accumulated deficits are on course to exceed \$50 trillion in just a few short years. The interest cost alone will soon be the largest item in the federal budget. If Democrats were in office and cared anything about doing something about it, their answer would likely be more regulations, higher taxes, price controls, etc., which would only make the situation worse.

Why? Because inflation is purely a monetary phenomenon. It is not caused by businesses raising prices or so-called price gouging at the grocery store or gas pump. These businesses are merely reacting to inflation. Instead, inflation is entirely caused by government spending more than it's receiving in taxes, and essentially choosing to print up dollars to cover the deficit. At the moment, we have no quick choice to do anything different other than collapse the entire government, which I do not think anyone would approve of. However, in the longer term, there is hope. DOGE (Department of Government Efficiency) has taken off the gloves, and is seeking to cut government expenditures and shrink the government's size. If they are allowed to succeed, then we can perhaps see inflation come under control.

It's nice to see grownups back in charge, and I pray they are successful.

God bless America,

WILLIAM B. HULL  
 POMFRET CENTER

### Time to get serious, Kamala Coderre

To the Editor:

When Mayor Barney left the Republican Party last year, I was hoping the Putnam Republicans would rationally and logically think of how red they really want this town to be and not challenge the mayor, which would mean he doesn't count against the per party limit on the Board of Selectmen and they could go for a 5-1 setup instead of a 4-2 setup, which would put one of the remaining Democrat seats in play and maybe bring some fight out of the DTC instead of coasting on minority representation rules. Putnam politics is a ball of yarn though. Neither party is great with social media, and it's really hard to tell just how partisan they really want to be with how they flip flop between trying to look bipartisan and trying to look like Red Sox vs. Yankees or Coke and Pepsi. You'll get a speech about working together one day, then you'll see things revert to actually having distinct parties later, such as the Republicans plastering the R-word everywhere instead of giving voters a reason to get excited about the actual individuals they're promoting.

I knew a long time ago that they were going to run a candidate for mayor though, and not because people on social media were calling Mayor Barney a RINO and screaming about how Putnam was going to become a sanctuary city. The Putnam RTC actually said so themselves, and so here we are with Dave Coderre aiming for a promotion from the Board Of Finance. Sound reasonable, and I'd like to see someone with a focus on numbers in charge in this town to keep some common sense going while the rest of us outside the Putnam municipal clique tighten the heck out of our belts to try to amount to something until inflation cools off. However, optics are another thing our parties struggle with, and little does Mr. Coderre know he's wandered straight into one of the biggest pitfalls that Kamala Harris dealt with last year.

The WINY story that announced his candidacy mentioned that he wanted to do something with that tech park we've had sitting around since the Falzarano era... and done what with, exactly? Most of the time when I hear about that part of town it's because

Rawson's blowing up more materials and announcing that they've scheduled another blast. Sometimes I hear about the YMCA, but mostly I chuckle because I'm like, "Oh those Rawson folks really know how to have a blast around here." (Thank you I'm here all week.)

The Republicans have been calling the shots in this town for nearly a decade and bragging about their "steady leadership and progress" along the way. If they were going to actually do something with the tech park they would have done so by now. I don't see how this is any different from Kamala Harris pitching her plan like she was running for office as an outsider when she was already involved as vice president of the Biden administration.

Let's see some WINY stories about how the Board of Finance is rabberousing some high-spirited plans to actually do something with that part of town - before Coderre's mayoral election. Otherwise, what I read from his announcement this week is just hot air. I only need hop on Indeed and snoop around job openings in Worcester to see that there's more STEM up the highway that we could attract down here if tech and AI firms are getting priced out of Worcester and Boston. We have fiber now, so remote workers or remote sites like tech park tenants can have access to synchronous internet. If we keep our fiscal house in order and stop looking like spendthrifts with our Putnam Peacock Projects maybe we can even go after the Massachusetts STEM scene on a cost-of-living basis if we keep our rents lower and target houses and vehicles for keeping their taxes from snowballing out of control. Cover the basics and let our people go to work and do the rest. I grew up with all the "Taxachusetts" jokes so I know Massachusetts has a bad habit of letting their head float into the clouds at the expense of the little guy.

Economic development should not be something the Putnam Republicans are talking about in future tense, especially when they've had the people and votes to make literally any progress on this tech park stuff for years.

JAY GERHART  
 PUTNAM

### Trump and Vance could learn from Zelensky

To the Editor:

The verbal assault on President Zelensky by Trump and Vance was a disgrace and an embarrassment for our nation. They acted like schoolyard bullies in the Oval Office, and seemed to think that being loud and obnoxious was a show of strength. What it actually showed (to the world) is how far U.S. leadership has been degraded.

Since Russia invaded his country, President Zelensky has proven himself to be a leader with great courage and control under pressure. When he's talking, Trump and Vance should just shut up, listen, and learn.

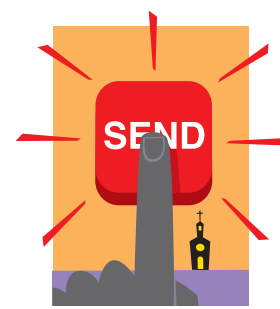
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## Home rules for children

Several years ago, I met a martial arts instructor; the late Grandmaster Jhoon Rhee of Washington, D.C. Over the decades, he taught hundreds of Senators, members of Congress, and several world champions. Even at age 70, he was the perfect physical specimen (doing one thousand sit-ups and pushups every day); but he decided not to get us out on the floor to train physically. Today's training skipped the physical portion, and instead, he dedicated his time to imparting invaluable life lessons, which he encapsulated in his fundamental principles known as "Home Rules For Children." These principles can serve as a valuable reference for people seeking guidance for your children's personal development and well-being at home.



TIPS FOR SUCCESS

MIKE BOGDANSKI

1. Children shall greet their parents with "Hi, Mom! Hi, Dad!" when they enter the home and tell their parents, "Goodbye," when they leave. Good manners are a gift to young people, teaching them politeness and etiquette. Please make sure to praise kids when they display the desired behavior until it becomes a habit.

2. Children will always be respectful of their parents, teachers, and elders. My personal definition of respect is "Treat people how you want to be treated". Some of us who are now older sure wish we still had our parents around to express our gratitude for the great upbringing they gave us. How you treat your parents will have a direct influence on how you treat people in future relationships. Respect teaches empathy and patience and allows you to benefit from your parents' wisdom (although at certain times you may not realize it).

3. Children will be kind to their brothers and sisters. It would be good to clarify this word into actions that even the youngest child can understand. Kindness is being friendly, generous, and considerate. Siblings can share a treat, give a compliment, cheer family members up, and even say sorry when they feel like they did something wrong.

4. Children will keep the household neat and clean. When our grandkids are over, we get to practice this skill with them. They can't take out new toys until the current toys are put away. I personally created a habit of not touching dirty dishes twice. Why put them in the sink for a visit when they can go directly into the dishwasher?

We all know the basic rule: If you take it out, it's your responsibility to put it away. Having things on a schedule helps (like getting our trash bins to the curb on time). Having a calendar of to-do's keeps everybody focused.

5. Children will keep their hair, body, and teeth clean daily. I think it's about routines and schedules. After doing a task consistently, kids develop habits. Having healthy habits will serve us all for a lifetime. It's definitely up to parents to get families set up as good habits instead of bad ones. What you do as a parent and role model has more impact than what you say. It's important to teach that specific cues equal certain actions. After waking up, you brush your teeth; after using the toilet, you wash your hands; when you cough, it's into your arm. I always liked teaching kids that these habits are self-defense against germs. To me, it's all self-defense.

6. Children will not inter-

Turn To TIPS page A10

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### The Cold War didn't end in 1991

To the Editor:

The Cold War, for all intents and purposes, is thought to have ended Christmas Day 1991, when the Soviet Union was officially dissolved into its 15 component nations. The conflict was one between Russia, who wanted to expand a Communist and authoritative regime, and America, who stood for a free market and more importantly personal freedom. It was US resolve, both economically and militarily, which held a USSR at bay. This resolve included the Truman Doctrine in 1947, which pledged aid to governments threatened by Communist subversion, and the Marshall Plan, which provided billions in economic assistance to eliminate political instability and raise a battered Europe from its ashes.

