

LOCAL NEWS BRIEFING

POLICE AND FIRE CT Fire Academy Graduates



Two former volunteers with the New Canaan Fire Department (NCFD) have successfully graduated from the Connecticut Fire Academy. Their training has equipped them to serve the community as they transition into their new roles as career firefighters with the NCFD. Photo credit: New Canaan Fire Company.

Fire Company Honors Local Veterans



On December 8, members of the New Canaan Fire Company placed wreaths on veterans' graves to honor their service. The event, organized by the New Canaan VFW, coincided with Pearl Harbor Day. Fire Company members participated in the tribute to recognize and remember those who served. Photo credit: New Canaan Fire Company #1 Instagram.

TOWN HALL New Medical Director Appointed

During the December 3rd Board of Selectmen meeting, Dr. Jaime Ruzskowski was appointed New Canaan's Medical Director, effective January 1, 2025. She succeeds Dr. David Reed, who is retiring after more than 20 years of service. A New Canaan resident and internist, Dr. Ruzskowski has previously worked closely with the town's Health Department.

AROUND TOWN Metro-North Quiet Zone Funding

A \$19 million plan to establish a quiet zone along the Metro-North Railroad's New Canaan branch faces funding challenges as Stamford, Darien, and New Canaan prioritize other projects. Darien First Selectman Jon Zagrodzky noted limited grant options and the unlikelihood of a federal waiver to reduce costs. Officials are considering alternatives, such as reducing train horn volume, but the project's future remains uncertain.

LOCAL BUSINESSES AND NONPROFITS Annual Pumpkin Collection

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Publisher@NewCanaanSentinel.com

At New Canaan Playhouse, London's Stage Finds a Local Spotlight

The New Canaan Playhouse is closing its 2024 programming with a bang, wrapping up its National Theatre Live series with Noël Coward's *Present Laughter* on December 18. Under the leadership of Luke Parker Bowles, CEO of Cinema Lab, the historic theater has transformed into a vibrant cultural hub that seamlessly blends world-class entertainment with community engagement.

"This isn't just a movie theater," Parker Bowles said during a recent community meeting. "The Playhouse is for everybody."

Present Laughter, featuring Andrew Scott in a luminous, Olivier-winning performance as the narcissistic yet endearing Garry Essendine, the production is a sharp, chaotic dive into fame, love, and identity crises. It's the kind of theatrical experience that feels simultaneously uproarious and cutting, a bittersweet love letter to the ego's perils and charms.

Scott, known for his roles in *Fleabag* and *Sherlock*, delivers what critics have hailed as "a revelation." His Garry is a man whose life is as messy as his perfectly tailored wardrobe, a performance oscillating between comedic brilliance and aching vulnerability. The supporting cast shines just as brightly. Indira Varma, another Olivier winner, is sharp and fiery as Garry's ex-wife and voice of reason, while Sophie Thompson's hilariously beleaguered Monica adds an extra layer of charm to the chaos.

The New Canaan screening captures every laugh, panic, and sigh, thanks to National Theatre Live's stunning cinematography. Matthew Warchus's direction finds modernity in Coward's 1939



play, making it resonate as more than just an amusing relic of theatrical high society. The staging is sleek, the performances magnetic—this isn't just theater; it's theater polished to a cinematic sheen.

Bringing London to Main Street

The Playhouse's partnership with London's National Theatre has injected a bold new dimension into its programming. What started on November 13 with Benedict Cumberbatch's critically acclaimed *Hamlet* evolved into a showcase of some of the best stagecraft the UK has to offer. Highlights included Danny Boyle's visceral *Frankenstein*, with Cumberbatch and Jonny Lee Miller trading off lead roles in alternating performances, and Andrew Scott's heart-

wrenching *Vanya*, a modern reimagining of *Chekhov*. On December 11, the Playhouse screened *The Motive & The Cue*, Sam Mendes's behind-the-scenes exploration of John Gielgud directing Richard Burton in *Hamlet*. While attendance for some screenings has been sparse—momentum has been building as word spreads about the series.

"It's about giving the community something extraordinary," said a Parker Bowles. "These productions bring the world's best stage performances to New Canaan. Where else can you see Benedict Cumberbatch or Andrew Scott so vividly without leaving town?"

Parker Bowles has reimagined the Playhouse as a multi-use community space. Beyond hosting films and live-theater screenings, the venue boasts a pub serving top-tier food and drink, a members-only lounge upstairs, and a second-floor workspace. "We've just got a proper Italian barista system," Parker Bowles shared. "Your cappuccinos—best cappuccinos. Dolche is pretty good, and upstairs, full coffee bar, whatever you like."

The theater has also introduced unique membership perks through its Bravo program, offering free movies, discounted concessions, and a private screening. "You get one movie theater screening that you can have to yourself," Parker Bowles said. "Lots of people have been doing them for parties."

The Playhouse has become a hotspot for holiday programming as well. Earlier this month, patrons enjoyed a festive lineup that included *Love Actually*, *The Polar Express*, *Elf*, and *It's a Wonderful Life*, paired with seasonal treats like eggnog and branded merchandise.

As the Playhouse continues to expand its offerings, Parker Bowles remains focused on creating a space that serves everyone. "We've finally found our feet, and we're listening," he said. "It's not a private club. We're here for the entire community."

This week the Playhouse continues its incredibly successful runs of *Wicked* and *Moana 2*. Tickets are available.

The December 18 screening of *Present Laughter* is expected to draw a large crowd as the Playhouse celebrates the success of its inaugural National Theatre Live series. Tickets are available on the Playhouse website.

playhouse.cinematlab.com/films-and-showtimes

COLUMN

Patriotic Holiday Spending



By STUART ADELBERG

I'd like to thank all of the marketing professionals who have solved what has historically been one of our nation's most persistent problems. For generations, Americans have awoken the day after Thanksgiving, comatose from their gastronomic overindulgences, content after watching a whole day of football, and thrilled to remember that most of them had an extra day off. We were sated from a joyful day of family and food and enthusiastic about the upcoming holidays. With these gleeful thoughts in our still weary heads, we happily rolled over and went back to sleep! For shame!!! What a waste of time!

