



Special, Inside

The Lakeville Journal

lakevillejournal.com

34 PAGES IN 3 SECTIONS VOLUME 129 NUMBER 20

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2025 \$3.00

Covering The News In Connecticut's Northwest Corner And Its Environs Since 1897

Norfolk begins construction on new firehouse

By Jennifer Almquist

NORFOLK — Residents gathered under bright Saturday sunshine on Dec. 6 to celebrate a milestone more than a decade in the making: the groundbreaking for the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department's new firehouse.

U.S. Congresswoman Jahana Hayes (D-5) and State Rep. Maria Horn (D-64) joined NVFD leadership, town officials, members of the building committee and Norfolk Hub, and 46 volunteer firefighters for the groundbreaking ceremony.

With shovels in hand, participants dug into the soil beside the current Shepard Road firehouse, which will be demolished once the new facility is complete. The project is slated for completion on Dec. 21, 2026.

The town unanimously approved the new building at a special meeting on May 22, 2025, voting to replace the aging 50-year-old station considered no longer adequate for modern apparatus or safety standards. The NVFD has served Norfolk as an all-volunteer

See FIREHOUSE, Page A12



PHOTO BY JENNIFER ALMQUIST
Brian Hutchins, chief of Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department, addresses attendees of the groundbreaking ceremony Dec. 6 for NVFD's future firehouse.



PHOTO BY JOHN COSTON

'Tis the season

Holiday cheer spread throughout the Northwest Corner last week as the community embraced the yuletide spirit. Santa Claus made appearances in several towns, including a visit to the Cub Scout's breakfast in North Canaan Sunday, Dec. 7, where he heard from Brianna King, 4, seen above. His arrival coincided with parades of lights, holiday fairs, tree lightings, toy drives and other joyful gatherings. See more on Pages A8-9.

Residents urge coexistence as bear conflicts rise

By Christian Murray

SHARON — About 40 people filled the Sharon Audubon Center on Wednesday, Dec. 3, to discuss black bears — and most attendees made clear that they welcome the animals' presence. Even as they traded practical advice on how to keep bears out of garages, porches and trash cans, residents repeatedly emphasized that they want the bears to stay and that the real problem lies with people, not wildlife.

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) convened the meeting as the first in a series of regional Bear Management Listening Sessions, held at a time when Connecticut is increasingly divided over whether the state should authorize a limited bear hunt. Anticipating the potential for heated exchanges, DEEP opened the evening with strict ground rules designed to prevent confrontations: speakers were limited to three minutes, directed to address only the panel of DEEP officials, and warned that interruptions or personal attacks would not be tolerated.

"We really want to hear from you," said Justin Davis, DEEP's bureau chief for natural resources, at the meeting. He said that DEEP is preparing a bear management report in early 2026 that evaluates the challenges the state is facing and the strategies going forward dealing with them. He said the report will include feedback from the public generated at the listening sessions. He urged attendees, however, not to turn the meeting into a discussion about whether there should be a hunt or not.



PHOTO BY JAMES H. CLARK

A mother bear and her cubs move through a backyard last summer in northwest Connecticut, where residents told DEEP that bear litters are now appearing more frequently.

Davis called the return of black bears to Connecticut a "conservation success story," but one that now comes with challenges. "They're large animals, they're powerful and they can become comfortable being around people--and they're opportunistic, and they love to eat."

DEEP shared data showing that black bears have been reported in nearly every Connecticut town and that conflicts involving trash, bird feeders, livestock and home entries have increased sharply in recent years. The state's bear population

See BEARS, Page A12

Bumpy handoff in North Canaan after razor-thin election

By Christian Murray

NORTH CANAAN — The transition from outgoing First Selectman Brian Ohler to newly elected First Selectman Jesse Bunce has been far from seamless, with a series of communication lapses, technology snags and operational delays emerging in the weeks after an unusually close election.

The Nov. 5 race for first selectman went to a recount, with Bunce winning 572 votes to Ohler's 570. When the final results were announced, Ohler publicly wished his successor well. "Congratulations," he said. "Wish you all the best. When you succeed, the Town of North Canaan succeeds."

Ohler, who will remain on the Board of Selectmen, later wrote,

"The future of North Canaan is bright... Now is not the time to wish failure or misstep upon any elected official."

Despite those well-wishes, the handoff has been anything but smooth.

Facebook fiasco

The highest-profile hiccup has involved the Town of North Canaan's Facebook page. Bunce said he never received administrative access to it, despite what should have been a quick and routine handoff.

In an email obtained through a Freedom of Information request, Bunce's staff member Christian Allyn offered to help Ohler complete the transition in person at Town Hall.

"Jesse said you were having trouble handing over the Facebook page," Allyn wrote to Ohler on Nov.

See TRANSITION, Page A12



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Online This Week

Carolers gather in Sharon

More than 100 attendees of Sharon’s tree lighting ceremony Saturday, Dec. 6, joined together in song. Watch the video on social media @lakevillejournal

POLICE BLOTTER: TROOP B

The following information was provided by the Connecticut State Police at Troop B. All suspects are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Snowy head-on with plow
Driving on Route 7 in North Canaan in the snow on the afternoon of Dec. 2, Harman Barzallo Bustamante, 50, of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, lost control of his Jeep Compass and slid into southbound lane, colliding head-on with an oncoming plow attached to a Ford F350 Super Duty driven by Patrick Redmond, 37, of North Canaan. There were no injuries in the incident, though the Compass was damaged and towed. Barzallo Bustamante was issued a written warning for traveling too fast for conditions.

Broadside crash on Rt. 41
On Dec. 5, Samantha Whaples, 21, of Falls Village, attempted to make a left turn into the XtraMart gas station off Route 41 in Sharon but turned prematurely as a vehicle was oncoming. Galen De Haan, 68, of Dover Plains, New York, was traveling the opposite direction on Route 41 and was unable to stop in time and collided with the passenger side of the Honda HR-V Whaples drove, disabling it. Both drivers reported no injuries in the incident. The vehicle De Haan drove, a Cadillac XT5, sustained minor damage but was able to be driven from the scene. Whaples was issued an infraction for failure to yield while turning left for the incident.

Driveway fender bender
On Dec. 5, Christopher Burt, 31, of Hartford was backing a delivery Ford Transit T-350 out of a private driveway near Lime Rock Station Road in Falls Village when he struck a Lexus RX 300 belonging to Casey Wolf, 31, of North Canaan, that was parked in the driveway. He did not leave contact information or notify authorities of the incident, but was located shortly afterwards and issued an infraction for unsafe backing.

The Lakeville Journal will publish the outcome of police charges. Send mail to P.O. Box 1688, Lakeville, CT 06039, Attn: Police Blotter, or email editor@lakevillejournal.com

Sandy Hook gun violence vigil to be held Dec. 14

SALISBURY — The community is invited to a candlelight vigil Sunday, Dec. 14, to remember victims of gun violence and those killed in the 2012 Sandy Hook school shooting.

The gathering will take place at the White Hart Inn lawn from 5 to 6 p.m.

Attendees are asked to bring their own candles.

Angels, shepherds needed for Christmas Pageant Dec. 20

CORNWALL — The annual Community Christmas Pageant will be held at Cornwall’s United Church of Christ on Saturday, Dec. 20, at 7:30 p.m.

Children, teens and young adults interested in being an angel should contact Katie Freygang at 860-488-0204 or Chris Gyorsok at clgyorsok@gmail.com. Shepherds are also needed.

Snow date Dec. 21. Rehearsal will take place on Friday, Dec. 19, at 5:30 p.m.



PHOTO BY ALEC LINDEN

Swapping skis

Salisbury Winter Sports Association’s annual Ski Swap brought winter sports enthusiasts from across the region to the Lakeville Hose Company engine house on Saturday, Dec. 6 for great deals on skis, skates, boots, gloves and beyond. Some items were donated to SWSA, and the remainder consigned by individuals. Proceeds benefit youth ski programs. SWSA’s premiere event, Jumpfest, will return to Satre Hill Feb. 6 through Feb. 8.

State awards \$2M to expand affordable housing in Sharon

SHARON — The Sharon Housing Trust announced Dec. 4 that the Connecticut Department of Housing closed on a \$2 million grant for the improvement and expansion of affordable rental housing in town.

About half of the funding will reimburse costs associated with renovating the Trust’s three properties at 91, 93 and 95 North Main St., which together contain six occupied affordable units, most of them two-bedroom apartments. Planned upgrades include new roofs, siding and windows, along with a series of interior and exterior refurbishments.

The remaining funds will be spent on converting 99 North Main St. — the unused former town community center — into four new affordable rental units, with two bedrooms each. The Trust has leased the community center from the Town of Sharon for 99 years at \$1 per year.

Grant money for the project will become available once the Trust presents the State with completed architect’s construction drawings for the building conversion and takes other construction-ready steps.

The Trust’s budget for the entire North Main Street project is more than \$2 million, and the Trust continues to seek additional funds from local foundations, private individuals and businesses. The Trust is a registered charity, and donations to the Trust are tax-deductible.

Richard Baumann, president of the Sharon Housing Trust, expressed gratitude to the Connecticut Department of Housing as well as local supporters, issuing a statement on Dec. 8.

“With their help, we plan to create a welcoming, 10-unit affordable housing campus on Sharon’s North Main Street, providing reasonable housing to those who need it and helping all Sharon residents take pride in what their community can accomplish.”

Affordable rental plan secures final approval

By Alec Linden

SHARON — The Historic District Commission approved the Sharon Housing Trust’s application to renovate the non-operational Community Center at 99 North Main Street into four units of affordable housing at its Nov. 24 meeting.

Having received an approval from the Planning and Zoning Commission earlier in the month, the HDC’s action marks the final town commission decision for the project, which will convert the interior of the building, originally a Masonic temple,

to two-bedroom apartments. The HDC matched P&Z’s conditions on its approval, asking for a formal demarcation of a unified waste bin site that the new units will share with the six adjacent affordable units already in use at 91, 93, and 95 North Main Street.

Salisbury November real estate sales

By Christine Bates

SALISBURY — With the Thanksgiving holiday shortening the month, Salisbury logged just seven property transfers in November, among them two more Lime Rock Park garages and two luxury homes exceeding \$2.5 million.

The median price of a single family residence turned upward again to \$925,000 from \$875,000 in October, while inventory levels have grown throughout the year.

In the beginning of December, there were 29 single family residences for sale, with only five listed under November’s median of \$925,000.

Transactions

17 Lawson Road — 3 bedroom/2.5 bath home on 5.6 acres sold by Sofia and Jacques P Chappuis to Stacy B and Scott B Gordon for \$2,800,000 the highest sale recorded in November.

91 Main St. — 5 bedroom/3.5 bath home on 3 acres sold by David J. Shillingford and Catriona L. Pike to Kathryn Ilana Frucher and Jennifer Ada Naylor for \$2,755,000.

56 Undermountain Road — 3 bedroom/1 bath cape on 3 acres sold by Robert A. Smith Jr. to Caleb M. White for \$190,000.

Garage Unit 12 at 60 White Hollow Road — sold by LRP Garages LLC to John Deveraux for \$250,000.

Garage Unit at 60 White Hollow Road — sold by LRP



PHOTO BY CHRISTINE BATES

Built in 1950, 7 Grove St. is a 1,612-square-foot home with 3 bedrooms, two baths and solar panels. In 2010 it sold for \$365,000 and in November 2025 for \$649,000.

Garages LLC to Gregory G. Galdi for \$250,000.

87 Canaan Road Unit 3H — 3 bedroom/2.5 bath town house condo sold by Maureen L. Tesoro to Ross Francis for \$731,000.

7 Grove St. — 3 bedroom/2 bath home on 0.18

acres sold by Angela Engle to Danielle Francoline for \$649,000.

* Town of Salisbury real estate transfers recorded between Nov. 1 and Nov. 30, 2025, provided by the Salisbury Town Clerk. Transfers

without consideration are not included. Market information from Connecticut MLS and infosparks. Compiled by Christine Bates, Real Estate Salesperson with William Pitt Sotheby’s International Realty, Licensed in Connecticut and New York.

Salisbury Housing Committee elects officers

By Alec Linden

SALISBURY — The Salisbury Housing Committee elected four officers during its annual meeting on Dec. 3.

Peter Halle was elect-

ed as the president, Abeth Slotnick as vice president, Claire Held as secretary and Joseph Woodard as treasurer.

Members of the Committee reflected on its appreciation for Jim Dresser, a

treasured colleague, friend and member of the Committee who passed away this year.

A note of appreciation was also offered to Tammy Broderick, the Committee’s property manager.

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Our Towns



PHOTOS BY SIMON MARKOW

SOAR presents ‘Newsies Jr.’
Students from Salisbury Central School performed Disney’s “Newsies Jr.” at Housatonic Valley Regional High School on Friday, Dec. 5, and Saturday, Dec. 6. In all, 40 students took part in the production. The play tells the story of a group of newsboys on strike in 1899 protesting for a raise and better working conditions. Directed by Darcy Boynton and Stephanie Hahn, the cast and crew worked on the show for approximately three months. All proceeds benefited SOAR, an enrichment program that provides Salisbury Central School students with hands-on learning opportunities.



Silver Lake announces closure; future unclear

By Alec Linden
SHARON — Silver Lake Camp and Retreat Center, a long-running summer camp affiliated with the United Church of Christ that has operated for 68 years, will be “winding down” programming after a final summer in 2026.
The Southern New England Conference of the UCC, the branch of the denomination that has overseen the camp since the Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island conferences joined in 2020, announced on its website last month that the decision was due to financial strain.
A June 2025 report by consulting firm Kaleidoscope Inc. states that the camp has run sizable deficits in the past three years: \$272,676 in 2022; \$129,482 in 2023; and \$355,018 in 2024.
The Southern New England Conference’s statement points to declining enrollment alongside rising costs as a cause for the challenges. “In recent times, as church attendance has declined, so has the number of families sending their children to overnight Christian camps,” it reads. “Ten years ago, there were 950 summer campers; in 2024, there were 250. Simultaneously, costs – in particular insurance for such a sprawling, waterfront site – have skyrocketed.”
Keeping the camp open for one more summer will be costly, the announcement said, but it will allow for what Southern New England Conference Board Chair Persephone Hall called a “tender transition.”
The Kaleidoscope report did not recommend an all-out closure, but rather that the camp pivot towards conferences and retreats and operate at a deficit in the interim to try and close the financial gaps.