When the Soviets cut off all traffic to Berlin, the US responded with a massive airlift lasting 231 days until the blockade was lifted. It led to NATO. It led to the Eisenhower Doctrine which offered military and financial assistance to Middle Eastern countries threatened by communism. It led to the Cuban Missile Crisis when President Kennedy stood up to a nuclear Russia who wanted a foothold in the Western Hemisphere. It led Kennedy to stand in Berlin and proclaim his support for a free Germany. It led to an arms and space race as American ingenuity kept us one step ahead. And finally, it led President Reagan once more to Berlin to speak the famous words, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall." These were American Presidents at their finest. Brave men standing for American values. They were all veterans who understood that it took American sacrifice, not America first, to ensure world peace.

At the same time, the US expanded our influence by helping other economies blossom. This not only created friends and allies, but it also opened global markets to expand capitalism. The American people reaped rewards both in a rapid growth of our standard of living but also in enshrining freedom of speech. Aided by trade treaties, American business was able to create products that were the envy of the world boosting the number of American middle-class workers. To be sure, the Russian people suffered through a regime that suppressed dissent, shipped millions of its own people to horrible Gulags, and suppressed innovation. Russian markets were few and Russian made products were shoddy.

Little did we know that the war was really never over, as the former KGB agent, Vladimir Putin, rose to power with a vision of a resurgent USSR. Nor were we ready for the influence that he had in manipulating the American psyche to allow a Donald Trump to usurp power. This reality was laid bare last week as America sided with Russia and North Korea, to strip language condemning Russia for invading Ukraine. What's more, Trump also claimed that Ukraine started the war. Then he admonished Ukraine's President Zelensky for not coming to the peace table, but was

even more upset that he did not thank Trump for his effort. It appears that the President wants Ukraine to lay down its arms on the Trump's guarantee that he has Putin's word of honor that Russia will also stand down. He ignores or chooses to forget that Putin is a war criminal who has killed thousands of innocent Ukrainians bombing their homes, hospitals and churches. Russia has kidnapped thousands of Ukrainian children in order to re-educate them. He forgets that Russia violated its treaties with Ukraine including the 1997 "Big Treaty," the 1994 Budapest memorandum and the 2014 Minsk accord. He also spits in the face of all the Ukrainians who have died fighting a vicious invader.

Trump states he fears a WW3 however this was also the strategy of Britain's Neville Chamberlin who took Adolf Hitler's word that he would not expand into Europe. History shows that capitulating to a global despot does not work. Military might and forging a strategic alliance does. His strategy of isolation is a coward's move. He disrespects all the American lives lost in WWII, Korea, and Vietnam standing up against tyrants.

Trump's approach to government is that of a businessman. Money, money, money. But government is not about the bottom line. It is charged with supporting its citizens' pursuit of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It is there to protect us from foreign adversaries. Trump is doing the exact opposite. He is antagonizing our friends and supporting our enemies, and with his tariffs he is shrinking our global markets. All this will raise the cost of living and cost Americans jobs. At the same time, by cutting foreign aid, he leaves a vacuum for Russia and China to fill. \$10 million to an African nation for condoms, on the surface, may seem silly, but in preventing unwanted pregnancies and stopping the spread of HIV, we create a healthy and safe middle class who are willing to buy our products and if needed do things like allow our companies to build there as well as a military base or two.

Mr. Trump has set America down a dangerous path much to Putin's delight. A cocooned and poor America is just what the Russian wants. Putin could then expand further into Europe, using his nuclear card. America has also been blessed with friendly neighbors to the north and south. Trump appears to be hell bent to undo this.

The war between East and West, Good versus Evil, America versus Russia, which we thought over and won last century may have only been a momentary pause in battle. I fear we allowed Russia to regroup and pollute our social media. Americans seemed to have lost our ability to see the difference between a lie and reality even if it is apparent for all to hear and see. At worse Trump is a Russian agent beholden to Putin. At best, he has been groomed to take us down. Either way, we lose.

LEE WESLER  
WOODSTOCK

### How did the advice of Democrats help Zelensky's cause?

To the Editor:

So, now we've had Zelensky meeting with Trump and Vance at the White House. Before that meeting, Zelensky met with anti-Trump Democrats, including Murphy, Blumenthal and (Pokey) Warren, who advised him to reject the terms of the mineral deal that the President was offering. And how did that advice help Zelensky's cause? It was mentioned that Zelensky owns a \$35 million home in Florida, he has \$1.2 billion in overseas bank accounts, he owns 15 homes, three private planes, and has a monthly income of \$11 million. I can't say if that's totally factual, but those are eye-opening statistics for a man whose country has been war-ravaged for years now, and a question that comes to mind is, how did he get all this money?

Is there anybody out there that doesn't realize that Elon Musk was "appointed" to that position by President Trump? The disgruntled can parrot that "he wasn't elected" all they want to, but they're only embarrassing themselves by doing that. Yup, Musk is that evil rich billionaire that the squawkers and the Democrats now hate, and they'll hate him all the more when DOGE audits the many billions of taxpayer dollars that were sent to Ukraine. However, the Soros Management Fund was the top donor to Murphy's Victory Fund in the 2024 election cycle (giving him \$21,600), and evidently George and (son) Alex are those "good" billionaires in the eyes of hypocrites like Murphy and many other democrats.

(And what's been going on in the State of Connecticut?) A former Connecticut budget official and state representative (both democrats) are facing charges for canceling a state audit of a Medicaid provider who allegedly engaged in fraud. A Bridgeport City Councilman, who was arrested on election fraud charges, said that he was just "following the orders of the (State's) Democratic Party." And in basically admitting that he was being a loyal

plastic robot, he named top Connecticut Democrat officials like Ganim, Lamont, Blumenthal, Murphy and Himes as the ones who benefit. Additionally, five people were arrested and criminally charged in connection with the misuse of absentee ballots during the 2023 Bridgeport Democratic mayoral election cycle. The Yankee Institute reported that Connecticut spends \$1.3 billion on illegal immigrants per year. A Connecticut man who was found not guilty by reason of insanity for a horrific crime involving murder and cannibalism, has been approved for conditional release from a psychiatric hospital, and I've previously mentioned the convicted illegal pedophile who was released from a Connecticut prison because the best interest of his parole board was to help him avoid deportation. Again, the Democrats do love their criminals, and maybe that's because they're criminals as well? The House Republicans passed a spending bill that would see no tax on tips, overtime and on social security, but no Democrats voted for the bill, and obviously, Murphy and Blumenthal were among them.

A parody (a.k.a. fake) account pretending to be from Lara Trump asked if you support Homan arresting AOC for giving illegal aliens instructions on how to avoid deportations? But instead of taking the time to check where it came from, that dimwit Murphy fired off an expletive-added post accusing the "Trump regime" of suppressing free speech. And "Rapid Response 47" responded with a classic takedown saying: "You are a moron, Chris. It is obvious this page is not affiliated with President Trump, his family, or the administration. We do, however, support your right to make such a statement, no matter how imbecilic it makes you look."

ED DELUCA  
NORTH GROSVENORDALE

### Do you have a NAC for helping people?

To the Editor:

You may have heard about a new organization in the area called Neighbors Against Cancer, or NAC.

Do you hate cancer? We do, and want to help those diagnosed with this disease.

It began in August 2024 by Patty and Gail Erskine, who were soon joined by five friends. The seven founding members of Neighbors Against Cancer have a total of more than 150 years of experience fighting cancer.

Our goal is to assist individuals and families fighting cancer. Although many treatments are covered by insurance, incidentals are not. These incidentals take a toll on an individual unable to work because of cancer. It often takes a heavier toll on families, especially if the primary breadwinner is diagnosed or it is a one parent family. These incidentals are rent, electricity, food, heating, transportation, clothing, but not limited to these. Our intention is to assist individuals and families in dealing with the hardships of making ends meet when cancer strikes.

Initially, we are going to concentrate on those living in Windham County,

regardless of where they must go for their treatment. We hope to eventually expand our services to other areas of Connecticut. We are not yet a 501c non-profit organization, but the process has begun.