Black Friday, Small Business Saturday, Cyber Monday and Giving Tuesday were truly exhausting. So I've decided that today is Worn-Out Wednesday!

But, no more. Now we know that the day after Thanksgiving it is our patriotic duty to get up early and hit the stores for Black Friday. There are bargains to be found and shopping records to be broken. What happens on Black Friday sets the stage for the entire holiday season, so when you choose not to participate, you

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COLUMN

A Coach

By JILL S. WOOLWORTH, LMFT



Illustrated by Wajih Chaudhry

Marriage counseling often has a negative connotation: something is broken and needs fixing. Let's call it marriage coaching instead. Coaching is something everyone welcomes, often for skills we are already good at, such as playing a sport or leading a team at work. Just as we wouldn't give a car to a 16-year-old without driving instructions, we shouldn't set out in marriage confident that our intelligence and our love for each other will conquer all differences. We are not the exception.

Our wedding day is the first day of our most challenging relationship, one that we hope will last a lifetime. Most of us haven't seen it well modeled. Weddings are an industry. We spend a lot of money getting married, but there is little support for staying married, and many worthy but time-consuming factors, such as work and children, to pull us apart. If we're smart, we'll get coaching. After all, divorce is an industry, too.

Liz and Jordan, both with advanced degrees, were certain that they didn't need marriage coaching. For the first ten years of their relationship, they focused on their careers and on their children, not on each other. Their "marriage tank" slowly emptied. When they finally met with a marriage counselor, they wished they had started coaching years before.

Excerpted from Jill Woolworth's book, *The Waterwheel*, available at Amazon and barnesandnoble.com.

RAMS HEAD TO FINALS



FOR FOODIES



We have a new-and-fabulous-column for foodies on page 4. It is worth the read!

COLUMN

Question: What's new this season at the Boucher Community Ice Rink?

By JULIE O'BRIEN DEASY

Answer: The Boucher Community Ice Rink is an open-air seasonal ice skating rink located in Waveny Park that opened for the season on December 7. The Rink is a non-profit 501(c)(3) entity and open to everyone. There are a few new features to the Rink this year!

New this year, adult skate rentals are available in addition to children's skate rentals. Skate rentals are \$5.00 per day or \$50 for the season. Also available to rent are children's "skate aids" for \$5.00 to help with balancing on the ice.

The Rink is again offering skate sharpening for both adults and kids. The cost to sharpen skates is \$10 per pair, and they will be done while you wait.

The Rink is open Tuesday - Sunday and has open skate times every day. Skaters can pay by the session, or season passes are available. Discounted group rates are also available for groups more than 10 people. Please note, cash is not accepted.

In addition, the Rink is available for private rentals

for birthday parties and other gatherings almost every day after 6:30 pm.

Group Skate lessons are also offered this year! The cost is \$175 for 4 lessons, and they can be reserved and paid for on the NC Rink website.

There is a heated gathering space with tables and benches. Hot chocolate is available for purchase, or skaters are welcome to bring their own food. In future seasons the Rink is hoping to offer additional food and snack sales.

Finally, volunteers are needed to help run the Rink. Please contact them at info@ncrink.com if you are interested in joining their team.

For more information and daily skate times, please visit ncrink.com or call 203-920-1508.

What do you want to know about living in New Canaan? Is there a resource you are looking for or something you need in our area? We want to hear from you! Send in your ideas or queries to Julie@NewCanaanSentinel.com and your question may be featured in a future column.



Now May Be the Best Time to Sell!
Are you Ready? The Engle Team is!



Rams and Wave: Get Ready for A Championship Game with a Lot of Heart

New Canaan and Darien are set to face off in the Class L championship game, a matchup that feels inevitable at this point. After last Sunday's semifinals, these two titans of Connecticut high school football are ready for a rematch—one that comes with a lot of heart.

NEW CANAAN HANDLES BUSINESS AGAINST NEWTOWN

Let's start with New Canaan's win over Newtown. The Rams faced their toughest test since September but came through with a 35-20 victory. It was another showcase for Michael Smith, who turned in a "do-everything" performance. Two interceptions? Check. A blocked extra point to preserve the lead? Check. A late touchdown run to seal the deal? Why not?

On offense, Hudson Kenny set the tone early with a 59-yard touchdown run that left Newtown defenders chasing shadows. Meanwhile, Andrew Esposito continued his wizardry, scoring on the ground and hauling in a 19-yard touchdown pass from Luke Robinson. Robinson was his usual steady self—165 passing yards, two touchdowns, and no turnovers. If you're looking for flash, Robinson isn't your guy. If you're looking for a quarterback who quietly wins games, look no further.



Hudson Kenny | Photo by Bill Berg



Andrew Esposito | Photo by Bill Berg



Michael Smith | Photo by Bill Berg



Grant Hickey | Photo by Bill Berg

Newtown made it interesting, with quarterback Ryan Schoffstall throwing for 318 yards and keeping the Rams on edge in the first half. But New Canaan's defense tightened up in the second half, forcing three turnovers and holding the Nighthawks to six points after halftime.

THE PLAY BY PLAY

FIRST QUARTER: SETTING THE TONE

Opening Drive: Newtown began with a long, methodical drive, converting multiple third downs. However, their momentum stalled in Rams territory when their field goal attempt was blocked by the New Canaan defense, with contributions from #97 Michael Harris and #15 Simon Tchakarov.

Kenny Strikes First: On New Canaan's ensuing possession, #25 Hudson Kenny broke free for a spectacular 59-yard touchdown run, bursting through a well-constructed hole on the left side and outrunning the Newtown secondary. #8 Tucker Stevens added the extra point to make it 7-0.

SECOND QUARTER: TRADING BLOWS

Newtown Answers: Using a power-heavy set, Newtown's Nick Pavia scored on a 5-yard run to tie the game at 7-7, capping off a balanced drive.

Cuesta Responds: Quarterback #12 Luke Robinson connected with #5 Chris Cuesta for a 23-yard touchdown on a precise throw over the middle, reclaiming the lead for New Canaan at 14-7 after another Stevens PAT.