Cornwall selectmen prioritize housing, healthcare in new term

By Riley Klein
CORNWALL — Housing and healthcare topped the list of 15 goals the Board of Selectmen set for the next two years, reflecting the board’s view that both areas warrant continued attention.
First Selectman Gordon Ridgway, Selectman Rocco Botto and Selectman John Brown outlined their priorities during the board’s regular meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 2.
On housing, the board discussed supporting organizations working to create affordable options in town, and Botto said the town should also pursue additional land acquisitions for future housing.
With healthcare, Ridgway underscored the importance of mental health services, social services and the town’s Food & Fuel Fund. The selectmen also noted shifts in the regional healthcare landscape, including the opening of the Community Health & Wellness Center in North Canaan and Northwell Health’s new ownership of Sharon Hospital.
Other goals included continuing to work on the West Cornwall wastewater plant, improving the Transfer Station, renovating town buildings, enhancing cell service, working on the Plan of Conservation and Development, supporting volunteer organizations in town, attracting new residents and businesses, creating more recreational resources, public transportation, celebrating America’s 250th birthday and revitalizing the town’s business centers.
“There’s increasing needs for all these things,” said Ridgway.
Winter parking rules
The Dec. 2 meeting was held on Zoom due to snowy conditions in Cornwall. The selectmen said they plan to implement winter parking rules at their next meeting on Dec. 16.
Ridgway also reminded residents to keep vehicles at least 10 feet from the edge of the road so plows can safely clear streets during storms.

Kent moves closer to reopening Emery Park swimming pond

By Alec Linden
KENT — Despite sub-zero wind chills, Kent’s Parks and Recreation Commission is focused on summer.
At its Tuesday, Dec. 2, meeting, the Commission voted in favor of a bid to rehabilitate Emery Park’s swimming pond, bringing the town one step closer to regaining its municipal swimming facility.
The Commission reviewed two RFP bids for the reconstruction of the defunct swimming pond, a stream-fed, man-made basin that has been out of use for six years.
The plans call to stabilize and level the concrete deck and re-line the interior of the pool alongside other structural upgrades, as well as add aesthetic touches such as boulders along the pond’s edge.
Ultimately, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend a bid totaling \$562,635 from locally-based landscape design firm Kent Greenhouse & Gardens. The Commission has already allocated \$500,000 towards the project in funds from the municipal capital plan and the American Rescue Plan Act, known as ARPA.
To cover the remaining cost, the Commission has moved to transfer \$100,000 previously allocated for Emery Park playground improvements to the pond project, though the Board of Selectmen must hold a town meeting to authorize the re-allocation.
The addition of those funds would total \$600,000, leaving a \$37,365 surplus to the total estimate, which includes an optional aerator to help maintain water quality.
“I’m confident on that number, that we can fund that amount, and if not, I’m happy to go stand on the side of the street with a cardboard sign,” said Parks and Recreation Director Matthew Busse jokingly, noting that if additional fundraising is needed, strong support is likely given residents’ interest in the project.
The Kent Greenhouse & Gardens bid edged out a competing estimate from Millennium Builders, which came in under \$500,000 but proposed a less durable polyvinyl chloride (PVC) liner instead of the pricier Gunite construction offered by Kent Greenhouse & Gardens.
Millennium also projected a completion date of late next year, while Kent Greenhouse & Gardens estimated that it would have the swimming area open by early summer 2026. Busse clarified that the date is speculative, though, and delays are always possible.
Busse thanked all involved and noted the project’s progress: “I’m happy to say that we have reached a point where now we’re making a decision on how we’re going to finally walk over towards the final steps of this goal. So this is a huge moment.”
Accessibility at Emery Park
Later during Tuesday’s meeting, the Parks and Recreation Commission authorized Busse to apply for \$2.4 million from the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection’s Recreational Trails grant program to expand accessibility infrastructure at Emery Park.
Currently, the majority of Emery Park’s facilities, such as the playground, fields and the soon-to-be reopened swimming pond are not ADA accessible due to the park’s steep topography and uneven walkways.
Commission member Heidi Wilson outlined the plan for a handicap accessible trail that would allow for park goers with disabilities to visit those attractions.
Busse added that the plans ultimately seek to connect to the camping locations further from the road. The funding could also provide an opportunity to install accessible bathrooms.



PHOTO BY ALEC LINDEN

The swimming pond at Emery Park in Kent is slated for improvements and could reopen for public use as early as summer 2026.

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The directors and UCC officials, though, felt that the shift in focus would not fit within the facility’s mission and opted to end operations, instead directing funding and energy towards other youth ministry programming.
For Silver Lake’s final summer hosting campers, Tim Hughes, who has held many roles at the camp over the past five decades including co-directing alongside his wife Anne from 2003 to 2015, will return to take over leadership. The current director, Rev. David Camphouse, will leave the post this month.
As for what’s next for the lakefront property off Low Road, the Southern New England Conference indicated that it would review purchase offers, prioritizing those from entities with a connection to the camp.
Rev. Chris Davies, Executive Minister for Programs and Initiatives for the Conference, said in the November announcement: “We don’t yet know what the future will hold, but we are committed to exploring faithful possibilities aligned with our missional impact and the theological commitments.”
After the closure announcement, concerned alumni and affiliates of the camp formed an independent nonprofit called Friends of Silver Lake. According to its website, the mission of the organization is “uniting the dispersed community

that values Silver Lake, and working toward a vision of future ministry in line with its historic mission.”
On Sunday, Dec. 7, more than 50 former campers joined a virtual meeting hosted by the nonprofit on Zoom. In a recap post on the organization’s Facebook page Sunday night, Co-Chair Brian Lapis is quoted: “Tonight’s gathering shows how profoundly Silver Lake has shaped the lives of those who have experienced it and how important outdoor ministry is to faith formation, personal growth, leadership development, and just making better humans. These ‘thin places’ between us and the holy that are experienced in outdoor ministry are for real!”

Christmas Services

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thesmithfieldchurch.org

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Town Hall throws retirement party for Bouteiller, Dinneen

By Ruth Epstein

CORNWALL — Townspeople bid farewell to two beloved town employees Sunday, Dec. 7.

Town Hall was packed with well-wishers who came to express their appreciation to recently retired Tax Collector Jean Bouteiller and soon-to-be retired Town Clerk Vera Dinneen.

“Like Patty Rovezzi at Cornwall Consolidated School, Vera is the heartbeat of the town,” said Jennifer Markow. “Vera certainly has her pulse on the town,” agreed Marianne Winslow. Susan Kelsey came from Falls Village to offer her congratulations. “I work in many town halls as a title searcher and I enjoy coming here. I love them both.”

Bouteiller served in the position for 18 years; Dinneen was assistant town clerk before taking on the top post 20 years ago. Both were elected. The tax collector’s post is now appointed and will be held by Rebecca Juchert-Derungs. Kathryn Lee will succeed Dinneen.

In his presentation, First Selectman Gordon M. Ridgway talked about how the two women served efficiently, impartially and fairly. “They made sure the nuts and bolts of the town were done right. They brought warmth to the town hall. Day in and day out, they made sure things happened.”



PHOTO BY RUTH EPSTEIN

State Rep. Maria Horn (D-64) congratulates Cornwall Tax Collector Jean Bouteiller, left, and Town Clerk Vera Dinneen during a retirement party held in their honor Sunday.

Ridgway said this was not a sad event, but one filled with appreciation. He said while they are irreplaceable, thorough and meticulous, there are good people taking their places.

The two were presented wooden bowls made by Peter Russ. Looking at them closely, Ridgway said, “They are made from a variety of grains, just like the variety of people in town.” The staff gave them each a basket filled with puzzles, books and other items to keep them busy.

State Rep. Maria Horn, (D-64) from Salisbury, said she was there to bring them boring gifts. “This town,

when you walk in, feels like a community,” she said. “There are warm exchanges because of the tone you set.”

She presented each of them with a proclamation from the General Assembly. Dinneen’s listed all the positions she’s held and volunteering she’s done, saying, “Vera exemplifies dedication, compassion and civic spirit. In Bouteiller’s, she said, “Jean exemplifies craftsmanship, stewardship and community spirit that have profoundly benefited Cornwall.”

In thanking everyone Bouteiller said, “If you have to be a tax collector, I couldn’t do it in a better town

than Cornwall. She said she was grateful that her dog could come to work with her, quipping some residents may miss the dog more than they’ll miss her.

Dinneen said she was overwhelmed by the turnout. While she’s leaving the job, she’s not leaving town. “I’ll be around,” she assured those in the room.

Region One enrollment drops 4% from last year

By Ruth Epstein

FALLS VILLAGE — For Region One Business Manager Sam Herrick and his staff, the budget process begins well before the New Year’s ball drops.

The process is a complex one involving a spending plan broken down into three components: Housatonic Valley Regional High School, pupil services (primarily special education) and the Regional School Services Center, or central office. It covers the towns of Cornwall, Falls Village, Kent, North Canaan, Salisbury and Sharon.

Herrick explains that “Resident student enrollment is the driving factor for tuition assessment percentages,” meaning a towns’ share of the budget is based on how many of their students are enrolled at the high school. The percentages determined for pupil services and RSSC are based on total school

population, so they generally have a bit less fluctuation.

Enrollment figures are determined by how many are signed in on Oct. 1 of the previous year. For Oct. 2025, there were 906 in the six elementary schools and 300 at Housatonic for a district-wide total of 1206. This compares to 930 in the elementary schools on Oct. 1, 2024 and 327 at the high school, totaling 1257.

The enrollments for the elementary schools as of Oct. 1, 2025 (compared to Oct. 1, 2024) are: Cornwall, 122 (117); Falls Village, 102 (96); Kent, 201 (197); North Canaan, 338 (353); Salisbury, 328 (361); and Sharon, 115 (133).

Herrick said a draft budget will be presented to the Region One Board of Education on March 9 and the public hearing is scheduled for April 9. This will be followed by a district-wide referendum in May.

Kent wetlands dispute nears settlement agreement

By Alec Linden

KENT — A year-and-a-half-long legal dispute over an unpermitted roadway and dock built through wetlands on North Spectacle Pond is approaching a resolution. The town’s Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission and the entity KenMont and KenWood LLC. are close to reaching a mutually acceptable agreement.

The conflict began after the IWWC denied a retroactive application in March 2024 for the road and dock, which were constructed without town approval sometime last decade. The Commission found both structures violated town regulations, leading the entity to file a legal appeal.

KenMont and KenWood LLC, which was formed roughly two decades ago by the camp’s former owner — who later sold the camp, is not connected to the present-day summer camp. The dispute concerns a separate 63-acre parcel off Kenmont Road where the roadway and dock were constructed.

Although most delibera-

tions occurred in executive session, IWWC Chair Lynn Werner announced at the Commission’s Nov. 24 meeting that both sides had found a path forward. “We’ve come to a place where both sides are in agreement,” she said.

The Commission then voted unanimously to approve the settlement, which must now be submitted to the court for final approval. During the meeting, the Commission’s legal counsel, attorney Michael Ziska, explained that KenMont and KenWood had agreed to terms that would prohibit vehicle traffic on the road, require invasive-species management around it, and allow the IWWC to conduct regular inspections.

Ziska noted the roadway

was built largely of logs that are now degrading into the wetland. Expert consultants for both KenMont and KenWood and the IWWC have advised allowing the roadway to be naturally reclaimed by the landscape, with light management to ensure several culverts beneath the structure remain functional.

“I believe that this settlement agreement protects the Commission’s interests,” Ziska said. “[It] recognizes the unique aspects of this particular violation — the number of years it’s been in place...and the fact that the consultants have said things should probably be left as is for the time being. All of that commends itself to this draft settlement that we have proposed.”



PHOTO BY RUTH EPSTEIN

Kent expands composting efforts

Rick Osborne, manager of the Kent Transfer Station, deposits the first bag of food scraps into a new organics “smart bin” installed at 3 Railroad Street during a ribbon cutting ceremony on Monday morning, Dec. 1. It is one of two new bins that allow for 24/7 public compost access, with the other positioned outside the Transfer Station’s gate. Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority Executive Director Jennifer Heaton-Jones, pictured right, said, “This is proof that even our smallest towns can make a big difference in tackling the waste crisis in our state.” Pictured left is Transfer Station staff member Rob Hayes.

LEGAL NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF CORNWALL
NEW OFFICE HOURS:
Monday 1:00 - 4:00 &
Wednesday 9:00 - Noon
Pursuant to Sec. 12-145 of the Connecticut statutes, the Tax Collector, Town of Cornwall gives notice that she will be ready to receive Supplemental Motor Vehicle taxes and the 2nd installment of Real Estate & Personal Property taxes due January 1, 2026 at the Cornwall Town Hall, PO Box 97, 26 Pine St., West Cornwall, CT 06753. Payments must be received or postmarked by February 2, 2026 to avoid interest.

All taxes remaining unpaid after February 2, 2026 will be charged interest from January 1, 2026 at the rate of 1.5% for each month from the due date of the delinquent tax to the date of payment, with a minimum interest charge of \$2.00. Sec. 12-146
Failure to receive a tax bill does not relieve the taxpayer of their responsibility for the payment of taxes or delinquent charges. Sec. 12-30
Rebecca Juchert-Derungs, CCMC
12-11-25
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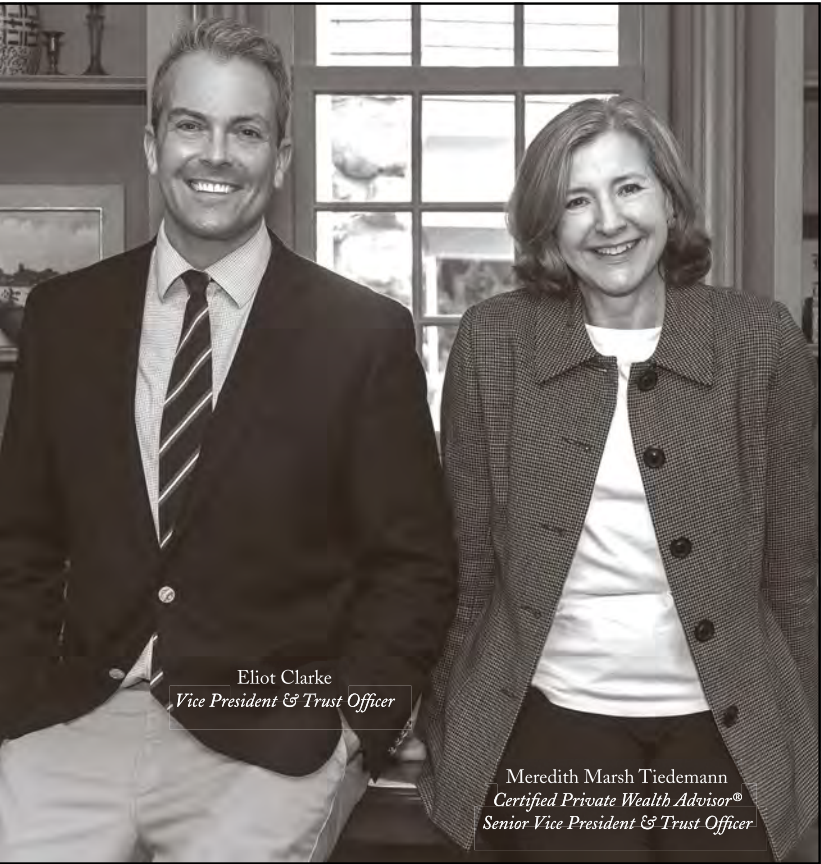


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Our Towns



PHOTO BY ALY MORRISSEY

Jennie Baird, left, and Christophe Armero are the chocolate makers behind Mudgetown Chocolate. Free tastings will be available at Tri-Corner Feed in Millerton Saturday, Dec. 13, at noon and 3 p.m.