We are holding an Informational meeting for anyone who may consider joining us as a NAC member. This meeting will be held Monday, March 24 at 6 p.m. in the South Killingly Fire Station located on Route 6. We encourage anyone with a desire to make a difference in the fight against cancer, by helping their neighbors, to attend this meeting. We would like to meet you.

Attending this informational meeting does not obligate you to become a member. We want you to learn about our organization and our goals for the future.

Our motto is 'We have A NAC for Helping People,' and we are Neighbors Helping Neighbors.

Anyone wanting additional information prior to the March 24 meeting, can call Patty Erskine at 860-933-2935 or Gail Erskine at 860-933-2936.

PAUL DESAUTELS  
PUTNAM

## Additional Letters To The Editor, See Page A-8



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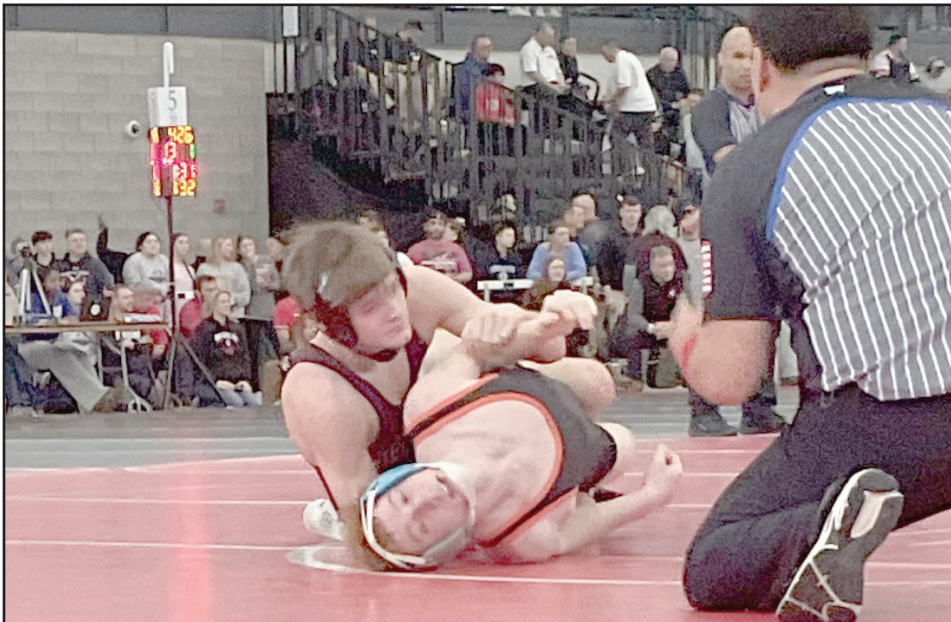
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Courtesy

Killingly took six wrestlers to the State Open and placed in the top ten, with 48.5 points. The only Class S school to do so. Brady Zadora placed third and has qualified to compete at the New England tournament next weekend. In the girls' division Josie Sanchez showed great heart and placed sixth while battling an injury all tournament. Bradey Jonasch and Aiden Mantia wrestled valiantly but fell just one match short of placing. Gavin Jonasch, Max Richardson and Exael Padilla all had a fine tournament to help secure a top ten finish. Lily Gadbois also competed in the girls' division. Next up: Brady Zadora will compete at the New England tournament in Providence next weekend.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Earth - A big ball of plastic! (Part 2)

To the Editor:

Plastic lasts forever. Yet only nine percent of plastic waste in America is recycled. Therefore, it would be logical to conclude “disposable” plastics should not exist, unless it is our deliberate intent to pollute our planet forever. Unlike natural materials that return to and replenish the Earth, plastic only contaminates it. Yet, we are filling the land, our drinking water, the oceans, and even the fish that live in them, with plastic. Microplastics now fall from the sky by the ton, everywhere on Earth.

Over the course of a year, humanity dumps the equivalent of 1,100,000 dump truck loads of plastic into the world’s oceans; two per minute, with never a pause. If lined up, those trucks would extend across the full width of the United States and back! As a result, our planet and our bloodstreams are quickly filling with plastic and with great consequences to our health and economy. A recent study published in the Journal of the Endocrine Society, estimates U.S. health care costs attributable to chemicals in plastics are on the order of \$250 billion per year, or 1.22 percent of U.S. gross domestic product. And, that figure is regarded as a gross underestimation and says nothing of the human suffering plastic related illness and disease have caused.

As a kid in elementary school in the 1970’s, I grew up drinking milk from thick glass bottles with a round cardboard cap and a paper straw. No doubt, I drank from the same bottle, washed and refilled, a hundred times. All of humanity functioned the same way since the beginnings of civilization 10,000 years ago. The idea of using something once and then discarding it is not only completely detached from nature, it would be unimaginable and abhorrent for all of humanity that existed prior to World War II. But clever corporate marketing campaigns beginning in the 1950s convinced us that “disposable” was modern and convenient. In 1970, CocaCola introduced the world to plastic soda bottles beginning a whole new form of planetary destruction.

Today, we live in a disposable economy which has never come to terms with its true cost. The purveyors of this system, the manufacturers of cheap plastic and disposable products, create new chemicals and materials that cannot be recycled and pollute our planet for a thousand years. They get rich and leave the pollution costs to us consumers (mostly to our children) in a twisted form of socialism that serves

only the rich. Each year the rate of production and sales of these pollutants increase with no effort to address the health risks or their environmental permanence. Unwary consumers paying two bucks for a 16 ounce bottle of coke also get an eternity of unwanted plastic waste. Without realizing it, we’ve walked into a trap we cannot escape.

The main reason we’re in this trap is because the longterm survival strategy of the fossil fuel industry is to convert itself into plastic manufacturers. With their enormous bank accounts, global footprint and supply of raw materials (petroleum) they are determined to triple global plastic production by 2025. The sheer volume of plastic products and new chemicals that go into them easily government regulators capacity to assess their toxicity or commit waste systems capacity to recycle. Thus, our planet, and we humans, become their dumping ground and guinea pigs.

Which brings me to the second part of the trap: we buy plastics without thinking about it. In doing so, we endorse the plastics industry strategy. We pay them to pollute and poison us every time we buy cheap plastic decorations and toys, bottled water, and laundry soap in heavy plastic gallon containers, instead of powder in a box. We pollute ourselves.

Donald Trump sold “Trump” branded plastic straws (\$15 for a 10-pack) during his 2020 election campaign, and on Feb. 10, he signed an order forcing government agencies to stop buying paper straws and return to plastic. The order also calls for a strategy to eliminate paper straws nationwide. Living in a world where market forces are given the green light and regulation of plastics the red, our only tool is our individual decision making. We unintentionally vote to support plastic pollution every time we buy bottled water, laundry soap or cheap plastic knickknacks from Walmart, Dollar Store or Temu.

Cast your vote against plastic whenever you can - don’t buy it. The trade-off can seem hard at times, but it’s nothing compared to plastics’ true cost. We should take inspiration from The Great Law of Iroquois: “In every deliberation, we must consider the impact on the next seven generations, even if it requires having skin as thick as the bark of a pine.” Can we stand up to Jeff Bezos’s Amazon, the fossil fuel / plastics industry and Donald Trump and protect our planet? I believe we can, but it will require some self-reflection, deliberate effort and thick skin.

KEN WOLSLEGEL  
WOODSTOCK

### Thoughts that keep me up at night...

To the Editor:

Why did Linsey Grayham advise Zelensky not to take the “bait” at the morning meeting with Senators before the meeting in the Oval Office last Friday? I heard him say this himself, on a radio interview. I can’t stop thinking about this advice to Zelensky, from a close advisor to the President. In my opinion, the Friday debacle was a staged ambush to reaffirm trump’s tough guy image, after the perceived weakness he demonstrated during his appearances with the French and British heads of State. Vance was inserted in the cast of characters at Friday’s meeting, and given the mission to stir trump up and get him to “act out” for the press. However, I think his contribution served the opposite purpose, because Trump went off script and disclosed the key and forgotten secret to his “rationale” for the madness.