Pavia Again: Not to be outdone, Newtown leaned on their ground game again, with Pavia punching it in from 2 yards out to tie the game at 14-14 just before halftime.

THIRD QUARTER: ADJUSTMENTS PAY OFF

Esposito in the Wildcat: New Canaan's first drive of the second half set the tone, with #14 Andrew Esposito taking a 2-yard Wildcat run into the end zone. The scoring drive was set up by a key 30-yard pass from Robinson to Esposito.

Taylor's Spark, but Smith Shines: Newtown's Ryan Schoffstall hit Jayden Taylor on a short pass, which Taylor turned into a 63-yard touchdown thanks to a dazzling display of speed and elusiveness. However, #7 Michael Smith blocked the extra point, preserving New Canaan's slim 21-20 lead.

Esposito Strikes Again: Robinson found Esposito on a 19-yard touchdown pass, extending the Rams' lead to 28-20.

FOURTH QUARTER: SEALING THE DEAL

Smith Closes It Out: #7 Michael Smith capped off his heroic performance with a 4-yard touchdown run late in the quarter, giving New Canaan an insurmountable 35-20 lead.

Defensive Stand: Newtown made a final push, but Schoffstall, under constant pressure from #15 Simon Tchakarov and #97 Michael Harris, threw his third interception of the day, this time to #6 Mikey Hiranman.

DARIEN OVERCOMES A SLOW START

While New Canaan was pulling away from Newtown, Darien was busy shaking off an ugly start against Notre Dame-West Haven. After fumbling the opening kickoff and falling behind early, the Blue Wave turned to quarterback Ben Rolapp, who delivered one of his best performances of the season. Four touchdown passes and a rushing score later, Darien had a 35-21 win and a ticket to the championship.

Darien's second-half adjustments were the difference. Rolapp found his rhythm, connecting with Charles Thom for two touchdowns, including a highlight-reel 36-yarder that showcased Thom's mix of size, strength, and speed. Thom, who had struggled in the Turkey Bowl against New Canaan, looked like a completely different player on Sunday.

Head coach Andy Grant attributed the win to halftime adjustments and the team's conditioning. Darien's ability to wear down Notre Dame-West Haven's two-way players paid dividends, as the Blue Wave dominated the second half on both sides of the ball.

THE RIVALRY RENEWED

Now, the focus shifts to Saturday's championship game at Central Connecticut State University. It's the third meeting between New Canaan and Darien in the last four years, and the stakes couldn't be higher. New Canaan is chasing a three-peat and its 15th state title. Darien, meanwhile, is seeking revenge after a 34-0 Thanksgiving loss that still stings.

New Canaan has owned this rivalry recently, winning eight of the last nine matchups. Their defense, led by Smith and Simon Tchakarov, has been dominant all season, allowing just 9.8 points per game. Offensively, Robinson, Kenny, and Esposito form a trio that can grind out drives or hit big plays when needed.

But Darien isn't going down without a fight. Rolapp is playing with confidence, and Thom looks like he's finally hitting his stride. If the Blue Wave can limit turnovers and control the clock, this could be the kind of back-and-forth battle fans dream about.

FINAL THOUGHTS

This is what high school football is all about—two great teams, a heated rivalry, and a championship on the line. For New Canaan, it's a chance to cement their legacy. For Darien, it's an opportunity to rewrite the narrative.

Mark your calendars. This one's going to be a classic.



Ayden Paulos | Photo by Bill Berg



Luke Robinson | Photo by Bill Berg



Finn Mocco | Photo by Bill Berg



Simon Tchakarov | Photo by Bill Berg



Hudson Kenny | Photo by Bill Berg

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18 DEC	6:00 PM	Wednesdays at the Well
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24 DEC	6:30 PM	God's Acre Caroling
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COLUMN

Best Bites: New Canaan



By PAUL REITANO

Adam Benenson is a brilliant guy – he’s taken a career in financial tech investment and transitioned with remarkable success into creating his own Artificial Intelligence firm, Forethink. He is – by any measure – smarter than your average sandwich eater. He’s also a great lover of theater and the arts. But there is no one in Fairfield County that thinks about chicken salad as much as Adam. Okay, no one in Connecticut. Okay, in the entire universe.

Me: Adam, before we get to talking about “you know what” – tell me a little bit about your professional career – just so folks don’t think this is all mayonnaise and cranberries.

Adam: I was a Quant – a type of investor that’s highly quantitative. I moved into fintech – doing that type of work with investors. Now I’m building software that makes it as simple as possible to get the most value out of Artificial Intelligence by feeding the most relevant data into AI just when it’s needed. Let’s say you are going into a meeting and you want to know everything about who you are meeting with – AI – used correctly – can be a tool for that. It’s an amazing technology but it needs all the right data.

Me: It’s like an adult talking on Charlie Brown – I understand very little – it’s all trombone.

Adam: We created a browser extension – called Forethink – essentially it makes it a lot easier to get value from AI without writing the prompts.

Me: Is AI going to replace me? Will it finish parenting my children and love my wife?

Adam: I don’t believe AI is going to replace us – but it has an extraordinary ability to be a tool to augment our own thinking and creativity – to give humans “superpowers” if you will. AI is a really powerful technology that we are just scratching the surface of. I think we are facing a world in ten years – where, in a lot of unexpected places – AI is deeply integrated and we can’t

remember a time before it...

Me: You grew up in New Canaan?

Adam: Yes, my wife and I both grew up in New Canaan, we met at New Canaan High School. Her mother was my teacher and we both were part of the Literary Journal. We have three boys.

Me: Lovely. We both know why we are really here, Adam. What are you eating in New Canaan right now?

Adam: There’s a lot of great stuff. I love the Black Bass at Elm – the Chicken Scarpariello at Cava – the General Tso’s at Ching’s Table.

Me: I love Ching’s, but my wife never wants to get Chinese – how do you convince yours to go?

Adam: Ching’s can be polarizing. I used to strategize, find the exact right moment to ask – but I’ve found the most success in just working the numbers and continually asking – eventually she caves from the exhaustion of it. I have about a 15% success rate.