Sharon chocolatier to debut Mudgetown Chocolate in Millerton

By Aly Morrissey
The Millerton News

MILLERTON — There’s wine tasting, beer tasting and even coffee tasting, but Millerton is adding something sweeter to the mix. A craft chocolate tasting event will mark the debut of Mudgetown Chocolate on Saturday, Dec. 13, at Tri-Corner Feed. Two free tastings will be held at noon and 3 p.m.

Mudgetown Chocolate is made in Millerton by Sharon-based chocolatiers using cacao beans sourced from all over the world. Saturday’s event will mark the official launch of the small-batch line at Tri-Corner Feed, one of the only places it will be available.

“Our goal is to delight the community with something special,” said Christophe Armero, chocolatier and founder of Mudgetown Chocolate. He describes his product as a “delicious, locally made chocolate that can’t be purchased anywhere else.”

The business began as a retirement passion project for Armero, who spent 38 years in the sugar industry. After moving full-time to Sharon in 2020 from Riverside, Connecticut, he and his wife, Jennie Baird, began experimenting with chocolate in their barn in 2022. “I realized quickly that it’s very easy to make mediocre chocolate,” Armero joked.

After becoming more interested in the process, he grew determined to master the craft. In 2024, he landed an internship at Dandelion Chocolate in San Francisco, where he learned the tricks of the trade.

“It was a bit intimidating because I was this older guy and all the other chocolatiers were young and very professional,” he laughed. “But they taught me a lot.”

Today, Armero can speak fluently about each step of the chocolate-making process, from sourcing the bean and fermentation to roasting, cracking and “melanging,” most of which is done right here on South Center Street in Millerton.

Tri-Corner Feed’s incubator kitchen

Tri-Corner Feed has a bustling storefront where community members can find locally sourced produce, nutrient-dense groceries and even a chai latte — all with sliding scale prices. And there is just as much action happening behind-the-scenes in their fully licensed commercial kitchen.

It’s here that entrepreneurs and early-stage businesses like Mudgetown Chocolate can roll up their sleeves and create products in an affordable space without the burden of high start-up costs.

Armero uses a small, 1-kilogram roaster in Tri-Cor-

ner’s kitchen, followed by a cracking and winnowing setup that uses a shop vac to suck out the shells and leave the nibs behind. Then, nibs spend 48 hours or more in a granite stone melanger, where they break down and release natural cacao butter. During this part of the process, the bitterness softens and new flavors develop.

Locally made, globally sourced

Armero and Baird purchase cacao beans directly from small farms and fermentaries in countries like El Salvador, Colombia and Uganda. The couple even traveled to Ecuador to visit one of their producers, prioritizing direct relationships whenever possible, which sets them apart from other commercial producers.

Armero said he hopes to bring more local partners into his chocolate business for future creations. “We’ve made some fantastic chocolate infused with whiskey,” he said, adding that he also has a vision of creating a chocolate bar with crunchy bread crumbs. His goal is to partner with local distilleries and bakeries to make this a reality.

Commercial chocolate vs. craft chocolate

Armero said the key differences between commercial chocolate and craft chocolate are “scale and objective.” Big-brand names rely on facilities designed to transform commodity beans into large quantities of uniform chocolate designed to meet the brand’s distinct taste.

Unlike these chocolate giants, Mudgetown Chocolate and other craft makers work in small batches, coaxing the best flavors out of beans. You might get a slightly different flavor with each batch. With only two ingredients in their dark chocolate — cacao and sugar — the results are highly dependent on the bean itself. Armero said, “We’re always trying to get the best out of the beans.”

The Dec. 13 tastings will be at Tri-Corner Feed at 56 South Center St., Millerton.

By Robin Roraback

SALISBURY — An estimated 100 people gathered at the White Hart Inn in Salisbury for a celebratory capstone dinner for Sharon Hospital’s Senior Meal Program on Dec. 3.

Sharon Hospital’s president, Christina McCulloch, addressed attendees. “Tonight, we celebrate connections, gratitude and looking ahead.”

She added that Sharon Hospital is “investing in a comprehensive approach to aging,” and said the meals are part of that, offering “not only a healthy meal, but socialization.”

Dr. Jonathan Joseph added, “activity, exercise, and socializing are key to health when aging.”

The Senior Meal Program offered residents 65 and older



PHOTO BY L. TOMAINO

Jane Kellner and Martha McAndrews talk at a Senior Dinner put on by Sharon Hospital on Dec. 3 at the White Hart Inn in Salisbury. They were two of an estimated 100 guests.

a full lunch that included a salad or small soup, a main course with a vegetable and starch, dessert, and coffee or tea — all for \$5. Meals were served in the Sharon Hospital café from 11:30 a.m. to

1:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Interspersed throughout the year were suppers with themes such as “The Sweetheart Supper” in February, which included a lecture on

heart health and an opportunity to meet Sharon’s new cardiologist, Sheri Harrison.

Rosemary Farnsworth, from Salisbury, remembered the Sweetheart Supper, “A lovely event, very nice.”

The discounted meals were made possible through a grant from the Northwest CT Community Foundation, the Northwest Corner Gives Fund. Donations from the community were matched by this grant.

The Dec. 3 dinner was the final senior dinner given the existing grant guidelines. Senior meals will be paused at the hospital café until the Sharon Hospital Foundation is able to secure ongoing support for the program.

Donations can be made by contacting Laura Eldridge at the Foundation, 203-739-7056 or laura.eldridge@nuvancehealth.org

OBITUARIES

Arthur John Heck

MILLERTON — Arthur John Heck, 89, a lifelong area resident died Sunday, Dec. 7, 2025, at Sharon Center for Health and Rehabilitation in Sharon, Connecticut. Mr. Heck worked in the maintenance department and drove a school bus at Webutuck Central School District in Amenia for over thirty-years, prior to his retirement on Jan. 31, 1998.

Born Sept. 3, 1936, in the Bronx, New York, he was the only son of the late Arthur K. and Dorothy (Deusenberry) Heck. Art graduated in 1954 with the last class at Miller-ton High School in Millerton. He served our country in the United States Naval Reserves from 1955 to 1962 when he received his honorable discharge as a “SR”/Seaman Recruit. On April 10, 1999, in Millerton, he married Donna Duncan. Mrs. Heck survives at home in Millerton. In his spare time, he was an avid train enthusiast and collector. In his younger years he was a parishioner of the North East Baptist Church. He will be

dearly missed by his loving family and many friends.

In addition to his wife of nearly twenty-seven years, he is also survived by two sons, John Heck and his wife Cindy of Millerton and Wayne Heck and his wife Debbie of Hudson, New York; two step-daughters, Tammy Nadaeu of Winsted, Connecticut, and Rebecca Korot of Torrington, Connecticut; six grandchildren and three great grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

A private graveside service and burial with standard United States Naval Honors will take place on Thursday, Dec. 11, 2025, at 11 a.m. at Irondale Cemetery in Millerton. Pastor William Mayhew will officiate. Arrangements have been entrusted to the Scott D. Conklin Funeral Home, 37 Park Avenue, Millerton, NY 12546.

To send an online condolence to the family, flowers to the service or to plant a tree in Art’s memory, please visit www.conklinfuneralhome.com

Matthew Caulfield Schwab

SALISBURY — Matthew Caulfield Schwab died unexpectedly on Nov. 11, 2025, while traveling abroad for work.

He was a man of quick wit and a big heart who read everything he could get his hands

on. He never turned down a good argument and always had something delicious cooking in the kitchen.

His absence will be acutely felt by his family for the remainder of their lives.



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Christmas Eve Service
7 p.m.
“Lessons and Carols”

Worship Services

Week of December 14, 2025

Christ Church Episcopal in Sharon 9 South Main, Sharon CT Sunday Holy Eucharist at 9:00 A.M. Transitioning through prayer All welcome to join us 860-364-5260 www.christchurchsharon.org	The Congregational Church of Salisbury, U.C.C. 30 Main Street, Salisbury, CT Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here! Worship, Sundays at 10 am, in-person and streaming www.salisburyucc.org Sharing God's shalom: Wholeness, harmony, justice, and joy! (860) 435-2442
Trinity Episcopal Church 484 Lime Rock Rd. Lakeville Offering companionship along the Way Sundays at 8 and 10:30 a.m. Livestream at 10:30 found at www.trinitylimerock.org trinity@trinitylimerock.org (860) 435-2627	St. John's Episcopal Church 12 Main Street, Salisbury, CT SUNDAY SERVICE 10:00 a.m. Eucharist with music (Rite II) Rev. Dr. Johan Johnson, Priest-in-Charge In-Person and on YouTube www.stjohnssalisbury.org
North Canaan Congregational Church, UCC Joyfully opening our hearts and doors to all God's people 172 Lower Rd./Rt. 44, East Canaan CT Worship services Sundays at 10 am www.Facebook.com/northcanaancongregational 860-824-7232 FISHES & LOAVES FOOD PANTRY, A MISSION OF OUR CHURCH Is at Pilgrim House, 30 Granite Ave., Canaan Tuesday 4-6 pm & Thursday 12-2 pm www.fishesandloavesnorthcanaan.org	Unitarian Fellowship of NW CT Cobble Living Room, Noble Horizons Sunday, December 14 at 10:30 a.m. For information, contact Jo Loi at jokilaui@gmail.com All are Welcome
Congregation Beth David A reform Jewish Synagogue 3344 East Main St., Amenia SERVICES SATURDAY 10:30 AM Twice Monthly • Followed by Oneg (Calendar at congbethdavid.org) ALL ARE WELCOME Rabbi Jon Haddon 845-373-8264 info@congbethdavid.org	ST. MARTIN OF TOURS PARISH Immaculate Conception, 4 North Street, Norfolk St. Joseph, 4 Main Street, Canaan St. Mary, 76 Sharon Road, Lakeville MASS SCHEDULE Saturday Vigil 4 pm, St. Joseph Church Sunday 9 am, Church of St. Mary Sunday 11 a.m., Immaculate Conception Church DAILY MASS SCHEDULE Wednesday 6pm St. Joseph Chapel or Church Thursday 8am Immaculate Conception Church Friday 8am Church of St. Mary ALL ARE WELCOME! For information, please call 860-824-7078
The Lakeville United Methodist Church 319 Main St., Lakeville, CT 06039 9:15 a.m. Worship Service 9:15 a.m. Sunday School “Open Hearts - Open Minds - Open Doors” The Rev. Dr. Anna C. Camphouse 860-435-9496 Lakevillemethodist@snet.net	UCC in CORNWALL Cornwall Village Meeting House Worship Sunday, 10 am Outstanding Church School (10 am) Mission Opportunities Warm Fellowship following Worship 860-672-6840 www.uccincornwall.org Rev. Micki Nunn-Miller, Minister Welcoming all - including the LGBTQ Community
Falls Village Congregational Church 16 Beebe Hill Road, Falls Village 10:00 a.m. Family Worship Coffee Hour A Friendly Church with a warm welcome to all!! 860-824-0194	The Chapel of All Saints, Cornwall Holy Eucharist: Sundays at 9 a.m. Trinity Retreat Center Chapel Lower River Road, West Cornwall in person and on zoom Warm fellowship following service All Are Welcome! www.allsaintscornwall.org Rev. Mary Gates!
The Sharon United Methodist Church 112 Upper Main Street, North End of Sharon Green Touching Lives - Lifting Spirits 10:30 a.m. Worship Service, Nursery Care No Sunday School in Summer The Rev. Dr. Anna C. Camphouse 860-364-5634 sharonumc5634@att.net	St. Thomas Episcopal Church 40 Leedsville Road Amenia Union, NY SUNDAY WORSHIP @ 10:30 IN-PERSON AND ONLINE Visit our website for links 845-373-9161 www.stthomasamenia.com A Community of Radical Hospitality
The Smithfield Presbyterian Church 656 Smithfield Valley Rd. Route 83, Amenia, NY Services every Sunday 10 a.m. www.thsmithfieldchurch.org 21st Century Theology in an Historic Building	Promised Land Baptist Church 29 Granite Ave., Canaan, CT Where you will find: A Warm Welcome! Helpful Bible Messages, A Place to Grow! Sunday School - 10am Sunday Worship - 11am Wednesday Bible Study and Prayer Meeting - 7PM (860) 824-5685 VISITORS WELCOME! www.promisedlandbaptist.org
All Saints of America Orthodox Christian Church 313 Twin Lakes Rd., Salisbury, CT Vespers Saturday at 5:00 P.M. Divine Liturgy Sunday at 9:30 A.M. Special Services Online Rev. John Kreta 860-824-1340 allsaintsofamerica.us	Canaan United Methodist Church 2 Church St., Rte 44, Canaan, CT 8:00AM - Worship Service 2nd & 4th Sunday “Open Hearts - Open Minds - Open Doors” The Rev. Dr. Anna C. Camphouse 860-824-5534 canaanct-umc.com canaanctumc@gmail.com We hope you will join us!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

7,600 pounds of Turkey

We are blessed to have a dedicated group of nonprofits doing incredible work to improve the lives of people in our community. You know the names — Jane Lloyd Fund, SWSA, Salisbury Volunteer Ambulance, Lakeville Hose, and many others. But there is one charity that may fly under your radar, that does extraordinary work, especially this time of year.

Sunday in the Country Food Drive raised funds, organized logistics, and delivered complete Thanksgiving dinners to 800 area families last week. Including an additional 425 lbs of chickens and two tons of dry goods. They purchased all the food from local businesses, with local employment in mind.

And their work is only halfway done- they will be providing the same number of dinners for families in need this Christmas. Sunday in the Country Food Drive has provided these services for the past 33 years, and its donations help an average of 13 local food pantries meet their needs.

If you can find it in your budget to donate to this worthy cause, you will help brighten the lives of many in this community, perhaps even your neighbors.

Sunday in the Country Food Drive, P.O. Box 789, Millerton, NY 12546
Sundayinthecountry.org
Love Where You Live,
Kendra Chapman
Lakeville

Opinion



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Send to publisher@lakevillejournal.com Include name, town and phone number. Keep letters to 500 words or less.