Trump explained the why for his outrageous but excusable behavior, in his mind. He’s still grieving and playing the dungeons and dragons scenario of the first impeachment efforts, when Zelensky would not submit to his intended bribe of financial assistance from the US in exchange for a letter announcing a fake investigation of Hunter Biden! It was Putin who stood by Trump during the “Russia-Russia” investigation. They bonded and exposed their “bromance” for all to see. Since then, they swore alliance to each other and belief in that unholy alliance. The sickness of this deranged man is so deeply rooted in his soul, that he and his cult followers cannot see how he has sold out this country’s soul as well. I’m also curious about those minerals...what’s up with that?

While reassuring his co-conspirators of his agenda, Trump is fully aware of his incompetence to govern and has delegated governing to his financial surrogate, E. Musk. (Does Musk really believe that bringing his little boy to the Oval Office would create a nostalgia for JFK and John-John?) Trump hasn’t stopped at insulting our moral codes by elevating a father of 14 children with multiple wives. This President has identified some of the worst fools to occupy Cabinet positions in his administration as well. Lack of experience and credentials are pre-requisites because it makes them more subservient. It’s also easier to abdicate their managerial duties and responsibilities to the person who is eager to take the presidential mantle for profit, power, and control, without any basic comprehension of government functions. This entire scenario causes no discomfort in the nest of vultures because they can easily claim deniability for the chaos by pointing to Musk. It would be a comedy of errors or a Shakespearean tragedy, if it weren’t for the dam-

age to the country’s leadership role in the world, the interruption of support to sick and disadvantaged populations, and our own stability and well being as individuals or members of families and communities, which we have struggled to achieve since the end of trump’s first term.

Interestingly enough, the “haves” are content with the mayhem while watching how easily Rome can burn around them. Meanwhile, the “have nots” majority displays confusion, disorientation, and expertise at the blame game; pointing fingers at each other instead of recognizing the real source of a problem with an unchecked system that rewards insurrectionists and wealthy folks who don’t pay taxes to sustain the lifestyles of the rest of us. The Democrats didn’t create the trump presidency, neighbor. Ignorance, hatred, and fear, in the minds of the “have nots” was fertile soil for the seed to be planted by an entitled, spoiled, mentally and emotionally scarred little boy in a man’s body. He found the soil of hopelessness and disenfranchisement perfect for his purpose. Then he attracted others of his kind to foster collective blindness by making the Jones commune Kool-Aid the model for the Country. The perfect preacher who sells the snake oil to cure whatever ails you. Your dreams come true with a red baseball cap! All he wants in return is your approval...your vote! Put an “X” next to the preacher’s name, lay back, and he’ll take care of everything.

No, my friend, it’s not as simple as a lack of transparency in the Oval Office. If that were the case, George W. Bush would be a famous speaker on the biggest stages of the world! Cheney was the shadow president, while George kept asking us if we wanted to have a beer with him! Darth Vader ran the entire government while running a decades long war and raking in billions of oil profits.

We keep looking for an easy path for guarantees in the Constitution. It is advertised as the magic carpet that will create the so called promised land. Maybe we have arrived at the reality check moment! You’ve got to love it more than self, partner, children or house and pets. It’s not easy to nurture such a love with the commitment it asks of you. You’ve got to love it with a passion and a faith in its promise. Watch some of those Town Hall meetings going on across the Country lately, and you just might see a little spark of it starting to show up! Damn exciting if you ask me!

Sleepless...

LYDIA RIVERA-ABRAMS  
DAYVILLE

### Satire?

To the Editor:

When I read Tami Jo Wykes’ opinion letter (We won!) in the Feb. 28 Villager, I thought I was reading a brilliant take-down of Elon Musk and the activities of his so-called Department of Government Efficiency, worthy of John Stewart and “The Daily Show” on Comedy Central.

But then, no, I realized it’s not satire. It was serious. Musk has not only distracted many with his theatrical performances, but Ms. Wykes actually believes that a group of teens and 20-somethings who have no accounting or auditing background, or government experience as far as we can tell, have discovered billions of dollars of “disgusting waste and abuse” by “auditing” the Federal government! No matter that most of the claims proved to be illusory or false and were scrubbed from the DOGE Web page. Oops. A

charitable interpretation of the fiasco is that Musk’s kids are either incompetent or very bad at arithmetic.

Musk’s clown show doesn’t appear to be fooling our enemies or soon-to-be former allies around the world. But his freezes on government spending, indiscriminate mass layoffs and closure of entire agencies such as U.S.A.I.D. have jeopardized nuclear safety, stopped vital medical research, and stopped the delivery of life-saving food and vaccines to millions.

The resulting loss of life and goodwill around the world is hardly something to revel in. Future administrations may never be able to rebuild the international relationships damaged by the Trump Administration’s colossally stupid actions.

BILLY G. TAYLOR  
KILLINGLY

# Tax planning strategies high earners should consider

FINANCIAL  
FOCUS

BY  
JONATHAN  
MATHEWS

High-earning professionals, executives, and business owners face unique challenges in managing their tax obligations while working to preserve and grow their wealth. At WHZ Strategic Wealth Advisors, we understand that individually-tailored tax planning is a crucial component of a comprehensive financial plan.

Through our Plan Well. Invest Well. Live Well.™ strategic financial planning process, we help our clients navigate these complex tax considerations to optimize their financial outcomes.

Let’s explore some of the key tax deductions and strategies that can help reduce your tax burden as a high earner, and support your long-term financial goals.

Reduce taxable income by maximizing retirement account contributions

One of the most powerful tax-reduction strategies available to high earners is maximizing contributions to retirement accounts. For 2025, you can contribute:

- Up to \$23,500 to your 401(k), 403(b), or 457 plan
- An additional \$7,500 if you’re age 50 or older
- Special catch-up contributions of \$11,250 for those aged 60-63

- Up to \$7,000 to a traditional IRA (\$8,000 if age 50 or older)

Remember that traditional retirement account contributions reduce your taxable income dollar-for-dollar. For business owners, consider establishing a SEP IRA or Solo 401(k) which can allow for even higher contribution limits.

Strategic charitable giving

Charitable contributions remain one of the most impactful tax deductions available. Consider these approaches:

- Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) from IRAs if you’re over 70 and a half
- Donor-Advised Funds to bunch multiple years of charitable giving
- Gifting appreciated securities to avoid capital gains taxes

- Creating charitable trusts for larger planned giving strategies
- For 2025, you can contribute up to \$105,000 through QCDs, offering significant tax savings while supporting causes you care about.

Leveraging real estate deductions

Property ownership provides several tax advantages:

- Mortgage interest deductions up to \$750,000 of qualified residence debt
- Property tax deductions (subject to SALT limitations)

- Depreciation deductions for investment properties
- Home office deductions for qualifying business use
- Health Savings Accounts (HSAs): Triple tax advantage

- If you have a qualifying high-deductible health plan, HSAs offer unique benefits:

- Tax-deductible contributions
- Tax-free growth
- Tax-free withdrawals for qualified medical expenses

- For 2025, families can contribute up to \$8,300 (\$9,300 if age 55 or older), providing both immediate tax savings and long-term healthcare funding.

- Business owner tax strategies

Business owners have additional opportunities including:

- Section 179 expensing for equipment purchases
- Home office deductions
- Business vehicle expenses
- Professional development and education costs
- Employee benefit programs
- Investment tax strategies

- Consider these investment-related tax strategies:

- Tax-loss harvesting to offset gains
- Municipal bonds for tax-free income
- Qualified Opportunity Zones for capital gains deferral

- Structured sale strategies for business exits

- Beyond taxes: Reap the value of high net worth financial planning

- While these deductions and strategies can significantly reduce your tax burden, it’s essential to implement them as part of a comprehensive financial plan that’s tailored for your specific situation as a high net worth individual.

Through our Plan Well. Invest Well. Live Well.™ process, we help ensure your tax strategy aligns with your broader financial goals. This comprehensive approach and our long-term client relationships are what helps us to achieve our goal of providing you with “Absolute Confidence. Unwavering Partnership. For Life.”

Ready to optimize your tax strategy for 2025 and create a strategic, long-term financial strategy to build and maintain your wealth? Schedule a complimentary discovery session on our website at whzwealth.com or call us at (860) 928-2341. Our experienced team will work with you to create a personalized plan that maximizes available tax advantages while supporting your long-term financial success.