Me: I’m going to try that.

Adam: I’ll also over order – so I’m really having Ching’s two or three times for every accepted invitation. In any case – I love cold General Tso’s.

Me: But what about the rice? Cold rice – it’s like driveway gravel.

Adam: No rice – just the string beans it comes with. I’ll often order a mixed vegetable dish. Cold sesame noodles, obviously. Moo shoo I’ll reheat.

Me: Cause of the pancake.

Adam: Yes, it’s a pancake problem.

Me: When I first started this article – which was about three weeks ago – this is the type of interview I dreamed of. I want you to know that.

Adam: (Sigh) Is this column going to make me look ridiculous?

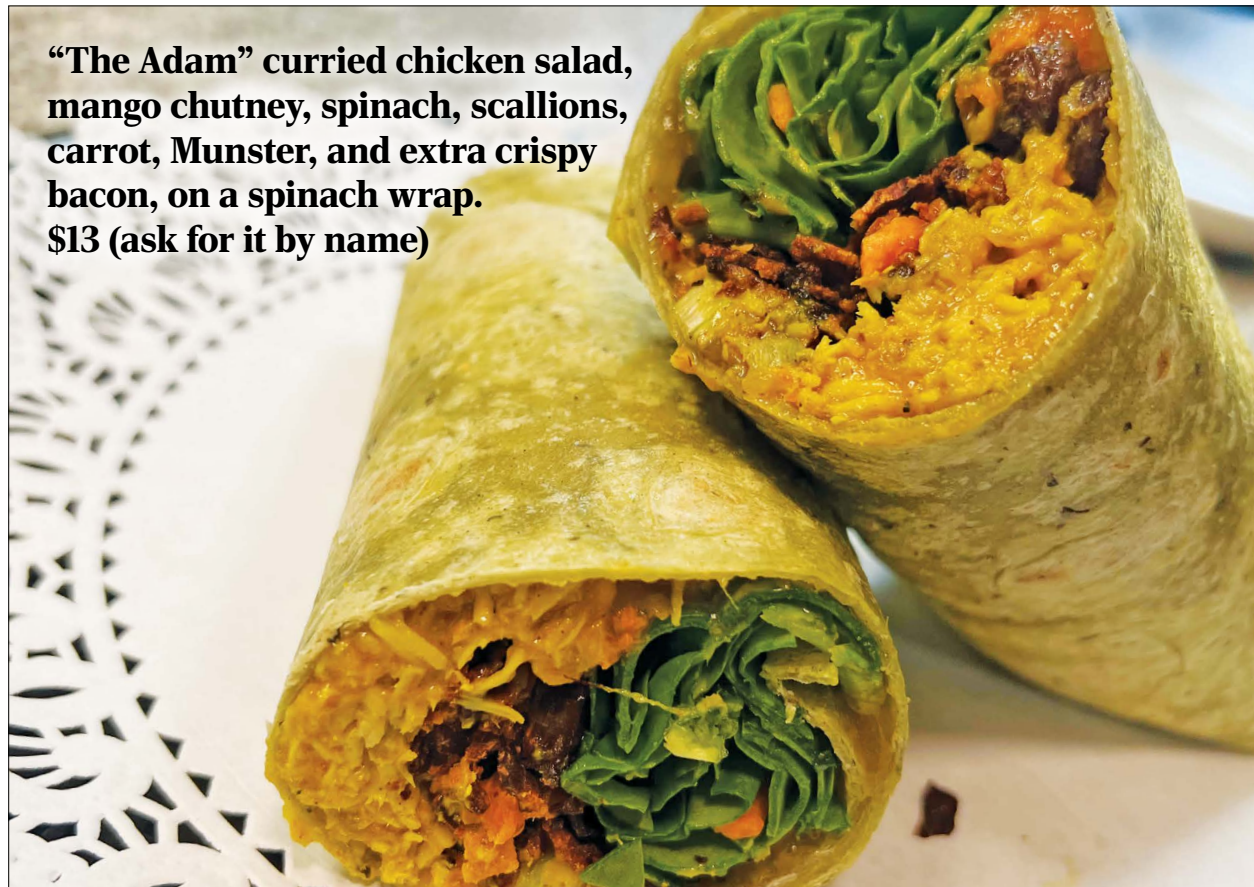
Me: Not in my eyes. But potentially yes, to much of society. In any case, integrity be damned – what’s your absolute favorite thing to eat right now in New Canaan?

Adam: On most days, my go-to lunch is at Club Sandwich. I get a couple of custom sandwiches – all chicken salad based.

Me: Go on.

Adam: I build a wrap or sandwich around the chicken salad. I have two custom orders. I’m hoping one day they’ll name one after me. The first is regular chicken salad with apple butter, arugula, avocado, cucumber, bacon and Monterey Jack, on a sun-dried

Back in the day at Forrest St. Deli (now closed) in town I used to love their Chicken Salad Melt. Chicken Salad, tomato, bacon, melted cheese, on a Portuguese roll. My brother and I have gone to great lengths to synthetically reconstruct it. We haven’t nailed it yet.



“The Adam” curried chicken salad, mango chutney, spinach, scallions, carrot, Munster, and extra crispy bacon, on a spinach wrap. \$13 (ask for it by name)

tomato wrap. The second is curried chicken salad, mango chutney, spinach, scallions, carrot, Munster, and extra crispy bacon, on a spinach wrap.

Me: How did you refine that order?

Adam: Each is a culmination of many failed variations. I’ll only eat a half and save the rest for later – dinner or lunch the next day. Really, it’s the best value in town. At about 13 bucks each – I can get lunch for under 7 dollars. And you get the punch card.

Me: What does your wife think of this? Does she still love you?

Adam: She definitely loves me – but she thinks I’m crazy. I think of it like this – she likes to make floral arrangements – that’s her thing. Chicken Salad variations are my thing.

Me: I’m sure she appreciates that. Has Chicken Salad been a thing...for a

while?