The deadline for letters to the editor is 10 a.m. each Monday. You may email letters to publisher@lakevillejournal.com.

If ‘public benefits charges’ require deception, get rid of them

Misconduct by its recently disgraced and departed chairwoman, Marissa Gillett, has Connecticut’s Public Utilities Regulatory Authority on the defensive. Past utility rate decisions have been put in legal jeopardy, utility companies are getting angry and aggressive, Gillett’s Democratic allies in the General Assembly have been discredited for their complicity with her power grabbing and lies, longstanding criticism by Republican legislators has been vindicated, and state government’s infamous “public benefits charges” on electricity bills

THE CHRIS POWELL COLUMN

are becoming a political issue again.

Some of those charges were recently removed by legislation with their financed transferred to state government borrowing, but most of the charges remain, comprising about 20% of customer electric bills, an estimated \$1 billion annually. So at a Hartford Business Journal conference last

month, a senior vice president of Connecticut’s largest electric utility, Eversource, Digaunto Chatterjee, called for removing the charges from electric bills entirely and financing their programs through the state budget.

For some time this has been the position of Republican legislators, who note that the charges function not only as a hidden tax but also as a tax on a necessity of life. But the electric companies, being heavily regulated and long having been scapegoated for Connecticut’s high electricity prices, had not been taking sides on the issue, lest they aggravate their adversaries.

Governor Lamont and most Democratic legislators are still resisting serious reform with the charges. The House chairman of the General Assembly’s Energy and Technology Committee, Rep. Jonathan Steinberg, D-Westport, says it makes little no difference how the programs financed by the charges are paid for -- by footnotes on electricity bills or by regular state government appropriations and formal taxes.

Steinberg is wrong. For if the “public benefits charges” were eliminated, the programs they finance would have to start competing for appropriations along with

everything else state government spends money on. They would become part of the budget process, where the items financed by the charges would get far more scrutiny from the governor, legislators, news organizations, and the public than they get now when they are buried in electric bills.

The HBJ reported last week that the “public benefits charges” consist of 63 fees that are summarized on electric bills in two line items, a format that virtually prohibits intelligent review. Of course that’s the way the governor and most Democratic legislators like it. They don’t think they would gain much politically from a billion-dollar reduction in electricity costs if it came with a billion-dollar increase in the state budget and taxes. Then they might face another billion dollars’ worth of controversy as they converted from a system where the charges and the programs they finance are hidden to a system where they would jostle against everything else government money is wanted for. Maybe in such a public process the governor and legislators would have trouble justifying some of the charges. Maybe they would feel compelled to reduce or eliminate some of the programs.

Moving the charges to the state budget would be best but it’s not the only way to increase transparency and accountability. A modest improvement might be for state government to keep the charges and their programs but to recover their costs with a formal sales tax on electricity — itemized in bold lettering at the top of all electricity bills.

That would get people’s attention even if it failed to explain the programs being financed by the charges.

Some of those programs may be necessary for the stability of the electrical system, but some are environmental niceties and nuttiness and some are simply welfare subsidies that are fairly resented by people who pay their own electric bills.

If the main objective of the “public benefits charges” is to pay for necessary things, they can be financed by the state budget and formal taxes.

If the main objective of the charges is just to conceal government expenses and deceive people, nothing is worth that much and programs financed that way should be scrapped.

Chris Powell has written about Connecticut government and politics for many years.

Cruises are in and not just for Baby Boomers

The COVID-19 pandemic was supposed to spell the end of the cruise line industry. These massive ships, crammed with sick passengers, were labeled “petri dishes” by the media, infectious disease experts, and politicians. Six years later, the sector is alive and growing.

AAA projects that a record-breaking 21.7 million Americans are planning to hop aboard an ocean cruise in the coming year. If so, that would mark the fourth year in a row the cruise industry has experienced record passenger volume. This year, more than 20 million passengers flooded the gates to new King Kong-sized vessels, offering fixed-price packages and promising a wide variety of cruise options for every age and pocketbook.

If you break down the demand demographically, Baby Boomers still make up the majority of cruise-goers, followed by Millennials. Most adults travel with a companion. Nearly 50% of U.S. cruise passengers are cruising as a couple.

About 65% of adult passengers are 55 or older. However, 27% are from younger generations (35 to 54 years old), and 7% are aged 18 to 34. The trend also includes multi-generational groupings who choose to take cruise vacations together. One quarter of Baby Boomers who like cruises do so with their adult children, and roughly 29% of Gen Z members cruise with their parents.

A survey identifying

THE RETIRED INVESTOR BILL SCHMICK

trends shaping the modern cruise experience found that Millennials and Gen Z are increasingly enthusiastic about opting for a cruise vacation. Key among the changes in attitude was the affordability of shorter itineraries, which allow younger generations to vacation more frequently. They much prefer a two-to-four-day sailing to the more traditional five-to-seven-day voyage.

The Caribbean remains the most popular destination, attracting 72% of American cruise passengers. As a result, Florida ports are the busiest in the world due to this vacation demand. The new mega-vessels ply the Caribbean, Mediterranean and Northern European waterways. Smaller vessels are more common in Northern Europe for expedition cruises and in the Mediterranean for luxury trips.

More than half of the 4,500 people surveyed had already cruised, and nearly 30% planned to do so again over the next two years. Of those planning another cruise, 36% were born between 1981 and 1996. The average age of a cruise guest is now 46 years old, and 36% of all cruisers are now under 40.

Cruise lines have quick-

ly adjusted to these preferences and begun marketing three-to-five-night cruises. Another popular consumer preference is the chance to visit a private island. Cruise lines are investing big bucks to create this type of destination or upgrade existing ones. Cruise operators know that the main draw for vacationers is convenience and value, especially today.

As such, cruise companies bundle lodging, meals, and entertainment. The price often equates to a lower per-night cost than on a land-based vacation. Celebrity-level chefs and Broadway-level shows have replaced the rubber chickens and crew member chorus offerings of yesteryears.

Modern-day ships are increasingly resembling ocean-going resorts, complete with floating buffets and satisfied customers — couples like the built-in date-night dining and entertainment options. Families appreciate the kid clubs, water parks, and multi-room lodgings. An expanding list of destinations, such as a cruise to Antarctica or the Arctic, excites and attracts younger adventure seekers.

More than 90% of U.S. cruise passengers rate their experience as good or very good, according to AAA, and 91% have taken multiple cruises. With those kinds of repeat rates, cruise lines expect growth to continue well beyond the next few years.

Wall Street likes what it sees and has rewarded

these companies with higher stock prices. Rather than rest on their laurels, cruise companies worldwide are expanding their fleets, building destination islands and upgrading their offerings hand over fist.

Bill Schmick is a founding partner of Onota Partners, Inc., in the Berkshires. Bill’s forecasts and opinions are purely his own and do not necessarily represent the views of Onota Partners, Inc. (OPI). None of his commentary is or should be considered investment advice.

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THE LAKEVILLE JOURNAL

(USPS 303280)

An Independent Connecticut Newspaper
Published Weekly by LJMN Media, Inc.
A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization; Dan Dwyer, Chair
64 Route 7 North, Falls Village, CT 06031
P.O. Box 1688, Lakeville, CT 06039-9989
(860) 435-9873 • lakevillejournal.com • editor@lakevillejournal.com

Volume 129, Number 20 Thursday, December 11, 2025

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LJMN Media, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Subscription Rates - One Year: \$120.00 in Litchfield County, \$147.00 outside county
Known Office of Publication: Lakeville, CT 06039-1688. Periodical Postage Rate Paid at Lakeville, CT 06039. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to LJMN Media, Inc., PO Box 1688, Lakeville, Connecticut 06039-1688.

Viewpoint

The burden of student debt is transforming education

What if I told you the only way you can get your college degree is by spending the next 20 years paying off the debt to attend that school. Would you still go?

Many people I know need to achieve that dream of walking across a stage and receiving a diploma to put themselves in a better position in life. However, that dream comes with a price tag now. A price tag that is so big at times that these people that I know have to give up on their dreams.

It has gotten to the point where higher education to earn a good paying job seems to be an unreachable luxury. Many kids who have a passion to pursue a certain career after high school cannot because they are too poor to reach a higher level of education. This makes higher education less about ability and more about affordability, reducing opportunity and diversity on campuses.

Even for those who make it to college, rising tuition widens the gap between students from wealthy families and those from low-income backgrounds. Many talented students must work long hours while studying, leaving them less time to focus on academics and extracurricular activities. The rise in cost takes away time from campus events and functions that students can attend during some downtime to get a leisure activity in.

In my personal experience as a student athlete, not only am I a full-time student that must prepare and study for class, but I also must prepare

CT MIRROR/
VIEWPOINTS
COLLIN JEFFERSON

and train for my sport while also taking up a part-time job at the school. Balancing sport, school, and the mind-set of making enough money to stay in school comfortably leads to lack in performance and mental health.

The issue of debt doesn't just affect individual students. The issue of student debt affects entire communities and the country's economy. When young people are forced to take out massive loans, they end up delaying important milestones like buying a home, starting a family, or even beginning a business. Instead of contributing to economic growth, they spend years trapped in a repayment cycle.

Furthermore, many students who start college but cannot keep up with tuition end up dropping out, leaving them with debt but no degree to show for it. This cycle creates long-term financial stress and limits upward mobility

for millions of Americans.

The constant rise in tuition makes college feel less like an opportunity to learn and more like a business transaction. The cost of education discourages students from pursuing degrees in fields that truly interest them. Instead, many choose careers that simply offer higher salaries, rather than following their passions or pursuing work that benefits society. This means a lack of teachers, social workers, and artists, which are professions that shape communities and culture. When education becomes only about survival and not personal growth, society loses creativity and compassion. Schools should focus on helping students succeed, not just on making profits.

Colleges often justify tuition increases by pointing to improved facilities, technology, or campus programs, but those benefits mean little if fewer students can afford to experience them. Education should be a right, not a privilege reserved for the wealthy. If the goal of higher education is to prepare the next generation of thinkers, leaders, and innovators, then it must be made accessible to all who are willing to work hard for it.

Overall, the growing cost of college is transforming education, which is supposed to be a pathway to open doors, into a barrier that limits success for many hardworking students. Colleges and policymakers need to find solutions to make higher education more accessible and affordable.

Expanding need-based scholarships, increasing state funding for public universities, and controlling unnecessary fees could help ease the cost that gives many students an untenable burden. Investing in education benefits everyone by creating a stronger, more skilled population that can achieve a career after their time in college to help boost the economy and quality of life in our country.

If tuition continues to rise unchecked, fewer students will be able to achieve their educational goals, and the nation will lose out on the talent and innovation that come from diverse backgrounds filled with motivated graduates who still have so much potential left to reach.

Collin Jefferson is a sophomore at Mitchell College majoring in Business Management.



PHOTO BY CAITLIN HANLON

Snowy morning

TURNING BACK THE PAGES
NORMA BOSWORTH

125 years ago —
December 1900

Miss Emma Ayres came nearly being burned to death on Tuesday. She was putting some wood in the stove and her apron caught fire and an instant later her dress was ablaze. She had presence of mind to remove her clothing, but it was a narrow escape.

Mr. and Mrs. William Conklin were presented with a beautiful silver set this week, it being their 25th anniversary. The members of the K. of P. Lodge and other friends were the donors of the gift which was an evidence of the high esteem in which this worthy couple is held.

Chester Barnes, about whom reports have been brought to the authorities to the effect that he was discharging firearms at passersby from his house on Canaan mountain was Thursday taken into custody and was examined by Dr. Hamant of Norfolk and Dr. Cobb of Falls Village as

to his sanity. The decision reached was that Barnes was not actually insane, but was the victim of constant hallucination which caused him to think that some one was going to kill him and rob him of his pension of \$12 a month. Barnes, it appears, is a veteran of the civil war, belonging to the Nineteenth Connecticut regiment, and has lived a solitary life on Canaan mountain ever since the death of his wife twelve years ago.

100 years ago —
December 1925

The Lakeville Fire District Committee have just ordered from the Connecticut Power Company the installation of six new street lights on the Hotchkiss School road. This will make a well lighted street the entire distance from the village to the cement road near Hotchkiss. The expense of installing and caring for the lights will be paid by the Hotchkiss School.

Donald M. Thrall, while motoring to Lakeville last

Thursday night, ran into a good sized doe near Norfolk and quite badly injured the animal. The doe sustained a broken shoulder and other injuries. Don did not want to leave the doe to suffer and for a time was puzzled as to what course of action to follow. He decided to get the doe off the highway, and he had quite an exciting time in so doing, owing to the struggles of the animal. He finally accomplished the task, but was still averse to leaving the animal by the roadside. He finally got out a heavy Stilson wrench from his car, and using that as a club, he struck the doe on the forehead, killing it instantly. With the help of a couple of passing autoists he loaded the animal into his car and brought it to Norfolk, where he hunted up the game warden and made a report of the affair. Don's worst grievance is the fact that the game warden confiscated the doe and wouldn't even give him any portion of it, and Don is wondering just what the warden did with the venison.

The remains of Bryant S. Keefer, who died at Shelby, Ohio, were brought to Millerton and the funeral took place on Monday, according to Masonic rites. Mr. Keefer for many years was connected with the Millerton National Bank, and later was one of the firm of the Morse-Keefer Co., which a number of years ago was engaged in the manufacture of bicycle spokes at Salisbury.

50 years ago —
December 1975

A petition filed last week in Litchfield Superior Court by Peter Reilly's defense attorneys claims that a person with "possibly two motives" for harming Reilly's slain mother has no alibi for the night of the murder.

Canaan's newest store, a small independent grocery, opened this week on Railroad Street on the site of the former Helbling's Delicatessen. The new little store, known as Casey's Market, will be operated by Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Casey of Church Street.

A memorial park will be dedicated to the memory of Michael Dunn on Sunday at 3 p.m. at the North Canaan Elementary School. Michael, the five-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Dunn of Housatonic Avenue in Canaan, drowned early last

summer. The park, located on a knoll overlooking the school's kindergarten wing, has been made possible through funds donated by friends and neighbors of the family.

A CBS television crew will be on hand this Sunday afternoon to film a dance at North Canaan Elementary School for the Peter Reilly Legal Defense Fund. The dance, from 2 to 6 p.m., will feature "The Departure," the band in which Peter Reilly plays. Admission price is \$1.50.

25 years ago —
December 2000

Members of the Salisbury Band serenaded Jimmy DuBois at his home before playing holiday tunes at the town's tree lighting festivities Saturday on the Green near the White Hart Inn.

CORNWALL — Norman Dorsen of Cornwall and New York City is one of five people who recently received the Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award from President Bill Clinton in celebration of Human Rights Day.