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**DOWD**

*continued from page A1*

“The Muddy Brook Fire Department is deeply saddened to hear of the passing of former Chief, life member, and lifelong Woodstock resident Russell Dowd. Russ joined



Russ Dowd became known as “The Voice of Thompson Speedway” during his decades-long career with the local track. Photo Courtesy of Thompson Speedway.

Muddy Brook in 1966. In his nearly 58 years of service, Russ served in virtually every position within our department and was a mentor to many, many people. He was a recipient of the Steven B Lincoln Award and the Woodstock Firefighter of the Year Award. As Chief,

he was part of the team responsible for the acquisition of numerous new fire apparatus including the current Rescue 475 and Service 275. Russ was also one of the organizers, spiritual adviser and charter signatories of The Woodstock Fire Protection Association, Inc. - There are many fond memories of Russ. Even after the end of his active service, he would frequently stop by when he saw people at the station, often with his dog in tow,” wrote the department.

Members of the department, along with countless fans and supporters, turned out for a funeral to bid farewell to a true Quiet Corner icon on Feb. 22. Donations in Dowd’s memory are being directed to St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital and the Muddy Brook Fire Department.

**MASCOT**

*continued from page A1*

we do put out a package for voting or surveying what the favorite idea is and the reason why the Historical Committee came to that decision and wanted the ad hoc committee to hear that was that we felt people may make a decision solely on just image and not the historical significance,” said Nash. “The process the Historical Committee

feels very strongly about is that process of going through the history of Killingly and the importance and the reasons why they chose the finalists was the strength they have in terms of representing our proud history here.”

Nash did not specify what names will be put forth for consideration, only that the package would be presented to stakeholders from throughout the district and that those individ-

uals would be asked to rank their top four choices from the provided list. Nash confirmed that group will include families, high school students and staff, coaches, and middle school students and staff.

Once the results of the survey are compiled the ad hoc committee will work to determine a recommendation that will go before the Board of Education for further consideration.

**TIPS**

*continued from page A4*

rupt adult conversations. I always taught kids to wait near the adult they wanted to speak with, make good eye contact, and then, when it was time to talk to adults, say, “Excuse me, Mom/Dad.” Respect for parents must be a priority in every household. If it’s not taught to children when they are young, you certainly know how they will treat parents when they are teens.

7. Children shall fix the recipe for straight A & B’s

daily!

I always like teaching the concept of “inspect what you expect.” Teaching kids that getting consistently good grades and constantly pushing for excellence is essential. Passing on the five P’s—perfect planning prevents poor performance sets kids up to on how important it is to dissect tasks. After completing a task, I suggest doing an after-action evaluation to assess performance and then update the plan.

8. When you come home from school, open the refrigerator and pick

a healthy snack, no exceptions.

This will become a habit that will serve them well over their lifetime.

At the end of his seminar, the Grandmaster asked the assembled group a question that reverberates in my head daily: “What is the purpose of life?”

The Grandmaster’s answer was so powerful, yet so simple. “To be happy!” Here’s to a happy and productive life!

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

# OBITUARIES

## In Loving Memory of Robert (Bob) Sears July 2, 1950 – February 20, 2025



It is with deep sorrow that we announce the unexpected passing of Robert “Bob” Sears, 74, of Brooklyn, Connecticut, who passed away at his home on Thursday, February 20, 2025.

Born on July 2, 1950, Bob’s life was defined by his love for his family, strong work ethic, and a wealth of stories that touched everyone he met.

Bob grew up on a dairy farm. It was the lessons learned during those early years—about hard work, perseverance, and community—that truly defined the man he became. Throughout his career, Bob worked at Putnam Water Works, the Town of Windham Water Department, and was the proud owner of Falcon Paving. Bob found it hard to step back from his work, a testament to his commitment and pride.

Above all, Bob’s greatest love was his family. He lived for his wife, children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews. Bob was immensely proud of their accomplishments and was always eager to lend a hand or offer advice. His pride in his family was evident to everyone who knew him.

A lover of stories, Bob could always be counted on to captivate others with a

tale. He had a deep love for the outdoors and cherished spending time in his pool with family. In his younger years, he enjoyed hunting, but more recently, he could often be found fishing on his boat or cutting wood at his son Scott’s house.

Bob is survived by his beloved wife of 57 years, Cynthia “Cindy” Sears; his children, Lori (Scott) Larkin of Killingly, Scott (Wendy) Sears of Scotland, and Robin (Chris) Bibeault of Eastford; and eight grandchildren: Kyleigh (Andrew) Strine, Zachary (Abigail) Larkin, Cole (Makayla) Larkin, Skyler, Abigail, and Amelia Sears, and Brett and Cam Bibeault. He also leaves two great-grandchildren, Blake and Adelynn Larkin, his siblings Mae (Al) Lyons, Marilyn Veilleux, and Randy (Arlene) Sears, and several cousins, nieces, and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Robert and Forest Sears; in-laws, Theresa and Edward Long; brother-in-law, Bruce Veilleux; daughter-in-law, Belinda Sears; and sister-in-law, Patricia Keeler.

Bob’s passing leaves a great void, but his memory will live on in the love he gave and the stories he shared.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Sunday, March 16, 2025, at the Scotland Community Hall, 47 Brook Road, Scotland, CT, from 2 to 5 pm.

## Andrew (Andy) deTreville, 93



Andrew (Andy) deTreville, 93, of Concord, New Hampshire, passed away peacefully on January 6th, 2025, at Havenwood Heritage Heights Retirement Community.

Andy was born on January 9th, 1931, in New York City and raised in Englewood, New Jersey. During his time at the Englewood School for Boys, he was elected class president and served as captain of the football team. It was also there that he met his high school sweetheart, Polly Fincke. After attending Yale University, he and Polly wed in 1953. They shared over 60 years of marriage before Polly’s passing in 2014.

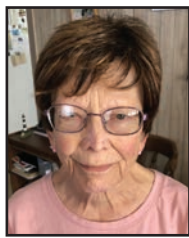
After college Andy served as an officer aboard the USS Sarasota in the U.S. Navy before embarking on a successful career at the American Sugar Corporation (Domino Sugar). He was also dedicated to his faith, participating in choirs at several churches. He

also enjoyed gardening.

After retiring, Andy and Polly moved to Lake Champlain in Vermont from Woodstock Connecticut. In Vermont, Andy served as an assistant judge for Grand Isle County. His dedication to the role earned him a retirement age extension from Governor Howard Dean. In 2011, the couple relocated to New Hampshire, where Andy remained active at Havenwood, organizing social events and engaging with the community. He was an avid New England Patriots fan and spent summers visiting Vermont.

Andy is survived by his children, Elisabeth Sauer and Peter deTreville, as well as five grandchildren and one great-grandchild. A celebration of life will be held in August 2025 at The Lady Chapel in Grand Isle, Vermont, followed by interment at the Grand Isle Cemetery.

## Wendy L. Pieper, 69



Wendy (McDonald) Pieper, 69, of North Grosvenor Dale, passed away Friday, February 28, 2025 at Day Kimball Hospital. Wendy was the loving wife of Kenneth Pieper for nearly 50 years. Born in

Worcester, MA, she was the daughter of the late Howard and Leona (Leonard) McDonald. For many years Wendy dedicated her life to helping others, serving as an EMT and volunteering with the Fire Police for the Community Fire Company in North Grosvenor Dale. She retired from Christopher Heights

of Webster where she worked as a CNA for 24 years. Wendy also enjoyed being involved with the Tri-State Baptist Church.

In addition to her husband Kenneth, Wendy is survived by her sister-in-law, Jean Pieper and husband Gary Cammisa of Shelton, CT. She also leaves behind several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her late siblings Dennis McDonald and Shauna McDonald.

Services are private and have been entrusted to Gilman Funeral Home. Memorial donations may be made to Community Fire Company, Tri-State Baptist Church or St. Jude Children’s Hospital. For memorial guestbook visit [www.GilmanAndValade.com](http://www.GilmanAndValade.com)

## Vintage and antique posters and advertising signs



Lager Beer of Texas porcelain lighted motion sign brought \$150,000 in 2023. A circa 1929 Porcelain Musgo Gasoline Service Station Sign depicting a Native American went for \$350,000 in 2022.