Adam: It’s always been my favorite. Back in the day at Forrest St. Deli (now closed) in town I used to love their Chicken Salad Melt. Chicken Salad, tomato, bacon, melted cheese, on a Portuguese roll. My brother and I have gone to great lengths to synthetically reconstruct it – we haven’t nailed it yet.

Me: Do you...experiment with other variations at home?

Adam: Absolutely. I’ll get the all white meat salad at Walter Stewarts and make a few sandwiches out of it. Right now I’m doing honey mustard, red lettuce, gorgonzola, spicy banana peppers, sun-dried tomatoes, crumbled bacon and a dash of balsamic vinegar. On a sun dried tomato wrap.

Me: Last question. Are you solving a problem with chicken salad or...do you

have a chicken salad problem?

Adam: Oh, I’m solving one for sure – specifically it’s an optimization problem. My background is in machine learning and data science – I’m trying to find optimum combinations in the vast chicken salad search space.

Me: I would like to see you again. You are exactly the type of person I like spending time with.

Adam: Double date at Ching’s?

Paul Reitano is television producer who lives in town with his patient wife and exasperated children. He’s created and produced multiple TV series including Alaskan Bush People for the Discovery Channel – which ran for 14 seasons. These days he’s making fancy sandwiches for his kids lunches and bemoaning why people only watch Tik Tok.



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2019 Château Trotte Vieille
\$99.99 95 Points, J. Dunnuck

Gorgeously pure notes of blue fruits, violets, spring flowers, and graphite emerge from the 2019 Château Trotte Vieille, a silky, concentrated, sensational Saint-Emilion. Clearly the finest vintage from this château I’ve tasted, it’s medium to full-bod-

ied, has a layered, multi-dimensional mouth-feel, beautiful tannins, and a great finish. It’s a “wow” wine in the vintage that can be drunk today or cellared for two decades. Bravo!



2015 Château Potensac
\$49.99 750ML
\$109.99 Magnum (1.5L)
88 Points, J. Dunnuck

The 2015 Potensac comes from vines near the northern edge of Saint-Estèphe and is 45% Merlot, 38% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 17% Cabernet Franc. It’s a rock-solid, medium-

bodied, classic Potensac offering notes of black cherries, underbrush, violets and even a hint of peppery herbs. With medium-bodied richness, juicy acidity and fine, nicely integrated tannin, it’s a classic 2015 to drink over the coming 10 – 15 years.

When Life is Unpredictable: New Canaan's Mental Health Program Offers Vital Support

By BETH BARHYDT

The holiday season, for many, is a time of joy and togetherness, but for others, it can amplify feelings of stress, isolation, and emotional strain. In New Canaan and Weston, the New Canaan/Weston Urgent Assessment Program (NCUA/WUA), in partnership with Silver Hill Hospital, stands as a critical resource for those grappling with mental health challenges during this period and beyond.

The program offers timely psychiatric assessments and tailored referrals at no cost to residents. It serves children, adolescents, and adults in urgent need, providing them with a clearer understanding of their mental health and a pathway to appropriate care. Appointments are available within 48 hours of an intake call, an essential service for those caught in the maze of mental

health care systems.

Former First Selectman Kevin Moynihan emphasized the significance of this initiative during a recent interview reflecting on his tenure. "When we had the ARPA dollars," Moynihan explained, "we started saying, 'Where are we going to spend these funds?' Post-COVID, the need for mental health support was undeniable. We approached Silver Hill with a proposal to create a system where people could get the help they needed without worrying about cost. In the first year, 110 people—referred by schools and police departments—were able to access assessments they might not otherwise have received."

The holidays often bring mental health issues into sharp relief. Many families, like one anonymous New Canaan resident who shared their story, find themselves facing crises with little preparation. "On December

1, we had an out-of-the-blue crisis with our younger son. The confusion and loneliness were overwhelming," the resident recounted. A referral from New Canaan Pediatrics to Silver Hill Hospital's program offered a lifeline. Though finding specialized care required persistence, the family credits the program and its staff, particularly Dr. Brent Penque, with providing vital support during a difficult time.

The program's design is as pragmatic as it is compassionate. Assessments are conducted by a team of mental health professionals, including psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers, who work together to identify the core issues and provide a "warm handoff" to a suitable provider. "The mental health community is complex and can be incredibly expensive," Moynihan said. "In a crisis, people often don't know where to turn.

This program simplifies that process."

The partnership with Silver Hill Hospital, a local institution with a 93-year history, exemplifies the power of public-private collaboration. The program's funding, initiated with a \$250,000 grant from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), underscores the community's commitment to addressing post-COVID mental health challenges. Moynihan credited this collaboration as "the greatest public-private partnership" of his tenure, urging other towns to adopt similar models.

The holidays also highlight the stigma surrounding mental health, particularly in affluent communities. Moynihan noted resistance from some neighboring towns to adopt similar programs, with skeptics questioning the need for free mental health services in wealthy areas. Yet,

as the anonymous testimonial demonstrates, crises transcend socio-economic boundaries. Programs like the NCUA/WUA provide a necessary safety net, ensuring no resident is left to navigate their struggles alone.

For those unsure whether the program is right for them, the service is designed to complement, not replace, existing providers. If a resident already has a mental health professional but faces an urgent situation, the program can step in as a stopgap. However, it is not a substitute for emergency services. In life-threatening situations, individuals should still seek care at an emergency room or urgent care center.

Now in its third year, its impact continues to grow, with Weston having joined as a partner town in the program's second year. In New Canaan, the program continues to be funded through a combination of Town funds, Board

of Education funds, and The New Canaan Community Foundation, reflecting the true community partnership that the program is. Moynihan reflected on the program's enduring value, stating, "When someone is in crisis, they need support immediately. This program ensures they get it, free of barriers."

For many families, the NCUA/WUA program represents hope—a beacon of stability during the stormiest of times. This holiday season, as residents reflect on the importance of community, the program serves as a reminder that no one should face mental health challenges alone. Those in need can schedule an appointment by calling Silver Hill Hospital at 1-866-542-4455 and requesting the New Canaan/Weston Urgent Assessment Program.