These items were taken from The Lakeville Journal archives at Salisbury's Scoville Memorial Library, keeping the original wording intact as possible.

Status
Report

CORNWALL — The Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department's campaign goal of \$600,000 for new trucks is within reach. By early December, the fundraising total had already surpassed \$500,000. Donations can be made online at cornwallfire.org. The Town of Cornwall and CVFD have published an Invitation to Bid for two new fire trucks. Bids will be opened at Town Hall on Dec. 17.

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The Sharon Audubon Center is a wonderful resource for family activities as we approach the holiday season. For example: the Nature Center and Store will be open 9-5 each Thursday, Friday, and Saturday through December 20, with extended hours (until 7:00pm) on Dec. 12, and different sales featured each weekend. Trails and grounds remain open daily from sunrise to sunset. The following public programs and events are being offered.

Dec. 12 - Finding the Wonder in New England Birds program and book signing with Zach Adams - 7:00-8:00pm
Dec. 13 - CBC and Project Feeder Watch Primer program - 10:00-11:30am
Dec. 14 - Trixie Strauss Christmas Bird Count - All day!

Although many of their programs are free to attend, pre-registration is often required or highly recommended. For more detailed information, descriptions of each, or to register for an upcoming program, visit audubon.org/sharon/events or contact Bethany Sheffer at Bethany.sheffer@audubon.org.

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PHOTOS BY ALEC LINDEN

Salisbury spreads seasonal spirit
Music and merriment filled Salisbury Saturday, Dec. 6 and Sunday, Dec. 7, as the community took part in a weekend of festive activities around town. The Salisbury Stroll down a snowy Main Street, the tree lighting, parade of lights, Holiday Baroque music concert at the Congregational Church and a seasonal market at Noble Horizons spread cheer throughout the town.



PHOTOS BY RUTH EPSTEIN

Cornwall Library hosts gingerbread house contest
Confectionary construction filled the Cornwall Library Sunday, Dec. 7, for the annual gingerbread house competition. West Cornwall’s covered bridge is a popular theme each year, and this year some entries took the inspiration a step further. Lily Landau-Willis and her mother, Jessica, showed a truck stuck in the covered bridge (above). Unfortunately, that has happened several times. Harper and Emerson Stefanski (below) created a damaged version of the bridge, having witnessed some mishaps that occurred on the span. Their mother, Heidi Stefanski, acknowledged she forgot to make one wall, so the damaged look fit. Each submission to the contest received a unique award.



Joy abounds at Sharon tree-lighting

By Alec Linden

SHARON — Downtown Sharon was alive with holiday cheer on Saturday afternoon, Dec. 6, for a lineup of family programming that culminated in a tree-lighting ceremony that Hallmark could only dream of.

To start things off, Santa arrived at the Hotchkiss Library at 2 p.m. sharp, bringing in scores of Sharon’s youngsters anxious to know whether they had made the nice list. According to Santa, there wasn’t a thing to worry about: “They’re always nice!” he said, as nine-month old Owen sat in his lap for his first encounter with old Saint Nick.

When not otherwise engaged with the man from up north, children roamed the library, working on crafts or sampling cookies to decide winners in three categories: kid-baked, adult-baked and prettiest. Submissions included “Grinch,” “pinecone” and “great grandmother’s Christmas cookies,” among others.

Light snacks were available for more mature palates, too, with ample charcuterie trays proving a popular selection, alongside sweeter options like toffee and blondies.

As the light faded over the snow-covered village outside,



PHOTO BY ALEC LINDEN

Merry carollers braved the evening chill Saturday, Dec. 6, to sing holiday classics like “Jingle Bells” and “Silent Night” on the Town Green.

families bravely left the library’s warmth for the Town Green where a festive group was growing in advance of the tree-lighting.

With the orange sky reflecting on the snow, the Salisbury Band Christmas Brass and Hot Chocolate Society started up with some warm tones as members of the Historical Society passed out Christmas carol lyric sheets and electric candles.

After the band led the assembled group in a spirited rendition of “o Christmas Tree,” the broad evergreen was lit with rings of colored bulbs.

Standing before the now-illuminated tree, the Sharon Playhouse’s cast of “Peter Pan,” an upcoming production that will run Dec. 17 to Dec. 21, performed a few preview tunes. “Happy Holidays!” the troupe proclaimed in unison, quite friendly though they were ostensibly pirates at the time. A voice from the crowd, clearly moved, shouted out: “Never grow up!”

As darkness descended on the scene, an all-ages group of more than 100 Sharonites stuck around for an extended caroling session that had passing motorists slowing down as they flanked the Town Green, surely wondering if they’d left 2025 for 1955.

Post-wassail, the Sharon Historical Society invited the jolly crowd to warm up inside its expertly-curated museum, where revelers refreshed themselves on cider and cookies.

Menorah lighting on Sharon Town Green planned for Dec. 14

By Alec Linden

SHARON — Residents of all faiths are invited to the Sharon Town Green on Sunday, Dec. 14, at 4:30 p.m. for the annual lighting of the menorah for Hanukkah.

Sharon resident Carl Chalet erected the menorah on the green after finding pieces of a candelabra in his father’s basement in the

Catskills that had been saved from a closed synagogue, following Jewish tradition that broken religious objects be brought back into use or buried in cloth.

Chalet, in a Dec. 6 press release, maintained that the ceremony, while Jewish in format, applies universally: “The celebration of Chaunukah is a celebration of strength, determination and resistance. Each year the message seems pertinent to all of us and we invite all faiths to come join in the lighting.”

Participants are asked to bring a flashlight to be able to read the music.

Questions may be directed to telford@earnest.net or 860-364-5618.

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Our Towns



Gen Dinneen carefully creates a tree ornament at Cornwall Town Hall Saturday, Dec. 6.

Holiday cheer shines in Cornwall

By Riley Klein

CORNWALL — Santa Claus made time during his busy season Saturday, Dec. 6, to spend a morning with the people of Cornwall.

He (Dave Cadwell) arrived in a fire truck, and the Grinch hitched a ride.

Attendees made tree ornaments, drank hot cocoa, decorated cookies and shared breakfast with Father Christmas. Some guests informed him of what they would like to see under the tree this year.

Down the road, the annual Christmas Fair was held at the United Church of Christ.

Shoppers browsed wares by local crafters and vendors, including a selection of laser-engraved ornaments made by Brian Saccardi.

There was also an apple pie contest, crèche display, soup and chili.



Santa Claus and the Grinch arrive at Town Hall in a fire truck the morning of Saturday, Dec. 6. They mingled and shared breakfast with those in attendance.

Tom Brown contributed to this article.

Cub Scouts hold flapjack feast with Santa in North Canaan

By John Coston

NORTH CANAAN — Cub Scouts donned their Santa Claus hats on Sunday, Dec. 7 at the North Canaan Elementary School to host a pancake breakfast with Santa.

A steady stream of families arrived for the annual event and found an eager swarm of 14 Scouts from Pack 22, which covers Sheffield, Falls Village and Salisbury as well as North Canaan, waiting to take their breakfast orders.

Bryce Salmon, 14, now a Boy Scout in Troup 22, was stationed in the kitchen fulfilling orders as his mother, Amy Salmon, ran the griddle. Bryce's younger brother, Declan, 6, from Lakeville, was busy like all the others taking orders, and was wearing his father's Cub Scout uniform from the 1970s.

Sonia Gale, another leader from Pack 22, also was helping out in the kitchen said, "We do this every year, and this is the first time at the school. We were at Pilgrim House before."

Fourteen scouts ran a tight ship as they split up and covered all the tables, taking orders for pancakes, sausage and coffee and juice.

Santa Claus (Joe Brady of Winsted) toured the tables to visiting with young and old and seemed to be a magnet for the Scouts, who drifted around him as he moved through the busy scene.



Above, Declan Salmon, 6, of Lakeville, wearing his father's Cub Scout shirt from 1977, takes an order from Makenzsilea Watson, 16, of Lakeville. Below, Bryce Salmon, 14, a Boy Scout in Troop 22, dishes out pancakes as the orders come in from Boy Scouts in Pack 22.



PHOTOS BY LANS CHRISTENSEN

Parade lights up Kent

The Kent Volunteer Fire Department's Parade of Lights rolled down North Main Street the evening of Saturday, Dec. 6. The procession featured illuminated vehicles of all sorts including trucks, buses, tractors, four-wheelers, boats, motorcycles, a steam engine and many holiday-themed floats.



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Our Towns

FFA Holiday Store opens for season at Housatonic

By Ruth Epstein

FALLS VILLAGE — Shoppers at the Housatonic Valley FFA Holiday Store are greeted with the sweet smell of pine as they step out of their cars.

“People are looking for nostalgia at Christmas,” said David Moran, department chairman of the agriscience and technology program at the school. “They remember a summer evening on a lake surrounded by pine trees that brings back fond memories or other experiences like that when they come here.”

The scent is derived from the rows of Christmas trees and the carefully created wreaths that line the yard of Housatonic Valley Regional High School’s agricultural wing. Inside, there is a burst of red where poinsettias fill the greenhouse.

The store has been a longstanding tradition at the school. Residents from around the area come back each year to not only purchase their Christmas staples, but support a very popular program. The store is primarily student-run where the teens learn a variety of skills, said Moran. Among those he ticked off are business management, providing service to the community, learning how to produce a quality product and how to interact with adults.

“Most of all they learn how to use their time wisely,” he said. At that point the internet system went down and credit cards could not be used for a period of time. When student Kevin Eisermann figured out what was wrong, Moran added problem solving to the list.

Eisermann, who, along with his sister Kellie Eisermann transferred to Housa-



PHOTOS BY RUTH EPSTEIN

Karen Lundeen of Salisbury looks over the poinsettias on sale at the Housatonic Valley Regional High School Holiday Store.

tonic from Webutuck Central School in Amenia, New York, said he enjoyed the activity. His father owns a business, so he is used to meeting and talking with people.

There are three varieties of trees being sold: balsam, fraser and silver firs, explained Moran. “Firs have three qualities: friendly, fragrant and flat-needed.” This year there was an inventory of 784 trees and 650 wreaths, the latter which are created during two nights when the community comes together to help the students produce them. Poinsettias totaled 500.

Funds raised from the project are put toward attendance at conventions and leadership programs for students. A portion also goes to area food pantries.

Students were bustling around on Saturday, helping patrons choose trees, cut them to size, wrap them and hoist them on vehicles. They took turns manning

the cash registers. They appeared to have learned their lessons well, eagerly assisting customers with cheerful demeanors.

Many of the buyers said they come to the sale each year. Several had children go through the program and chatted with Moran, who has been at the school for 30 years, about what career paths they’d followed.

Stephanie Plunkett of Sharon, whose son attended the program, said, “I love this sale. And isn’t the smell good?” Rebecca Trahan said she always buys her tree at the store. “I like to support the students.” Bentley Chou of Salisbury was there with her family. She said this was their first time. “We usually cut down our own, but the offerings this year weren’t as good.” Dean Yuliano of Lakeville also had children who went through the program. “We come every year. They always have good trees.”



Housatonic Valley Regional High School student Chris Crane loads a Christmas tree onto a customer’s car at the school’s Holiday Store.

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FIREHOUSE

Continued from Page A1
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Henry Tirrell, Norfolk's newly-elected First Selectman, welcomed the crowd of more than 150 people. He thanked his predecessor, Matt Riiska, a key player who worked for the past five years to secure funding for the building projected to cost \$10.4 million.

Assistant Chief Matt Ludwig said, "One thing this experience has taught me is that building a firehouse isn't just about blueprints and budgets. It's about people, patience and a whole lot of teamwork."

Fire Chief Brian Hutchins said, "This reflects the trust this town places in its volunteers, and the commitment we make in return; to be ready, dependable, and there when someone needs us. To the members of the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department: this moment belongs to you as well. Your dedication, your patience, and your steady commitment to serving this town are the reason this station is being built; and it's well earned."

Tony Kiser and Barry Roseman lead the capital campaign, which to date has raised \$3 million. Tirrell acknowledged the work of the architects Silver, Petru-



PHOTOS BY JENNIFER ALMQUIST
Left, NVFD crew members move dirt at the groundbreaking ceremony Dec. 6. Top left, U.S. Congresswoman Jahana Hayes (D-5) stands with State Rep. Maria Horn (D-64) at the firehouse. Above, Norfolk First Selectman Henry Tirrell at the dig.

celli + Associates of Hamden and Newfield Construction Group of West Hartford, which is managing the project.

State Rep. Horn helped secure a \$2.5 million state grant for the new firehouse. A longtime champion of the plan, she was warmly received by the crowd. She said, "This is really exciting to have this finally coming to fruition and start the official

part of the process on a sunny day in the Icebox." Congresswoman Hayes secured a \$500,000 federal grant for the firehouse. She stood looking across at the gleaming firetrucks and added, "This is a really great day. I am glad to be a part of it and look forward to cutting the ribbon with you next year." Tirrell smiled as the shovels were gathered up, "I am so proud to be part of such

an amazing town. One of the cornerstones of our community is the shared support for each other." As people said their good-byes and stomped the mud from their boots, Tirrell added, "I am thrilled that we are starting this final step to get the NVFD a facility that is safe and meets their needs, plus the needs of this town, so they can continue to keep us and our homes safe."

BEARS

Continued from Page A1

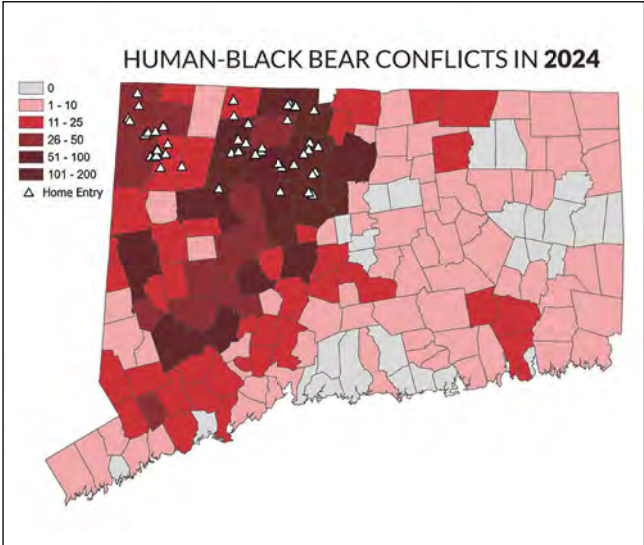
was last estimated at roughly 1,100 to 1,200 animals, a number that DEEP recognizes has grown since the study was conducted in 2012. Eric Hammering, the office director of Environmental Review & Strategic Initiatives at DEEP, told the attendees that since 2020 there have been 264 reported home entries in 38 municipalities in northwest Connecticut, citing data from the state's State of the Bears report released in March. A home entry, he said, is defined as an event when a bear actually goes inside a resident's living space.