You can also find advertising on items other than conventional signs. A stoneware figural pig marked “J.O. Sanders Dealer in Wines, Liquors & Cigars Elberton GA 1883” sold for \$8,500 last year. “Cigar Store Indians” were placed in front of tobacco shops and are said to symbolize Native Americans introducing tobacco to the colonists. A Samuel Robb (American, 1851-1928) Cigar Store Indian maiden figure brought \$37,500 in 2022. A hand-painted canvas Louis Vuitton advertising panel with images of Louis Vuitton trunks went for \$4,750 last year. A late 19th century “Ice Cream & Fancy Cake” tin trade sign picturing a scoop of ice cream in a dish reached \$50,000 in 2016.

There are some recognizable characters you might immediately associate with certain brands, and items featuring those characters are always in demand.

An early paper mache Michelin Man figure sold for over \$12,000 in 2023. A 1906 cast iron peanut roaster with Mr. Peanut sitting atop the roaster brought \$132,000 last year. More recent character advertising pieces can also bring strong results. A Styrofoam Pillsbury Doughboy figure that was

approximately 4 ½ feet tall and said to be one of fifty produced for company executives brought \$1,500 in 2021. A 7 ½ foot Bob’s Big Boy statue in his red and white overalls, holding up a hamburger went for \$4,300 earlier this year. A plastic Tony the Tiger Kellogg’s Frosted Flakes cookie jar sold for over \$7,000 online last year. I’m sure the seller thought that price was more than good...grrreat!

We are still cataloging for the large one consigning Civil War memorabilia auction, Beacon Hill estate auction, and a comic book, sports memorabilia, and collectibles auction that will be taking place over the spring and summer. We are always accepting quality consignments for future auctions. Please visit our website <https://centralmassauctions.com> for links to upcoming events.

Contact us to consign items or for auction information at: Wayne Tuiskula Auctioneer/ Appraiser Central Mass Auctions for Antique, Collectibles Auctions and Appraisal Services [info@centralmassauctions.com](mailto:info@centralmassauctions.com) or (508-612-6111).

**MUDDY BROOK**  
*continued from page A1*

gratitude to Spectrum for their generous contribution through the Spectrum Employee Community Grant,” said Travis Blair, Fire Chief of Muddy Brook Fire Department. “This grant will significantly enhance our ability to protect our community by providing essential PPE for our dedicated volunteers. We are incredibly thankful for Spectrum’s support and commitment to our safety and well-being.”

“As a representative of the Woodstock community, I am deeply appre-

ciative of Spectrum’s generous donation to the Muddy Brook Fire Department,” said State Rep. Pat Boyd. “This contribution through the Spectrum Employee Community Grant program is a testament to the company’s dedication to the safety and well-being of our residents. The support for our volunteer firefighters in acquiring essential Personal Protective Equipment is invaluable and will greatly enhance their ability to protect and serve our community. Thank you, Spectrum, for your unwavering commitment to making a positive

impact in our town.”

“Through Spectrum Employee Community Grants, we’re proud to provide support to vital community organizations with which our local employees are already volunteering their time and talent,” said Rahman Khan, Group Vice President of Community Impact for Charter Communications. “Together, we’re building stronger communities where our customers and employees live and work across America.”

Spectrum Employee Community Grants has provided funding to more than 573 local nonprofits in 35 states throughout the company’s service area since its inception in July 2019.

Recipients deliver critical social services, helping underserved residents meet basic needs, including food, shelter, clothing, job training and neighborhood safety. Each awardee is nominated by one of the company’s more than 101,000 U.S. employees who has volunteered with the organization for at least one year.

## Local residents make Dean’s List at Wentworth Institute of Technology

BOSTON, Mass. — The following local students have made the dean’s list at Wentworth Institute of Technology for the Fall 2024 semester:

Josh Lackner of Brooklyn  
Jake Souksanti of Dayville  
Justin Larson of Eastford  
Wentworth Institute of Technology  
Founded in 1904, Wentworth Institute of Technology provides a comprehensive, interdisciplinary, project-based education in architecture and design, computing and data science, engi-

neering, management, and sciences and humanities that integrates classroom, laboratory, studio, cooperative and experiential learning to develop career-ready, skilled professionals, and engaged citizens. The University of Opportunity, Wentworth aims to be a student-centered institution that offers high-quality undergraduate, graduate, and life-long learning programs, and embraces a culture of innovation and education. Hands-on. Future-Ready. Education that’s worth it. Wentworth.

# OBITUARIES

## John Wallace Burns Jr., 80



John Wallace Burns Jr., 80, of Danielson, CT, passed away peacefully surrounded by family on February 5, 2025, at HCA Florida Osceola Hospital. Born on October 29, 1944, in Putnam, CT, John was the beloved son of John Wallace Burns Sr. and Ruth Potvin. He was a proud graduate of Plainfield High School's Class of 1962 before earning an Associate Degree in Business from Mitchell College and a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Connecticut. He also honorably served in the National Guard of Connecticut. On September 17, 1966 married the love of his life, Rita (Lebeau) Burns.

John finished out his career at Windsor Federal Bank, where he served as Vice President of Loans until his retirement in 2001. Never one to slow down, he continued working part-time in collections for Saveway Petroleum as it fit with his tee times.

His early years were spent on his family's dairy farm, Wauregan Dairy, where he developed a strong work ethic and a love for storytelling. He often reminisced about long summer days bailing hay and cooling off with an entire case of Coca-Cola—the real kind, from glass bottles.

Above all else, John was a devoted family man. He was a loving husband, father, and "Pepere" who traveled near and far to support his children and grandchildren in all their endeavors. Whether it was driving hours to watch his daughter cheer, taking road trips with his sons to the 2004 Red Sox World Series and the Baseball Hall of fame, or proudly sitting in the stands for his grandchildren's games, John's presence was a constant source of encouragement and love. When he wasn't cheering on his family, he was an avid supporter of UConn basketball, the Boston Red Sox, and Killingly High School athletics. John spent many Friday nights under the lights. John's down time was reading the newspaper, taking walks with his dog Lilly and having many laughs with Ritzie.

John also had a passion for giving back to his community. He served two terms on the Killingly Board of Education, including four years as Chairman, chaired the Saint James Bazaar for several years, served on the Saint James Church Finance Board,

and was President of the Killingly/Brooklyn Midget Football League for eight years. His dedication to youth sports, his faith, and education left a lasting impact on countless lives. His efforts were recognized with the prestigious Paul Harris Fellow award from the Rotary Club, a testament to his selfless service. It is easy to say, he left his community better than he found it.

Beyond his love for sports and community service, John enjoyed gardening, golfing—especially with his children and grandchildren—and traveling the world with his beloved wife, Rita. Together, they explored destinations near and far, from New Zealand and Australia to Alaska, Hawaii, Canada, and Greece. Despite their many adventures in the states, their favorite places remained North Conway, New Hampshire, and Ogunquit, Maine.

John is survived by his loving wife of 58 years, Rita Lebeau Burns; his children, John S. Burns of Brooklyn, CT, Heidi Burns Berard and her husband Dennis of Millville, MA, and Travis Burns and his wife Julie of Mebane, NC; six grandchildren, Ryan Berard and his wife Amanda of Douglas, MA, Riley Burns and his wife Jasmine of Pinehurst, NC, Elisabeth Berard and her fiancé Ally of Putnam CT, Mackenzie and Emily Burns of Mebane, NC and Michael Burns of Brooklyn, CT. He is also survived by many cherished cousins, nieces and nephews.

John's legacy of love, dedication, and community spirit will forever be carried in the hearts of those who knew him. His life was a testament to kindness, perseverance, and the importance of family.

Calling hours will be held on Friday, March 14, 2025, from 5-7 PM in Tillinghast Funeral Home, 433 Main Street, Danielson CT.