Person to Person's annual 'Holiday Toy Store' spreads cheer, community ties

The Exchange Club invites families to join in this enduring tradition, celebrating the season while giving back to the community.

By ANNE WHITE

Hosted at the Anderson Youth & Community Center on the Saint Luke's campus in Darien, the event brightened the holidays for over 1,000 families this season.

The festivities began at 12:30 PM with remarks by P2P CEO Nancy Coughlin, followed by a ribbon-cutting ceremony featuring local elected officials, including Representatives Travis Simms, Lucy Dathan, Rachel Khanna, and Corey Paris, as well as Darien First Selectman Zagrodzky. Afterward, the Toy Store opened its doors, offering P2P clients an opportunity to select gifts for their children.

The P2P "Holiday Toy Store" has become an enduring symbol of community generosity. Each

year, the event ensures that families in need can experience the joy of the holiday season. In the weeks leading up to the event, the community played a crucial role in its success:

Residents contributed generously to the Toy Store initiative by shopping locally and supporting sponsors like LUSH at the SoNo Collection. This location featured curated gift options that directly benefited the Toy Store. Additionally, online shoppers played a crucial role by purchasing gifts through P2P's Amazon Wish List or by donating the cost of gifts at Darien Toy Box.

Volunteers were essential to the success of the event, with nearly 400 individuals lending their time and energy. From

wrapping gifts at the SoNo Collection to organizing the event itself, their dedication ensured a smooth and seamless experience for all attendees.

For P2P's clients, the Toy Store represented more than just gifts—it was a chance to provide their children with a sense of normalcy and joy during the holidays. As one parent shared, "Without these gifts, my children wouldn't have had anything. Thank you so much, my children get to have a Christmas this year."

The Toy Store's success reflects a broader network of support. Corporate sponsors like M&T Bank and the efforts of hundreds of volunteers exemplified how a united community can make a

meaningful difference. The event highlighted the power of shared responsibility and kindness, bringing the spirit of the season to life for Fairfield County families.

For those who would still like to contribute, toys can be dropped off at the following P2P locations:

- **Stamford:** 425 Fairfield Avenue, Stamford, CT 06902
- **Darien:** 1864 Post Road, Darien, CT 06820
- **Norwalk:** 76 South Main Street, Norwalk, CT 06854

For more information about future events or how to contribute, contact Flor Gonzalez at (203) 621-0702 or florgonzalez@p2phelps.org.



The event highlighted the power of shared responsibility and kindness, bringing the spirit of the season to life for Fairfield County families.

On Thursday, December 12, 2024, Person to Person (P2P) unveiled its annual "Holiday Toy Store," a cherished tradition that brings joy to families across lower Fairfield County.

The Food Pantry: Neighbors in Need

By BETH BARHYDT

In a town known for its close-knit community and deep-rooted traditions, the New Canaan Food Pantry plays a vital, if understated, role. Operated by New Canaan Human Services and based at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, the pantry provides essential food support for residents who find themselves facing difficult circumstances.

Every other Tuesday, the pantry's volunteers gather to transform the church basement into a hub of quiet generosity. Shelves stocked with canned goods, pasta, rice, and cereal are meticulously organized and distributed to individuals and families in need. This biweekly effort reflects New Canaan's spirit: neighbors helping neighbors, no questions asked, no judgment passed.

The increasing demand for the pantry's services tells a story not often shared. Rising costs of living, economic challenges, and changes in housing demographics have created a growing need for resources like the pantry. More families are finding themselves navigating unexpected financial strains, even in a community that values stability and support.

During the holidays the pantry provides all the fixings for Thanksgiving meals and the New Canaan Police Department donates chickens or turkeys that they pick up at ACME.

For Christmas they will provide everything for a Christmas dinner; and for families with children under the age of 18, the pantry gives gift cards to Walmart to fulfill help holiday wish lists.

Senior citizens are also included as volunteers shop specifically for a senior

in order to create a beautiful gift filled basket that will be personally delivered by members of the Health and Human Services Commission.

How the Pantry Works

The New Canaan Food Pantry is a collaborative effort, driven entirely by the local community. Food donations, the backbone of the operation, come from residents, schools, and civic organizations. Items must be non-perishable and unexpired, with high-demand items including peanut butter, canned vegetables, soup, and pasta. Donations can be dropped off daily at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, located at 111 Oenoke Ridge.

Monetary contributions are equally important, allowing the pantry to purchase items that might be in short supply. Checks can be made payable to the New Canaan Food Pantry and sent to New Canaan Human Services at 77 Main Street. These funds are used to fill gaps in inventory and ensure that every family receives a balanced selection of food.

Volunteers are essential to the pantry's success. They handle everything from stocking shelves to packaging and distributing food. For those interested in giving their time, volunteering offers a direct way to contribute to the community while meeting neighbors who share the same commitment to service. To get involved, residents can contact **New Canaan Human Services at 203-594-3076**.

Addressing a Growing Need

Demand at the food pantry has been steadily increasing, with records showing over 100 individuals served in a single month. This rise reflects larger economic

pressures that are impacting families across all walks of life. Yet the response from New Canaan has been consistent: an unwavering willingness to step up and help.

The pantry is more than a place to pick up food—it's a community safety net. For those who use its services, it represents the assurance that even during difficult times, the people of New Canaan are here to help. For those who support it, it's an opportunity to live out the values of compassion and care that define the town.

How You Can Help

The New Canaan Food Pantry depends on continued support to meet the growing needs of the community. Here's how residents can contribute:

Donate Food: Non-perishable, unexpired items can be dropped off at St. Mark's Episcopal Church.

Donate Household Items: Also in need are household cleaning supplies and personal care items such as may not be covered by benefits. These are often not given by donors: Toothpaste, Tissues, Dishwashing Detergent, Paper Towel, Cleaning Supplies, Feminine Products, etc.

Volunteer: Join the team that organizes, stocks, and distributes food every other Tuesday.

Give Financially: Send donations to New Canaan Human Services to help the pantry purchase additional supplies.

For more information, visit the New Canaan Food Pantry website at https://www.newcanaan.info/departments/human_services/new_canaan_food_pantry.php or contact New Canaan Human Services directly.