DEEP officials stressed that bird feeders and unsecured household trash are the two biggest drivers of bear conflicts. They advise residents to remove feeders entirely and keep their garbage inside or in bear-resistant containers. DEEP representatives noted that once a bear discovers food, it is likely to develop habits and return.

Many attendees said they see widespread noncompliance in their neighborhoods — particularly among part-time residents and short-term rental guests who leave trash out for days. Several said they were frustrated that the people causing the problem are often not the ones who attend sessions like this.

As a result, a number of residents called for stronger statewide enforcement, including fines for leaving trash unsecured and penalties for repeated violations. Without consequences, they said, the same households will continue to attract bears and put neighbors at risk. Others described practical steps to reduce bear activity—including the use of secure dumpsters, food composting stations, and the placement of electric fencing around livestock and beehives.

Again and again, residents emphasized that the underlying issue is human behavior. One attendee summarized it succinctly: "There are 3.6 million people in Connecticut and far fewer bears. Human behavior is the problem."



MAP COURTESY CT DEEP

From the State of the Bears Report, March 2025.

Lynn Levine, a Litchfield resident who enjoys seeing bears, said common sense steps are the answer. She said that when she first moved to the area, she mistakenly left her garage down open with a 15-pound bag of shelled peanuts inside. "A bear dragged the bag around the side of the garage, sat down and had a teddy bear picnic." She said she learned not to leave the garage door open, especially with food inside.

Not all the stories were lighthearted. An 82-year-old Sharon woman recounted repeated break-ins that left her shaken and facing thousands of dollars in repairs, including a bear walking into her kitchen while she was washing dishes. A veterinarian described livestock attacks, including an alpaca that was mauled and dragged. A farmer said bears caused about \$160,000 in crop losses in one year and that cornfields across the region face similar damage.

Several speakers added that DEEP's limited staffing means local police often end up responding when bears are struck by cars or behaving aggressively. People are frightened Cornwall First Selectman Gordon Ridgway, who attended the session, said afterward that he was troubled by how outdated the state's population data is. "My biggest personal take-away was surprise — that DEEP doesn't have a handle on how many bears are here," he said. "They said

they haven't surveyed them since 2012. How do you make a plan or policy without doing a survey?" Ridgway said Cornwall has received about 40 bear-related reports this year, including home and vehicle entries and injuries to pets. "People are frightened by intrusions onto their property," he said. "These are not happy stories." He noted that in 2012 -- when the state said it last did its population count -- "a bear was a novelty," but sightings today are very common. "Today, most people see a bear every week. It's no longer a novelty — it's a real issue." Ridgway said he supports developing a statewide management plan and wants Connecticut to examine

approaches used in other states, including reducing their numbers. While most attendees at the Dec. 3 session indicated they opposed a hunt, Ridgway said that is not a true reflection of how his constituents in Cornwall view the issue. "If we had a vote, it would be close as to whether there should be a hunting season." Only one resident called for a hunt Only one attendee — a longtime hunter from West Cornwall — advocated for a controlled bear hunt. He argued that the population is "exploding" and that education and bear-proof containers are "a band-aid." In keeping with DEEP's rules, other residents did not respond, and the session took place without conflict. Much of the remaining discussion centered on unsecured trash, short-term rentals, and outdated dumpsters at state parks that residents say train bears to expect human food. Some questioned why the listening session was not better publicized, and Ridgway echoed that concern, saying it should have also been held at the high school to allow more residents to attend. DEEP collected comment cards at the end of the session. Staff said all feedback will be reviewed as the agency drafts its statewide bear management report.

TRANSITION

Continued from Page A1

24. "If we can set a time, I can help you do this at the Selectman's Office. It should take under 10 minutes." The transfer never took place and earlier this month, the page disappeared entirely. Bunce said he and his staff are now creating a new town Facebook page under the same name so residents can resume receiving updates, though followers of the original page will need to re-follow the new one.

Ohler said he tried to transfer the page but ran into verification hurdles tied to his personal account. He said he contacted Facebook for help and ultimately concluded that deleting the page was the only solution. Town attorney D. Randall DiBella, a partner at Cramer & Anderson, called the situation extraordinary. "This is the first time I have had this issue in 44 years," he said, noting his firm represents nine Connecticut towns.

DiBella said Ohler lawfully managed the page while serving as first selectman, but was not permitted to continue doing so once he lost the election. He was unaware the page had been deleted, but said its removal was a positive development. DiBella said it is still unclear if the Facebook page constituted town property. Ohler maintained that he was not trying to obstruct the transition. "Between Jesse and I, there has been no animosity," Ohler said. "People have their opinions, but we were willing to offer information without issue."

Teacher pay delayed as treasurer transition hits snags Another early test of the transition emerged when teachers and staff at North Canaan Elementary School were paid several days late. The delay stemmed from handoff problems between outgoing treasurer Emily Minacci and incoming Treasurer Melanie Neely, a Democrat who defeated Minacci in November.

School employees were supposed to receive their pay on Wednesday, Nov. 26 — the day before Thanksgiving — but the deposits never hit their accounts. Neely and Bunce learned of the missed payroll on Friday, Nov. 28, and went to the bank to resolve the problem. According to Bunce, the bank had indicated earlier in the week that the school's payroll ran automatically via ACH payments, like all other town departments. Instead, they learned that the school payroll required manual approval, which Neely was unable to process since she did not have online bank access. Getting access is not easy, officials said, unless it is transferred. "It's a multimillion-dollar account," Bunce said. "There are lots of verifications. They don't just turn over access like that."

Neely, who now has online access, said steps have been put in place to prevent similar issues. "We are setting up procedures to make sure an outgoing treasurer provides online access to a new treasurer, which will make transitions quicker and smoother," she said. Principal Beth Johnson assisted school employees once she learned of the delay. She called employees on Friday, Nov. 28, and offered to issue checks to anyone who needed immediate funds; one employee accepted. Johnson said the matter "has been resolved."

Administrative turnover adds complications The Town's administrative assistant resigned around the time of the recount, adding another layer of disruption during the transition. The assistant's departure made it difficult for Bunce to access several of the town's communication tools. Although he eventually received the correct usernames and passwords for Constant Contact, the system continued sending verification codes to phone numbers belonging to former staff, temporarily locking him out. Similar login problems also pertained to the town's Zoom and YouTube accounts, which are used to livestream and archive public meetings.

Bunce, however, said he now has access to them. **Board of Selectmen's monthly meeting postponed** Bunce pushed back his first Board of Selectmen meeting as First Selectman from Dec. 1 to Dec. 15.

He said that he postponed the meeting because several key officials — the treasurer, tax collector, town clerk and his administrative assistant — were new to their roles. He said he wanted to get to know them and learn more about their departments before the meeting. "I'd like to have a few weeks together before we go to the public," he said, noting that with all the change, it was too soon.

Call for cooperation despite tensions In interviews, both Bunce and Ohler insist the transition remains cordial, even as the bumps draw public attention.

Bunce said Ohler has come to his office, reviewed upcoming matters, and "has been accessible" when questions arise. "It's no easy thing to lose an election," Bunce said. "I think he's handled it with grace." Ohler said he has refrained from engaging in online back-and-forth, even as he bristled at political commentary from some residents. "I'm not one to malign anyone," he said. "When my name is dragged through the mud, I don't take the bait." Both men said they hope the town will move past election-season tensions.

PROJECT
SAGE
to end relationship violence

1 in 4 men will experience domestic violence in their lifetime.
If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, we can help.
Call Project SAGE 24/7 at 860-364-1900

project-sage.org
13a Porter Street Lakeville, CT 06039

Dec. 6-7
12-5 PM

Dec. 13-14
12-5 PM

Winter
Wonderland
Market

TO BENEFIT WASSAIC PROJECT
ARTS EDUCATION

Wassaic Project 37 Furnace Bank Rd, Wassaic, NY

Sports



PHOTOS BY RILEY KLEIN

Housatonic Valley Regional High School’s girls and boys basketball teams are ready for another season on the court in their colorful kicks. Above, from left, Autumn McKone, Olivia Simonds, Keely Malone, Selena Black, Hayden Bachman, Olivia Brooks, Maddie Johnson, Victoria Brooks, Carmela Egan, Aubrey Funk, Grace Graney and Noell Laurry. Below, from left, Rhys Culbreth, Anthony Labbadia, Owen Riemer, Timothy Coon, Henry Berry, Wyatt Bayer, Anthony Foley, Wes Allyn, Simon Markow, Nick Crodelle, Tyler Roberts, Peyton Bushnell, Jaxon Visockis, Bryce Salmon and Jasper Oyanadel. (Not pictured: Mya Weed and Ryan Segalla)



Mountaineers lace up for varsity basketball

By Riley Klein

FALLS VILLAGE — Squeaking sneakers could be heard in Ed Tyburski Gym the first week of December as athletes hit the hardwood for basketball practice at Housatonic Valley Regional High School.

Part performance and part style, shoes say a lot about a player. Ahead of the coming season in the Berkshire League, the Mountaineers’ varsity and junior varsity squads shared insight into the footwear that connects them to the court.

Girls

Senior captain Olivia Brooks, a 5-foot 1-inch point guard, will be playing this season in a pair of Nike LeBron 20s. She said she was drawn to the “violet frost” colorway and the double swoosh.

Her sister and fellow captain Victoria Brooks, 4-11 guard, was also wearing a pair of LeBron 20s that “didn’t fit my twin sister’s feet.”

Senior captain Maddie Johnson, 5-7 center, laced up her Nike LeBron NXXT Genisus shoes. She chose them for both fashion and function: they’re lightweight and she liked the white and Aegean storm colorway.

Hayden Bachman, junior 5-3 guard, was wearing Nike Sabrina 3s, the official shoe of Sabrina Ionescu, in the

summit white, iron grey and photon dust colorway.

Carmela Egan, junior 5-7 forward/center, wore blue Puma x LaMelo Ball basketball shoes.

Grace Graney, junior 5-5 guard/forward, was in a pair of purple Steph Curry’s by Under Armor.

Selena Black, junior 4-11 guard, wore high top CL Bangs in a purple and white style.

Lily Gold, sophomore 5-3 guard, had white Under Armor shoes on.

Noell Laurry, freshman 5-7 center, wore Giannis Immortality 4s in the wolf grey, luminous green and metallic silver colorway.

Aubrey Funk, freshman 5-2 point guard, was wearing pink custom Nike KDs.

Mya Weed, 5-5 freshman guard, also wore Nike KDs, the official shoe of Kevin Durant.

Keely Malone, freshman 5-3 guard/forward, had Nike Sabrina 3s in the summit white, iron grey and photon dust colorway.

Autumn McKone, freshman 5-4 guard/forward, was wearing Nike Luka Doncic 4s in flash crimson and sunset pulse.

Olivia Simonds, freshman 5-4 guard/forward, had white and pure platinum Nike A’Ones. She liked the A’ja Wilson shoes for their clean look, plus “they’re comfy and bouncy.”



PHOTO BY SIMON MARKOW

These Way of Wade Shadow 6 V2 “Road to Finals” sneakers will be worn by Simon Markow, forward, in the coming basketball season.

Boys

Simon Markow, senior 6-2 forward, chose his SpongeBob-esque Way of Wade Shadow 6 V2 “Road to Finals” sneakers because they match the Mountaineer yellow and “Dwyane Wade was a big dunker, and that’s what I plan to be doing this season.”

Anthony Foley, senior 6-3 forward, had Nike Sabrina 3s in the “Radiant” colorway, which is described as a mix of grape, magic ember and bright peach. He liked the flashy colors and said they are “rated one of the best grip shoes.”

Owen Riemer, senior 6-2 shooting guard, wore teal Nike G.T. Cuts. He said the shoes have VKTRY insoles and are “really light with a lot of spring.”

Nick Crodelle, senior 6-0 point guard, was in black and white Curry 11s that he described as durable and comfortable. While he chose them for function, he noted, “They look good though.”

Tyler Roberts, senior 5-8

guard, also had on Ja 3s. His pair was black and blue in the “Scratch 3.0” colorway. He noted they have good cushion and traction.

Anthony Labbadia, senior 6-1 guard, wore Nike Ja 3s. In the “Hustle & Flow” style, each shoe is unique: one yellow and one purple. “They looked really light and Ja [Morant] loves to dunk.”

Henry Berry, senior 5-10 guard, wore ANTA KAIs, Kyrie Irving’s official shoe, in a blue and red design. The shoes, he said, have great cushion and help him move easily.

Wyatt Bayer, junior 5-11 guard, had Curry 12s in the “fire and ice” style. One shoe was blue Atlantis color, the other dark orange. He liked the the look and support of the dual colored shoes.

Ryan Segalla, junior 6-2 forward, will be playing in a pair of pink Nike KD 18s.

Rhys Culbreth, junior 6-0 guard, was wearing nightmare red Nike Ja 2s, which he described as “really comfortable” with great traction.

Jasper Oyanadel, junior 6-0 center, wore wolf gray Nike Giannis Immortality 4s. “They’re reliable,” he said. “Won’t tear on the sides, good grip.”

Peyton Bushnell, sophomore 5-10 point guard, was in Nike Sabrina 2s for their functionality. He chose based

on ratings for best traction and ankle support.

Jaxon Visockis, freshman 5-2 guard, wore white and turquoise Nike G.T. Cut 3s. He said they are “durable with good grip. I can stop quick and get to where I want to be.”

Timothy Coon, freshman 5-9 guard/forward, wore Nike Giannis 4s in the white and sky-blue style. “They’re the first ones I saw.”

Bryce Salmon, freshman 5-7.5 guard, had gray and light blue Nike G.T. Cuts.

Wes Allyn, senior 6-4.5 center, was rocking a leg brace and a crutch as he recovered from knee surgery due to a football injury. He said he plans to be back on the court in February, at which point he will be wearing Jordan Why Not 0.6s, the Russel Westbrook shoe, in a bright red colorway with green accents. “They’re really roomy for bigger insoles with a larger toe box.”

Holiday Artisan Markets

Saturday, December 13th

10 am – 5 pm

The White Hart, Salisbury, CT

Featuring Local Artisans!

Proceeds benefiting local non-profits
info: artisansale.org

See more preseason sports coverage for Housatonic Valley Regional High School on the next page

Winter sports season approaches

By Riley Klein

FALLS VILLAGE — After concluding a successful autumn of athletics, Housatonic Valley Regional High School is set to field teams in five sports this winter.

Basketball

Berkshire League basketball tips off Tuesday, Dec. 14. HVRHS's girls and boys squads will face Nonnewaug High School to start the season.