A Memorial Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Saturday, March 15, 2025, 10:00am at St. James Church, Danielson. There will be no burial. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in his memory to Shriners Hospital donate.lovetotherscue.org or St. Jude Research Hospital stjude.org/donate. tillinghastfh.com

## Mary Roberta Gazzola, 89



Mary Roberta Gazzola, 89, of Alexander's Lake, Dayville, CT, passed away peacefully January 28, 2025 at Matulatis Nursing Home, Putnam, CT. She was the wife of Paul M. Gazzola who

predeceased her on November 14, 2000. They were married at St. Joseph Church in Dayville, CT on April 25, 1959. Mary was born at home on Maple Street in Dayville, CT, the youngest of five children to John Dennett and Sarah (Reddy) Dennett.

She attended Killingly public Schools and then became a secretary working at Pryms textile mills in Dayville, CT. She met her husband from New York City during his summer trips to the Alexander Lake area and after marrying in 1959, moved with him to Bronx NY, where their first son was born. In 1961 the family relocated back to Lake Road Dayville, CT and also had a family property on nearby Alexanders Lake, where she lived out and enjoyed her remaining years after her husband's passing.

She was a Communicant of St. Joseph

Church in Dayville, CT until it closed in 2017 and then became a Communicant of Our Lady of La Sallette Church in Brooklyn, CT. She was a member of the Alexander's Lake Yacht Club and Interfaith Stitches at the Congregational Church in Danielson, CT.

She is survived by her three sons; Dr. Gregory M. Gazzola and wife Geraldine of East Putnam, CT and their two sons, her grandsons James G. Gazzola of Bangor, ME and David M. Gazzola of Marlboro, MA; her son Paul J. Gazzola and wife Elaine of Dayville, CT; her son John E. Gazzola of Dayville, CT. In addition to her sons and grandsons she had many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her parents and her brothers Robert, Edward and John Dennett and sister Charlotte Carter.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made to Hospice of Northeast Connecticut, DKH foundation, P.O. Box 632 Putnam, CT 06260.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held on Wednesday, February 5, 2025 at 11:00 AM at Our Lady of La Sallette Church, 25 Providence Road, Brooklyn, CT. Burial followed at St. Joseph Cemetery Dayville, CT. Share a memory at www.gagnonandcostellofh.com

## Yvette P. Breault 1920 - 2025



Dayville – Yvette P. Breault, 104, of Ware Rd., died Friday morning, February 21, 2025, at Westview Healthcare.

She was the loving and devoted wife of the late David Breault. Born in Sherbrooke, Canada she was the daughter of the late Hector Paris and the late Regina Bissonnette.

Yvette was a homemaker who loved taking care of her two sons and later in life her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She had many interests which included cooking gourmet meals for family and friends, knitting, playing the organ, reading, bowling and golfing with her lady friends. She was a mem-

ber of the Quinntisset Country Club for many years. She was an excellent golfer and had the pleasure of shooting several holes-in-one as well as shooting her age at 86!

Yvette is survived by two sons; Richard Breault of Wickford RI, Roger and his wife Patty Breault of Dayville CT; five grandchildren; six beautiful greatgrandchildren and several nieces. She was the sister of the late Beale Ross, Mary Goudreau, Loretta Brown, Lucille Vandale and Marcel Dumas.

A celebration of life was held at Moon Glow Farm in Pomfret CT on March 2nd. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the Gilman Funeral Home and Crematory, 104 Church St. Putnam, CT. 06260. For memorial guestbook visit www.GilmanAndValade.com.

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

*Gilman & Valade* 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Funeral Homes and Crematory  
"Living Up to a Tradition Started 100 Years Ago"  
~ Bob Fournier

1919 Alexander & Senora Gilman, Eva & Leonard Gilman, Lawrence & Arlene Bellrose, Robert & Adrienne Fournier 2019

"A century of dedication, compassion and guidance."

Gilman Funeral Home and Crematory  
104 Church Street, Putnam, CT 06260 • 860-928-7723 • [GilmanAndValade.com](http://GilmanAndValade.com)

## LEGALS

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF Henry G Davis, AKA Henry George Davis (25-00069)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated February 26, 2025, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Brenda Duquette, Chief Clerk  
The fiduciary is:  
Henry G Davis, II, 1436 North Road, Dayville, CT 06241  
Carrie-Ann Davis, 47 Charlotte Drive, Plainfield, CT 06374  
c/o FRANK GERARD HERZOG, BORNER SMITH ALEMAN HERZOG & CERRONE, LLC, 155 PROVIDENCE STREET, PO BOX 166, PUTNAM, CT 06260  
March 7, 2025

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF Wanda E Poplawski (25-00056)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated February 26, 2025, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Elyssa A. Foley, , Clerk  
The fiduciary is:  
Rose Tieman,  
194 West Walk,  
West Haven, CT 06516  
March 7, 2025

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF Priscilla A Provencher, AKA Priscilla Aurore Provencher, AKA Marie Aurore (24-00491)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated February 25, 2025, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Elyssa A. Foley, , Clerk  
The fiduciary is:  
Kenneth L Provencher  
c/o OWEN P EAGAN, EAGAN & DONOHUE, LLC,  
24 ARAPAHOE ROAD,  
WEST HARTFORD, CT 06107  
March 7, 2025

### TOWN OF KILLINGLY METERED USE LEGAL NOTICE

Payments will be received in the Revenue Office, 172 Main Street Killingly CT 06239, as follows: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 8-4:30pm, Tuesday 8-5:30pm, and Friday 8-11:30am. By mail, online, or in our drop box.

The second installment of metered use is due March 1, 2025. If payment is not received on or before April 1, 2025 the installment becomes delinquent and subject to interest at the rate of 18% per annum, 1.5% per month, or any fraction of a month, from the due date. A minimum of \$2.00 interest will be charged for each delinquent tax bill and installment. Please visit our website for full details and online payments

[www.killingly.org](http://www.killingly.org).  
April Lamothe, CCMC  
Revenue Collector  
Town of Killingly  
February 28, 2025  
March 7, 2025  
March 14, 2025

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF Lorraine Phaneuf, AKA Lorraine Theresa Phaneuf (25-00065)

The Hon. Gabrielle Labonte, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Northeast Probate Court, by decree dated, February 26, 2025, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Elyssa A. Foley, Clerk  
The fiduciary is:  
Michael T Phaneuf & Anne L Falvey  
c/o EDWIN C HIGGINS, BACHAND,  
LONGO & HIGGINS,  
168 MAIN STREET, P.O. BOX 528,  
PUTNAM, CT 06260  
March 7, 2025

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF Mark C Dieterle (25-00010)

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

Brenda Duquette, Chief Clerk  
The fiduciary is:  
Suzanne M Huyghue  
c/o ALYSON R ALEMAN, BORNER  
SMITH ALEMAN HERZOG &  
CERRONE, LLC, 155 PROVIDENCE  
STREET, PO BOX 166, PUTNAM, CT  
06260  
March 7, 2025

Please take notice that Quinebaug Associates LLC of 270 Park Ave, Suite 447 New York, NY 10169, filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) an Application for New License for a Minor Water Power Project – Existing Dam (License Application) for the Quinebaug-Five Mile Hydroelectric Project, FERC No. 5062. The License Application provides details of the Licensee's proposal to seek a new license from FERC for the continued operation of the existing Quinebaug-Five Mile Hydroelectric Project located on the Quinebaug River and Five Mile River, in the towns of Killingly and Brooklyn. The License Application was filed on or before February 28, 2025 and is available online at FERC's eLibrary at <https://elibrary.ferc.gov/eLibrary/search> under docket number P-5062. Additionally, a hard copy of the application may be reviewed at the Killingly Public Library, located at 25 Wescott Road, Killingly, CT 06239. Questions regarding this notice or the license application can be directed to Jessica Antonez, Regulatory & Compliance Specialist, Relevate Power LLC at [ja@relevatepower.com](mailto:ja@relevatepower.com).  
March 7, 2025



Courtesy

Pictured, left to right: Vice Chairman John B. Lenky, Robert Werge, Sr., Randolph Blackmer, John Rice and Chairman Joe Parodi Brown.

## Longtime Thompson Zoning Commission members honored for service

THOMPSON — The Town of Thompson Planning and Zoning Commission, at their monthly meeting held on Feb. 25 at the Thompson Town Hall in the Merrill Seneby Community Room, honored longtime elected Zoning Commission members for their extended service to the community.