STUART ADELBERG CONTINUED From Page 1

are letting down your fellow citizens, missing the opportunity to purchase the gifts that friends and family really want, and putting the nation's economy at risk! Of course, you're also missing the chance to upgrade your own electronics, appliances, wardrobe, etc. with the deals of the century!

But not to worry, if you miss Black Friday, there is always Small Business Saturday, that special day when each of us demonstrates with our credit cards that local businesses are essential to our community.

So we set out again to purchase the unique and wonderful items that could never be found on Black Friday, but are supplied only by the esteemed small businesses we know and love.

And then, because we can't possibly find everything we need in a brick and mortar store of any size on Friday or Saturday, we hit the internet on Cyber Monday when we support the behemoths of online shopping and, of course, the shippers—who have staffed up for months to prepare for the onslaught of online orders coming their way. How fun is it to come home everyday and see a pile of packages you don't even remember ordering all waiting at your door!!

One might think that you have done enough for your nation by spending money you don't have on

all the purchases made on Friday, Saturday and Monday. You would be wrong and selfish to think this way! There are needs far more important than shopping, and if there is any chance that you're somehow unaware of them, your inbox will be packed with hundreds of email solicitations from our very worthy nonprofits imploring you to help them in their important work with donations on Giving Tuesday! Not for me to say, but you would think the charities might figure out how to ask for money before we've spent it all on Friday, Saturday and Monday!! Just saying!

I write this column the Wednesday after Thanksgiving. I have no more money left for anything. I bought more for myself than for others and I didn't really need any of it, but deals are deals!

Friday, Saturday, Monday and Tuesday were truly exhausting. So I've decided that today is Worn-Out Wednesday. Because the marketers have been slacking off, I have no idea what I'm supposed to do on Thursday, but I'm "thinking" (see what I did there?) about using the day to come up with plans to make the gifts I didn't find and can no longer afford to buy! But I will sleep well tonight knowing that I have fulfilled my patriotic duty! Happy Holidays!

Stuart Adelberg has a long record of active engagement and leadership in the region's arts and social services communities. He appreciates the opportunity provided by Greenweek Sentinel to share his occasional observations and opinions.

New Canaan Sentinel

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Shared Bonds

Local newspapers, long the bedrock of community life, serve a purpose far beyond the headlines. They hold up a mirror to the lives of their readers, reflecting not only the big stories but the small moments that quietly shape a town's identity. In these pages, engagements, weddings, births, family milestones, and obituaries are not just personal markers—they are a shared history, a communal legacy.

Here in New Canaan, where traditions run deep and community connections are prized, the role of the local newspaper takes on particular importance. Though *The New Canaan Sentinel* is still young, at just a year and a half old, we aspire to uphold the role that newspapers have long played in fostering community bonds. Announcements of life's milestones are not just updates; they are an invitation to honor, to celebrate, and to remember together.

In an era dominated by social media, one might question the continued relevance of such announcements in print. Platforms like Facebook and Instagram offer the allure of immediacy and global reach. Yet, the difference between an online post and a printed announcement is profound. Online, these moments may live forever yet they are also becoming more scattered, ephemeral, and irrelevant in the relentless churn of content from everywhere and everyone. The information super highway is quickly becoming very crowded. In print, they are carefully preserved—a deliberate act that lends permanence and gravitas.

In the pages of the Sentinel, your story will not only be told—it will endure.

The Sentinel's print edition, unlike social media, exists within defined boundaries. Its reach is targeted, its audience intentional. An announcement in our town paper is not broadcast to the world but shared with a trusted, familiar circle. This distinction offers something increasingly rare in today's hyperconnected world: privacy. In print, there are no algorithms to amplify or distort, no strangers peering into your personal life. These pages remain a sanctuary, offering a safe, intimate space for the moments that matter.

Local connections are especially important for obituaries, which hold a unique and irreplaceable role in the community. They are not just a notice of someone's passing but a way to honor lives lived and stories told. In a local paper, an obituary does more than inform; it celebrates the connections and contributions of a neighbor, a friend, a family member. At *The Sentinel*, we offer this service for free—not out of convenience, but out of commitment. We believe every life deserves to be acknowledged with dignity, and that our pages can serve as a permanent tribute to the individuals who have shaped our town.

Print announcements, including obituaries, also foster a sense of community that social media cannot replicate. They create a shared experience, connecting neighbors and friends in a way that transcends digital clicks and likes. A marriage announcement in the *Sentinel* invites collective congratulations. A birth notice signals the arrival of a new member into New Canaan's extended family. And an obituary brings people together to grieve, reflect, and remember, reminding us of the bonds that unite us even in loss.

Equally important is the archival role that newspapers play. The printed announcement remains a record that can be held, revisited, and cherished. For future generations, news pages serve as a tangible link to the past.

The enduring value of these announcements lies in their simplicity and intentionality. To submit a wedding, birth, or obituary to the *Sentinel* is to say, "This is worth remembering, and worth sharing with those who matter most." It is a quiet but powerful act of trust in the local newspaper as a custodian of shared history.

Our ability to fulfill this role depends on you—our readers and neighbors. For *The Sentinel* to continue building a legacy of celebrating New Canaan's milestones, we need your engagement. Share your joys, your milestones, and yes, your farewells with us. Send us your announcements of engagements, weddings, new babies, family milestones, and obituaries. Your stories are the heart of this paper, and they reflect the vibrant life of our town.

This is not to diminish the role of social media. Its convenience and reach are undeniable, and for some, it will remain the preferred way to share news. But as we embrace the digital age, we should be careful not to lose the unique benefits that print media offers. The *print edition of The Sentinel* provides a more private space for locals where the milestones of life are celebrated with dignity, permanence, and a sense of place.

The Sentinel remains a unifying force, preserving the stories that bring us together. For all its challenges, the printed page continues to serve as a vital forum for connection and celebration.

So, to those considering how best to share their next milestone, remember the power of print. Let your announcement become part of New Canaan's history, a shared moment that strengthens the bonds of our community. In the pages of the *Sentinel*, your story will not only be told—it will endure.