The boys varsity team is under new leadership this year with the addition of head coach Bobby Chatfield. The boys will be out for revenge in the season opener at Nonnewaug, which knocked HVRHS out of the BL post-season tournament last year.

The girls will be at home Dec. 14 for the first league game of the basketball season. Coach Jake Plitt returns for his fourth season at the helm.

Last year, the HVRHS girls were eliminated in the semifinals of the BL tournament by Northwestern Regional High School on their way to repeating as champions.



PHOTO BY RILEY KLEIN

The boys basketball team is seen practicing Saturday, Dec. 6, ahead of the season.

Hockey

Ice hockey players have joined a co-op team this year with New Milford High School. Two HVRHS athletes will be on the team: Logan Miller and Melanie Rundall.

Games and practices will be held at Canterbury School's O'Neil Arena. The first official hockey game of the 2025-26 season will be Dec. 17 at home against the Newtown-New Fairfield co-op.

The Housatonic co-op team that was previously led by coach Dean Diamond disbanded after last season due to a player shortage.

The New Milford co-op is led by coach Hank Dietter.

Swimming

The HVRHS swim team, coached by Jaqueline Rice, will begin the season with a road stretch. The first meet will be held Dec. 18 at Shepaug Valley High School, followed by meets at Northwestern and then Lakeview High School.

The first home meet for the swim team will be Jan. 14 against Nonnewaug, held at The Hotchkiss School's pool.

New to the team this year is freshman Phoebe Conklin, who raced at the 2025 YMCA National Long Course Swimming Championships in Ocala, Florida, in the 50-meter freestyle, 100-meter freestyle and 100-meter butterfly.

Skiing

The HVRHS ski team practices and competes at Mohawk Mountain ski area in Cornwall.

Competition will hit the slopes beginning with a group meet at home Wednesday, Jan. 14.

The HVRHS ski team is coached by Bill Gold.

Indoor track

The last winter sport to get underway will be indoor track. Silas Tripp was the lone Mountaineer to sign up for the sport. He will represent HVRHS, but travel with Lakeview athletes to meets.

The first scheduled event will be at Bethel the weekend of Feb. 6 to Feb. 8.

HVRHS announces fall sports awards

FALLS VILLAGE — Housatonic Valley Regional High School celebrated its Fall Sports Awards on Thursday, Dec. 4. Athletic awards were presented to athletes.

The Tyburski Award is given to an outstanding freshman and the Stevenson Award is given for junior varsity sportsmanship. Four Year Awards go to seniors for competing in a sport each year of high school.

Football awards for the Gilbert/Northwestern/Housatonic co-op team were presented at the football dinner. HVRHS's Wes Allyn was named to the Naugatuck Valley League defensive second team.

Boys Soccer

Most Valuable: Abram Kirshner, Gustavo Portillo
Most Improved: Jackson McAvoy
Sportsmanship: Adam Hock
Tyburski Award: Raymond Houghtaling
JV Most Improved: Justin Sorrell
Stevenson Award: Federico Vargas Tobon

Girls Soccer

Most Valuable: Ava Segalla
Most Improved: Vilija Salazar
Sportsmanship: Meadow Moerschell
Tyburski Award: Lyla Diorio
JV Most Improved: Lola Miller
Stevenson Award: Keely Malone

Girls Cross Country

Most Valuable: Olivia Brooks
Most Improved: Hannah Johnson
Sportsmanship: Grace Graney
Tyburski Award: Sophia Paz-Cortez

Boys Cross Country

Most Valuable: Silas Tripp
Most Improved: Nico Bochnovich
Sportsmanship: Bailey Williams
Tyburski Award: Elden Grace

Volleyball

Most Valuable: Sydney Howe
Most Improved: Lydia Fleming
Sportsmanship: Richie Crane
Tyburski Award: Sophia Funk
JV Most Improved: Grace O'Brocki
Stevenson Award: Caitlin Devino

Golf

Most Valuable: Jonas Johnson, Daniel Moran
Most Improved: Jacoby Reeve
Sportsmanship: Logan Miller
Tyburski Award: Ava Humes
Stevenson Award: Nick Sartorini

Four Year Awards

Cross Country: Hannah Johnson, Silas Tripp
Boys Soccer: Everet Belancik, Graham Belancik, Henry Berry, Adam Hock, Anthony Labbadia, Eric Lopez Espinosa,
Girls Soccer: Madeline Mechare, Ava Segalla
Football: Wesley Allyn, Hunter Conklin, Nick Crodelle, Logan Labshere, Owen Riemer, Cole Simonds
Volleyball: Victoria Brooks, Katie Crane, Richie Crane, Anna Gillette, Chloe Hill, Abby Sherwood

Housy girls begin basketball preseason with scrimmage against Torrington

By Riley Klein

FALLS VILLAGE — Torrington High School's girls basketball team traveled to Housatonic Valley Regional High School Friday, Dec. 5, for a scrimmage.

The exhibition game featured a mix of varsity and junior varsity competition, giving the full roster an opportunity for floor time ahead of league games in the 2025-26 basketball season.

HVRHS's varsity squad sent out a starting lineup of three seniors, Victoria Brooks, Olivia Brooks and Maddie Johnson, with two juniors, Hayden Bachman and Carmela Egan. Coming off the bench were junior Grace Graney and freshman Aubrey Funk.

Coach Jake Plitt started the girls in a zone defense but later adjusted to man-to-



Point guard Olivia Brooks is a senior captain.

man. The straight-up coverage was more effective, and the Mountaineers successfully won that quarter against the Raiders.

Funk led the JV squad as point guard, along with teammates Selena Black, Lily Gold, Noell Laurry, Olivia Simonds, Keely Malone, Mya Weed and Autumn McKone.

The scoreboard reset each quarter of the scrimmage and there was no final score.



PHOTOS BY RILEY KLEIN

Above, Noell Laurry wins the tip off in the junior varsity portion of the scrimmage between HVRHS and Torrington Friday, Dec. 5. Left, Olivia Simonds secures a steal for Housatonic.



At The Movies

Moviehouse SHOWTIMES & TICKETS FRI 12/12 > THU 12/18 (518) 789-0022 themoviehouse.net

HAMNET	December 11 @ 7PM THE NUTCRACKER at Wethersfield + Q&A with Additional Shows Dec 12, 13 & 14
WICKED: FOR GOOD	December 13 @ 1PM Met Live: Giordano's ANDREA CHENIER
ZOOTOPIA 2	December 17 @ 6:30PM Member Holiday Event THE HOLIDAY
IT WAS JUST AN ACCIDENT	AVATAR: FIRE & ASH OPENS 12/18 Not a Member? JOIN TODAY!
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Painting and Acoustics with Bobby + Kellyn Trapp

Friday, December 12 2:00 - 3:30PM Learning Center

Bobby and Kellyn are a very special couple with a calling to create, teach, and build community through artistic expression. During this unique event, Kellyn will teach us to paint a poinsettia on a wooden canvas while Bobby will serenade us with his acoustic guitar! Join us for this creative class that you will never forget. Beginners are welcome, no experience necessary. There is no fee for this class and supplies will be provided, but registration is required! To register, go to noblehorizons.org/events-activities or scan QR code below.

Noble HORIZONS 17 Cobble Rd. Salisbury, CT 06068 860-435-9851 noblehorizons.org

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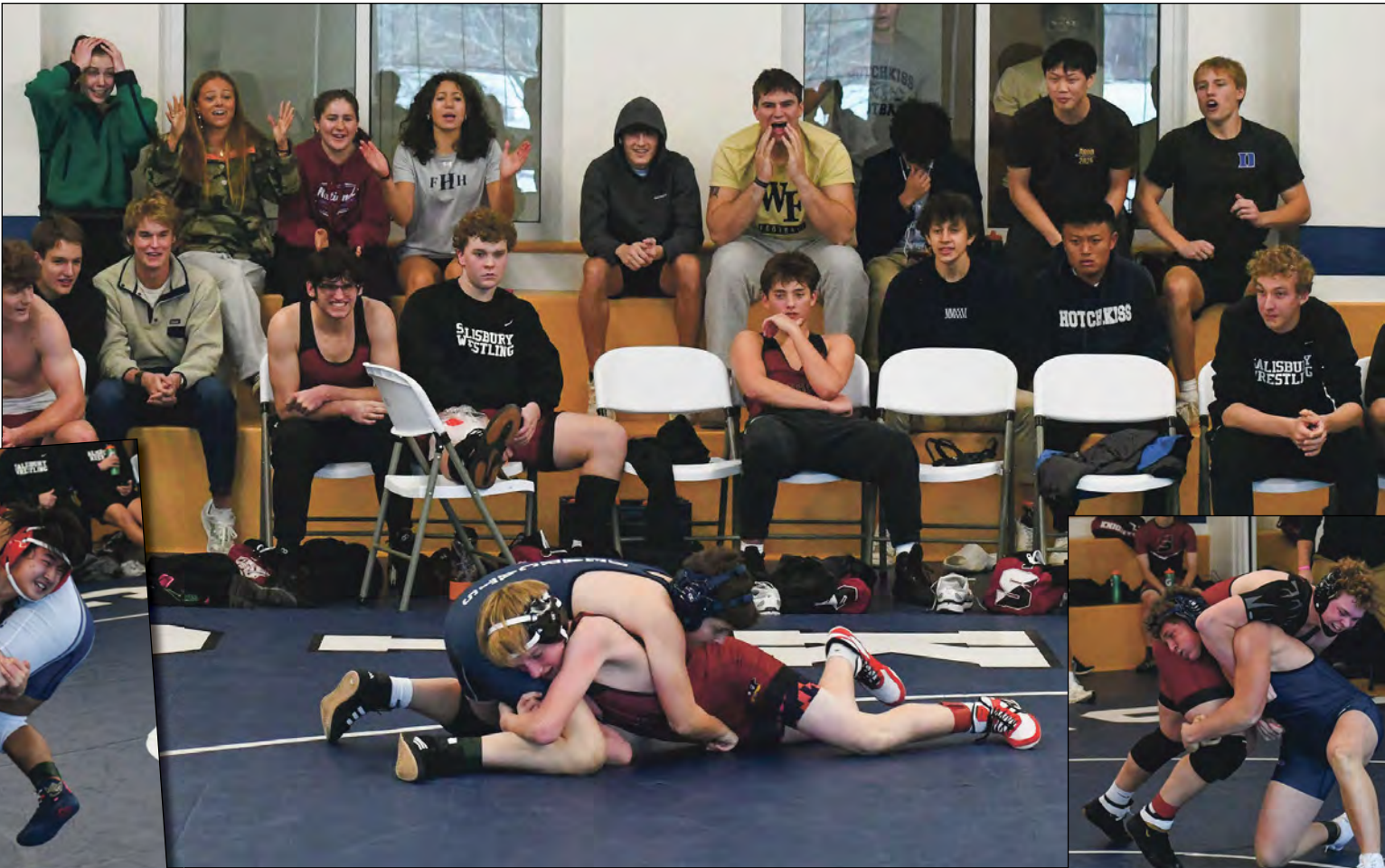
Stadium System Inc. 297 Ashley Falls Road Cannan, CT 06018 860-824-4300 TREE & WREATH SALES Starting 11/28 Monday -Sunday 10:00 AM -6:00 PM 'Tis the season of giving

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Sports

Cross-town
throw down

The Hotchkiss School hosted Salisbury School for a wrestling scrimmage Wednesday, Dec. 3, to start the 2025-26 season. The Knights traveled from Old Sarum to Lakeville to take on the Bearcats for a preseason meet between the Town of Salisbury's two prep schools. Fourteen bouts unfolded with lots of slams, pins, escapes and roaring cheers.



PHOTOS BY RILEY KLEIN

Berkshire Bears beat Kent Lions 2-0 in girls ice hockey

By Lans Christensen

KENT — The Berkshire School Bears' girls ice hockey team came to Kent School Saturday, Dec. 6, for what promised to be a tough match between two high-powered New England Prep School Athletic Council Division I teams.

The first period fulfilled that promise with both teams playing aggressively on attack and defense. Despite the action and many attempts, the first period ended scoreless.

The second period began with the equal effort from both teams. Neither side was able to capitalize on their advantage when an opposing player was in the penalty booth. The second period ended with the 0-0 score still in place.

The third period began and, seemingly out of nowhere, Berkshire scored 45 seconds later. Cora Davidson snuck a puck into the net to put the bears up 1-0.

Berkshire kept the momentum rolling in the third period and Addie Lang scored again with seven minutes left.

The match ended 2-0 in favor of Berkshire. A tough loss for Kent but still a long season ahead.



Kent's Olivia Machan takes a shot through traffic in the game against Berkshire School Saturday, Dec. 6.



Lily Herzog controls the puck for Berkshire.



Kent's Dakota Boyle attacks on offense.

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U.S. News
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WBSL FM 91.7
Serving North Canaan, CT, Sheffield and South County, MA

TRI-CORNER CALENDAR

Items are printed as space permits. Submit calendar items to editor@lakevillejournal.com

DECEMBER 11

Cookie Exchange

The Center on Main, 103 Main St., Falls Village, Conn. thecenteronmain.org

Please join us at the Center on Main on Dec. 11 from 4 to 6 p.m. for a cookie exchange! Bring two dozen of your favorite homemade cookies and swap them for your choice of two dozen cookies from everyone's offerings. Join us starting at 4pm for cookie check-in, mingling, and hot beverages. The cookie exchange will begin at 5:15 p.m., after everyone has arrived. This free event is co-hosted by The Center on Main and The D.M. Hunt Library. Please register using this link: www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/cookie-exchange-2

DECEMBER 12

Finding the Wonder in New England Birds

Sharon Audubon, 325 Cornwall Bridge Road, Sharon, Conn.

From 7 to 8:30 p.m. former Audubon naturalist Zach Adams will discuss his new field guide, "Birds of New England," and share stories from his birding adventures. A book signing and light refreshments will follow, along with holiday sales in the Nature Store. Free for adults 18+. Pre-registration encouraged. act.audubon.org/a/finding-wonder-new-england-birds-12122025

Stephen Bennett's Annual Christmas Concert

Sharon United Methodist Church, 112 Upper Main St., Sharon, Conn.

Guitar phenom Stephen Bennett will play his annual Christmas concert at 7 p.m. This is a fundraiser for Fishes & Loaves, a food pantry serving people in North Canaan, Falls Village and Norfolk.

Salisbury Forum Talk on the Impact of Declining Birth Rates

Housatonic Valley Regional High School, 246 Warren Tpke., Falls Village, Conn.

Friday, Dec. 12, at 7 p.m., HVRHS will host a talk on the global implications of declining birth rates. The Salisbury Forum will present "Not Too Many, Too Few: Population, Progress and the Case for People," a discussion with University of Texas economists and demographers Dean Spears and Michael Geroso. Admission is free. Learn more at www.salisburyforum.org.