Chairman Joseph Parodi Brown and Vice Chairman John B. Lenky presented awards to three members. Current member Randolph Blackmer has given 50 years of service to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Past commission members John Rice served 28 years, and Robert Werge, Sr. served 15 years.

Lenky, when presenting the awards, thanked them for their valuable service as town elected officers to the Commission. Total combined years of the three members' service to the community is 93 years. As Brown and Lenky stated, "That is remarkable service from the three members serving their community."

## EASTCONN educator named 2025 CAACE Leader of the Year



Kristin Hempel

Kristin's work inspires students, leaders, policy-makers, and community members alike. We are very proud and grateful for Kristin's leadership to support adult education."

As Director of Adult & Community Programs at EASTCONN, Hempel leads three comprehensive programs serving northeastern Connecticut. Adult Education programs provides free educational programs for residents 17 and older, including high school completion pathways, English Language Learning (ELL), citizenship preparation, life skills development, and college transition support. Through Workplace Education, she oversees industry-recognized certificate programs and customized workplace training in English language, high school equivalency, and essential skills.

The Employment and Training programs manage two American Job Centers and implement Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs, providing free career services and training for adult job-seekers while also offering specialized youth employment programs for those 14 and older.

Locally, Hempel champions workforce development through initiatives supporting disconnected youth, addressing transportation barriers, and connecting young students to manufacturing career pathways. At the national level, she serves on the Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE) board and chairs its Students As Leaders Task Force.

"I am deeply honored to receive this recognition from CAACE, but the real success stories belong to our adult learners who show incredible determination every day," said Hempel. "This award reflects the dedication of our entire EASTCONN team and our partners who work tirelessly to create meaningful educational opportunities. Adult education transforms lives, strengthens families, and builds stronger communities — and I'm grateful to be part of this vital mission."

"Kristin Hempel exemplifies EASTCONN's commitment to transforming lives through education," said Eric S. Protulis, Executive Director of EASTCONN. "Her innovative leadership in adult education has created lasting positive change for countless learners in our community, and this well-deserved recognition reflects both her exceptional contributions and our mission of educational excellence."

WILLIMANTIC — The Connecticut Association for Adult & Continuing Education (CAACE) has named Kristin Hempel as its 2025 Leader of the Year, recognizing her exceptional contributions to adult education in Connecticut.

The prestigious award honors educators who demonstrate outstanding dedication to adult learners and excellence in innovative programming.

The award was presented at the 44th Annual CAACE Conference Professional Awards Luncheon on Thursday, March 13 at the Mystic Marriott Hotel in Groton.

"The awards committee of CAACE unanimously selected Kristin Hempel as this year's Leader of the Year," said Michelle Bonora, CAACE Awards Committee Chair. "Kristin's exceptional contributions span the local, state, and national levels. Through innovative programming and creative partnerships,

## Five join Putnam High School's Wall of Honor

PUTNAM — The Putnam High School Wall of Honor Committee has released the names of five individuals who will make up the Class of 2025.

The award honors PHS graduates or those who have provided service to the school through leadership in their chosen profession, high standards of citizenship and service to their community. Selection to the Wall of Honor also serves as a reminder to current students that a Putnam High School education can serve as a springboard to successful careers in one's chosen field. The induction ceremony to honor these individuals will be held in the fall.

This is the eighth class of inductees and includes Stephen Faucher, class of 1981; Ross Franklin, class of 1983; Cynthia Morse, class of 1979; Douglas Porter, class of 1972; and James Greenhalgh for dedicated service to PHS.

Faucher spent 28 years with the Connecticut Department of Corrections, rising to the position of Captain before being appointed statewide CERT Commander. Upon retirement, one of his community roles was to become heavily involved with the Putnam Lions Club where he has served as president numerous times.

Franklin is a renowned Photojournalist whose works have been published across the globe. From his start with the Washington Times in 1987, his advancement to the Associated Press, and as a member of the White House Press Corps, he has received numerous photographic awards including; a first prize award in the White House News Photographers Association presented by President Clinton in the Oval Office and as a Pulitzer Prize runner-up in 2003.

Morse spent thirty-seven years as a teacher and coach of both boys and girls sports at Killingly High School, but made the biggest difference when she established the Unified Sports Program at KHS to benefit those students with intellectual disabilities in athletic competition. For her efforts she was named Connecticut Field Hockey Coach of the year in 2008 and the CIAC Special Olympics United Sports Coach of the Year Award in 2021.

Porter, managing partner of Woodstock Building Associates has quietly achieved multiple business and community awards over his 45-year career and has had a huge impact on Northeastern Connecticut through his community involvement. The former Woodstock selectman is currently a member of the Northeast Chamber of Commerce and serving his second term as president of Putnam Rotary Club.

Greenhalgh becomes the second inductee to the Wall of Honor for service to the school. From the mid-1940's to the 1970's, he was the Physical Education teacher and head coach of the football, basketball and baseball at PHS before becoming guidance counselor to complete his service to the school. The athletic complex at Murphy Park bears his name and a scholarship is presented annually.

To date, 35 individuals have been enshrined on the "Wall," which is located in a corridor adjacent to the gymnasium. All nominations remain on file for at least five years following submission.

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Courtesy

Five-time Martial Arts Hall of Fame inductee, 7th Dan Master Daryl Laperle announces promotion of Jaycee Adams from Apprentice Black Belt to 1st Dan Black Belt. For more information regarding classes, please call 860-779-0699 or visit their Web site at dan-jelsonmartialarts.com.



Courtesy

On March 2, Nikki's Dog House in Putnam held a Dining for a Cause event to benefit Relay for Life of Northeastern CT. Nikki's Dog House was able to donate more than \$400 to the American Cancer Society and help the Relay for Life of NE CT Team. Pictured are Larry and Erica Groh and David Johnson of Nikki's Dog House handing off the donation to Shane Donahue from Relay for Life of Northeastern CT. Erica herself is an 18 year cancer survivor. Dave sadly lost his wife Cindy to cancer in 2017, so this event was very meaningful to the entire Nikki's team. They can't thank the community enough for the great turnout.

## Dining for a Cause to benefit Paws Cat Shelter

PUTNAM — Black Dog Bar and Grille, 146 Park Rd., Putnam is hosting a Dining for a Cause fundraiser event to help Paws Cat Shelter on Wednesday, March 12 from 3-9 p.m. Fifteen percent of food and beverage sales will be donated when you present a coupon for either dine in or take out.

Coupons are available at Petco in Dayville, Paws Cat Shelter, 74 School St., Putnam, on Saturday March 8 from noon-3 p.m. or request by email at pawscatshelter@gmail.com. Coupons are free and must be obtained in advance. No coupons will be available at the event.

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

## Quiet Corner Garden Club announces scholarship program

REGION — The 2025 Quiet Corner Garden Club's annual scholarships are awarded to local high school seniors or current college students pursuing a major in an agriculture/ horticulture-related field of study such as: Agronomy, Botany, City Planning, Conservation, Environmental Studies, Floriculture, Forestry, Horticulture, Land Management, Landscape Design, Plant Pathology, Aquaponics, Natural Resources and/or related subject. Applications are available at area high school and college guidance offices or at the Quiet Corner Garden Club's website: QuietCornerGardenClub.com. The application deadline is April 10, 2025. Scholarships will be awarded based on a combination of academic achievement, leadership qualities, community service, letter of recommendation and student essay. Applicants must reside within the Quiet Corner Garden Club's service area of northeastern Connecticut and south central Massachusetts. More than one scholarship may be awarded.

Proceeds from our Annual Plant Sale, always the Saturday before Mother's Day, are used to fund these scholarships. For more scholarship information or questions, please email QCgardenclub@gmail.com. And for more information about the Quiet Corner Garden Club and its activities, see our website QuietCornerGardenClub.com or find us on Facebook.

## Killingly hoop girls fall to North Haven

KILLINGLY — Killingly Girls Basketball (9-13) was led in a loss against North Haven (14-7) behind 17 points, seven rebounds and three assists from Amaya Spadola, while Ariahna Headen added 12 points, 10 rebounds and four assists!

Final Score: North Haven 54, Killingly 46.

Lila Beaudreault added five points and six rebounds, while Ella Adams added six points and three assists.