Poetry Workshop with Sally Van Doren

Scoville Memorial Library, 38 Main St., Salisbury, Conn. scovillelibrary.org

2 to 4 p.m., join poet and artist Sally Van Doren for an immersive workshop using inspiring poems and well-chosen prompts to unlock the imagination and generate unexpected new work. No previous poetry-writing experience. Registration is required at scovillelibrary.libcal.com/event/15132244

DECEMBER 13

Enjoying Birds, Counting Birds, Helping Birds: Christmas Bird Watch Count and Project Feederwatch Primer

Sharon Audubon, 325 Cornwall Bridge Road, Sharon, Conn.

From 10 to 11:30 a.m. Learn beginner-friendly winter bird ID and how to take part in the Christmas Bird Count and Project FeederWatch.

Gingerbread House Decorating with Chef Emma

Troutbeck, 515 Leedsville Road, Amenia, N.Y.

Dec. 13, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. or 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Decorate a gingerbread house with Troutbeck Pastry Chef Emma Isakoff. Twelve houses per session; limit two people per house. Ideal for children ages 4–12 (parent required for those 12 and under). \$90 per person; \$80 for members. Reservations: troutbeck.com/culture/gingerbread-house-decorating-with-chef-emma-2025/

23rd Annual Christmas Party

Kent Historical Society, 93 N. Main St., Kent, Conn.

Join us 5 to 8 p.m. for the annual celebration presented by Kent Historical Society as a thank you to our community. This year we'll have a special Museum Shop Gift Basket Raffle. Bring your holiday cheer! Admission is free; donations welcome. Optional: bring an appetizer, dessert or festive dish to share.

Windborne: The Music of Midwinter

Stissing Center for Arts & Culture, 2950 Church St., Pine Plains, N.Y.

At 7 p.m. Windborne's captivating show draws on the singers' deep roots in traditions of vocal harmony. Tickets: ci.ovationtix.com/36784/production/1245532?performanceId=11665217

Current Fiction Book Group with Claudia Cayne

Scoville Memorial Library, 38 Main St., Salisbury, Conn. scovillelibrary.org

Join Claudia Cayne on Saturday, Dec. 13, 4 to 5 p.m., for a lively and informal discussion of the novel "Orbital," by Samantha Harvey. Critically acclaimed and a winner of the Booker Prize, "Orbital" deftly snapshots a day in the lives of six characters hurtling through space. Registration is not required. All are welcome.

Falls Village Holiday Extravaganza

The Center on Main, 103 Main St., Falls Village, Conn. thecenteronmain.org

From 4 to 6 p.m. get into the holiday spirit at the Falls Village Holiday Extravaganza at the Center on Main, hosted by the David M. Hunt Library, Falls Village Recreation Commission, and the Center on Main! Join us for community holiday music and readings at 4 p.m. before experiencing the annual Tree Lighting at 5, with Santa coming down Main Street. After the tree lighting ceremony, join us inside the Center on Main for visits with Santa. Enjoy some complimentary hot cocoa and oookies while you wait!

Holiday Fête at Fiddlestyx

Fiddlestyx, 85 Sharon Mountain Road, Sharon, Conn.

Second annual Holiday Fête in the great room at Fiddlestyx featuring goods from artist friends and makers from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Craft Feast 2025

Stissing House, 7801 South Main St., Pine Plains, N.Y. www.stissinghouse.com

Join Deborah Needleman Dec. 13 and 14 for the third annual celebration of American craft. Fifty makers and dealers fill the tavern with pottery, baskets, textiles, furniture, and more. Enjoy broth, brooms, whittled spoons, and carols.

Tickets for both days available through Resy.

Last week's WotW				
C	H	I	C	K
U	S	H	E	R
M	U	S	H	Y
P	L	U	S	H
S	L	U	S	H

DECEMBER 14

Hike Day Preserve

Day Preserve, 285 Sharon Goshen Turnpike, West Cornwall, Conn.

On Sunday, Dec. 14 at 10 a.m., Terry Burke will be leading a hike through the Day Preserve. This preserve trail is a steady rise through wooded fern beds, to a field and ridge top view. It is a medium level and is 1.9 miles, our longest. Be tick savvy too.

Trixie Strauss Christmas Bird Count

Sharon Audubon, 325 Cornwall Bridge Road, Sharon, Conn.

Dec. 14 and 15, 12 p.m. The Christmas Bird Count is 126 years old this year! That means everyday people have been counting birds for science for over a century. Email Volunteer Coordinator & Naturalist, Bethany Sheffer, at Bethany.sheffer@audubon.org to learn more about how you can join us this year.

Intro to Chore Service

Hotchkiss Library of Sharon, 10 Upper Main St., Sharon, Conn. hotchkisslibraryofsharon.org

On Sunday, Dec. 14, at 4 p.m., Hotchkiss Library of Sharon's Volunteer Guild will host Chore Service for an informational session introducing the essential non-medical support they provide to older adults and individuals with

disabilities throughout Litchfield County. The event is free and open to the public, with registration required: hotchkisslibrary.libcal.com/event/15645311

Regalis Pop-Up: Caviar, Truffles, Smoked Fish + More

Troutbeck, 515 Leedsville Road, Amenia, N.Y.

On Dec. 14, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Chef Ryan Tate offers a selection of Regalis' smoked fish, caviar, truffles, tinned fish and more ahead of his White Alba Truffle Supper Series from 5:30 to 9 p.m. Skip shipping fees and shop in person with expert guidance. Stay for brunch with luxe specials, and reserve the White Alba Truffle Supper Series dinner that evening.

Community Supper and Film Screening

Westerly Canteen, 3201 NY-199, Pine Plains, N.Y.

A nourishing evening of a warming meal followed by a complimentary screening of Andrea Gibson's documentary, "Come See Me In the Good Light." Supper will be served at 5 p.m., and the film screening will begin at 6 p.m. Discount code (ANDREA20) is available for anyone needing it. Tickets: www.exploretock.com/westerly-canteen/event/581555/a-night-for-tender-hearts

Book Discussion with Author Jana Laiz

Scoville Memorial Library, 38 Main St., Salisbury, Conn. scovillelibrary.org

4 to 5:30 p.m., join in discussion with the author of "A Free Woman on God & Earth: The True Story of Elizabeth 'Mumbet' Freeman." This illustrated biography for young readers recounts the life of an enslaved African woman living in Sheffield, Mass., who successfully sued for her freedom in 1781. Free copies of the book are available at the library. Readers of all ages are welcome.

Registration is requested at scovillelibrary.libcal.com/event/15517770

DECEMBER 17

Leland Faulkner: World of Wonder

The Norfolk Library, 9 Greenwoods Road East, Norfolk, Conn. norfolklibrary.org

Join us at the Norfolk Library at 3:45 p.m. for an animated journey around the planet with Leland Faulkner. Children will need a note to get off the school bus at the Library. Adults are welcome too.

To register for this program, please visit www.norfolklibrary.org or call front desk circulation 860-542-5075 ext. 2

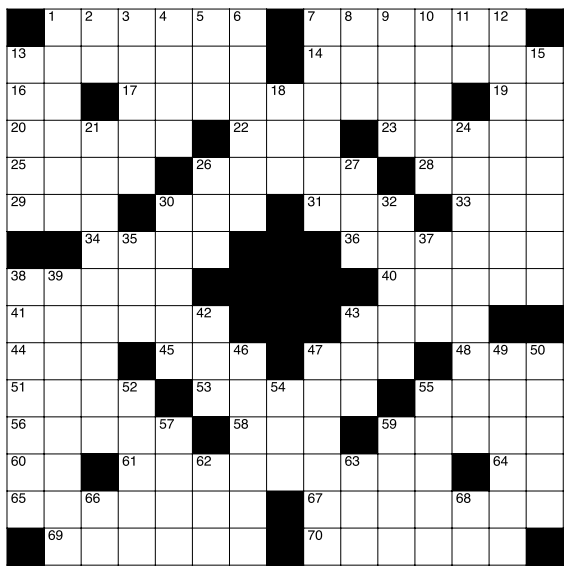
Brain Teasers

CLUES ACROSS

- Spiritual leaders
- A type of solution
- Fortified wine
- Edible mollusk
- They precede C
- A way to compare
- Government lawyer
- "Game of Thrones" actor Ciaran
- The eighth month (abbr.)
- Very willing
- __ ex Machina
- Makes happy
- Type of berry
- A doctrine
- Popular Dodge truck model
- Dekagram
- Naturally occurring solid
- Company officer
- Villains
- Cricket frogs
- Influential German psychologist
- Endured
- A female domestic
- You can get stuck in one
- Cigarette (slang)
- Fiber optics network
- Group of blood disorders (abbr.)
- Employee stock ownership plan
- Belonging to the bottom layer
- Sound
- MLB legend Hank
- Very attractive person
- Late beloved sportscaster Craig
- South Dakota
- Mocking
- Symbol for gold
- Longtime Braves pitcher Julio
- Humor
- Shawl
- Preliminary patient assessment

CLUES DOWN

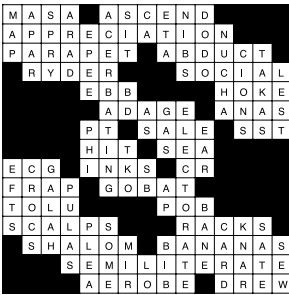
- Animal disease
- Commercial
- Necklace material
- Containers
- A way to save for your future
- Colorado Heisman winner Rashaan
- Dipped down
- Head injury (abbr.)
- Lay about



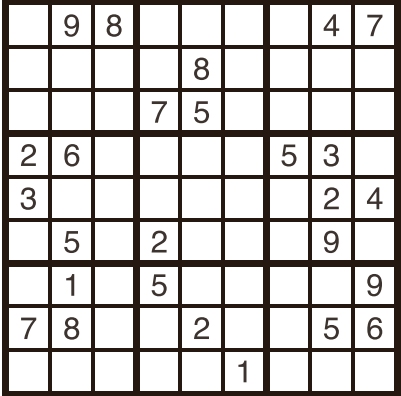
- Intestinal
- Opposite of yes
- Caused to be loved
- Spiritual leader of Islam
- Businesslike
- Not in
- Number above the line in a fraction
- An animal with its own day
- Pouch
- Swedish krona
- Start over
- Field flowers
- Fourteen
- A visual way to interact with a computer
- Up-to-date
- Campaigns
- Touch lightly
- "Boardwalk Empire" actress Gretchen
- Violent seizure of property
- Supporter of the Pope

- Anxiety
- Body fluid
- One who's faking it
- Title of respect
- Chilean city
- City in central Japan
- Silk garment
- A form of dance
- Automobile
- The man
- Justice Dept. head honcho

December 4 Solution

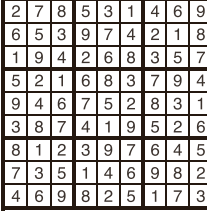


Sudoku



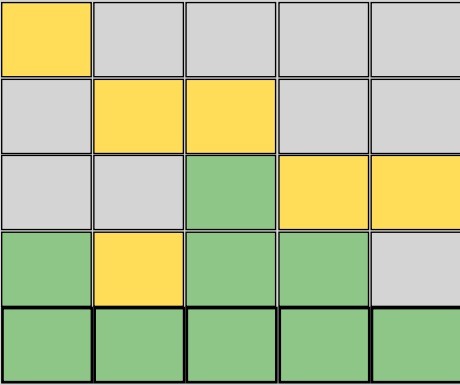
Level: Intermediate

December 4 Solution



Word of the Week

Hints relate to adjacent five-letter words. Solve to reveal correct letters. Green tiles indicate correctly placed letters in the Word of the Week. Yellow tiles indicate a correct letter in the wrong place. Uncolored tiles indicate letters that do not appear in the WotW.



- Even, having the same value
- Lure; dummy; red herring
- Daughter of sibling
- A small stream of water
- Seasonal joy



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Our Towns

12x12 show draws art aficionados to Hunt Library

By Robin Roraback

FALLS VILLAGE — An eager crowd milled around a barrier of chairs keeping them from the display of 12-inch by 12-inch paintings, prints, photos, drawings, collages, and ceramics hung on the ArtWall at the Hunt Library in Falls Village on Dec. 6. The show runs until Jan. 9.

Organizer and participating artist Garth Kobal remarked, “This is the fourteenth 12x12 show. We began them in 2011.”

The show caps off the year and is a major fundraiser for Hunt Library. Explaining that each work was \$150, Kobal introduced his team of Zoe and Sergei Fedorjaczenco, Rika and Sara Laser, Yonah Sadeh and librarian Meg Sher, who would take care of the purchases.

The pace of the show was fast and a bit chaotic. Art

buyers zeroed in on their favorites and quickly bought them. They were allowed to take the art at 6 p.m., but not before.

For the fundraiser component, artists could choose to donate all of the purchase price to the library or half of it. Many of the artists, wearing stickers identifying them, circulated through the crowd.

Veteran 12x12 artist Hope Mongeau was philosophical about whether or not her painting sold. “If my chicken doesn’t sell, I like it and I’ll put it in my kitchen,” she said.

Another veteran artist, Jane Macfarlane, said, “This is a great way to bring the community together to see the work of the local artists and bring funds to local organizations.”

Second time artist Ingrid Freidenbergs was showing

one of her collages. She commented, “I am surprised at so much wonderful art and that so many people come out from the community.”

Art lover Robin O’Connor of Salisbury exclaimed, “I think it is fabulous!”

First time 12x12 artist, Laura McCarthy said, “I am impressed with the local talent.” She began creating her art during the COVID-19 pandemic.


Jessie “NEMO” Luterbach was showing her work for the first time. “I’ve been an artist since I was a child,” she said. Her inspirations are science fiction and fantasy.

By the end of the night Kobal reported, “The event sold 37 artworks and raised over \$4,500 for the library and \$2,300 for participating artists. There are over 40 pieces remaining and looking for homes before the show comes down on January 9”




PHOTO BY L. TOMAINO

Norfolk artist, illustrator and expressive therapist Katie Atkinson reflects on one of the 84 works at the opening of this year’s Art Wall 12x12 show at the Hunt Library in Falls Village. The reflecting disc, by organizer and artist Garth Kobal, is flanked by a painting by Judith Wyer and a landscape in oil and wax on paper by Shaari Horowitz, both of which were among almost forty pieces that sold immediately.



Mohawk ski area opens for season

The lifts were spinning at Mohawk Mountain ski area in Cornwall Saturday, Dec. 6, as the lodge declared opening weekend. The snow report on mohawkmtn.com indicated “on-going snowmaking and a few inches of natural snowfall” on the three trails that were open. Tubing and uphill skiing was not yet available.



PHOTOS BY TOM BROWN

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