Editorial Page



"It's too late! Bob's brain has been sucked out by the internet!"

LETTER

Editorial Was Truly a "Great Editorial"

Your editorial this week was truly a "great editorial" itself. Your summary of what an editorial should be and contain was excellent, and should be read by every student of journalism. It is especially appropriate at a time when many of our major publications - like the Wall Street Journal, have abandoned all pretext of objectivity.

I come from a long line of journalists. One branch of the family published a newspaper in Baltimore that was shut down by the military government in Baltimore during the Civil War for publishing an article that was supportive of the Confederacy. The publisher and his two sons were sent to federal prison, and then exiled to Charleston, South Carolina, where they started another newspaper, which at one point was printed on the backside of flowered wallpaper (due to a shortage of newsprint). The arrest of the Richardsons created quite a political stir in Baltimore - so much for first amendment rights. My grandfather Hobbs was a war correspondent in the Spanish-American and Russo-Japanese wars, and became the editor of the Philadelphia Public Ledger, and

Your summary of what an editorial should be and contain was excellent.

then joined his brother-in-law, Frank R. Kent at the Baltimore Sun. Frank Kent was the Washington reporter for the Baltimore Sun during the WWI era, and then editor of the Sun. My grandfather Hobbs was the editor of the Sunday edition of the Baltimore Sun. My brother worked as a newspaper reporter for about ten years.

Thank you for publishing the Sentinel.

Skip Hobbs

LETTER

Cell Phone Issue Needs To Be Addressed

Cell phone dead zones are a chronic problem for many people living in New Canaan.

I know there was supposed to be some kind of "study" done to figure out a solution but I haven't heard any recent updates on the study.

It is such a huge issue for those of us who live in (or drive through) cell phone dead zones. There was a time when life didn't revolve around cell phone use. Sadly, that was the past.

It's not merely an inconvenience anymore. For example, Bluetooth allows for relatively safe hands-free phone use while driving. But abruptly losing a call while driving creates a safety hazard as the driver can become distracted by the disruption.

Hope we can at least get an update on possible solutions.

Hope we can get at least an update on possible solutions.

Thanks so much.

P.S. At one point somebody suggested that the newest version of the iPhones would allow for emergency calls. I happen to have an Android -- which I strongly prefer -- as does everyone in my family. I shouldn't be expected to have to buy a new device in order to get cell phone service in an emergency. And who determines when a seemingly routine call with a doctor edges into "emergency" territory? Men's Club to Learn About Natural Diet's Benefits

Brondi Borer

SUBMITTED

Men's Club to Learn Natural Diet's Benefits



The New Canaan Men's Club will host Dr. Joe Feuerstein, an assistant professor of medicine at Columbia University and Quinnipiac University, for a presentation on the health benefits of a diet enriched with cannabinoids and natural ingredients.

The talk will take place on Friday during the club's regular meeting at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 111 Oenoke Ridge.

Dr. Feuerstein's discussion will focus on the therapeutic effects of incorporating ingredients such as turmeric, basil, rosemary, black pepper, flax, oregano, cloves, cinnamon, omega-3s, truffles, and cacao into one's diet. According to Dr. Feuerstein, these elements can enhance the body's regulation of functions and help alleviate conditions like pain, inflammation, and anxiety.

As a consultant physician specializing in integrative medicine, Dr. Feuerstein has treated patients with serious medical

The meeting will begin at 10 am; speaker at 10:40 am

conditions using natural approaches. In addition to his academic work, he runs a boutique concierge practice in lower Fairfield County, offering home visits and acupuncture.

The Men's Club meeting will begin at 10 a.m., with Dr. Feuerstein's presentation starting at approximately 10:40, following the business portion of the gathering.

The New Canaan Men's Club welcomes new members aged 55 and older. For more information, email ncmens@ncmens.club or visit their website at newcanaanmensclub.org.

Obituaries

RAYMOND KELLEY

Raymond J. Kelley, a beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother, and friend, passed away peacefully at 92 in Sherman, Connecticut. Born on January 19, 1932, in Norwalk, Connecticut, Ray grew up in New Canaan, where he graduated from New Canaan High School.

Ray pursued higher education at the University of Maine, earning a degree in Civil Engineering, and later at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Fine Arts, where he met the love of his life, Polly Anderson. They married and built a beautiful life together, raising two children and sharing a remarkable 60 years of love and companionship. He began his career as an associate of Joseph Salerno Architect in Westport, Connecticut. In 1966, he opened his own office in New Canaan, Connecticut.

During Ray's professional career, he mentored several young architects and was

responsible for the design of numerous institutional, commercial, industrial, corporate, and residential projects. He designed Wamogo Regional High School, Queen of the Clergy Residence in Stamford, CT, and the Sherman IGA, to name a few. He volunteered and served on several building committees for the Town of Sherman.

A man of diverse passions, Ray found joy in sports, Japanese gardening, traveling, architecture and design, and exploring religion and history with his family and friends. He loved building stone walls and creating Japanese gardens on his lakefront property. Ray planted almost every tree, shrub, and rhododendron on his property and looked forward to watching them bloom every May. He approached life with a deep curiosity and love for the world around him, creating lasting memories for those fortunate enough to know him. Our family will remember him for being thoughtful, kind, and generous.

Raymond is survived by his daughter, Kate Frey, of Sherman, Connecticut, and his cherished grandchildren, Spencer Kelley, Hunter Kelley, and Julia Frey. He is also survived by his dear sister, Patricia Page, of Burlington, Vermont. He is predeceased by his wife, Polly, and son, Joe, whose memory he holds close to his heart.

Ray's legacy of love, wisdom, and dedication will continue to inspire all who knew him.

Instead of flowers, the family kindly requests donations to Sherman Cares in Ray's honor.

May he rest in peace, reunited with his beloved Polly and son Joe, and forever remembered by those who love him.

Lillis Funeral Home of New Milford has care of Ray and his family.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to The Inn - Waveny LifeCare Network, 3 Farm Road, New Canaan, CT 06840.

A 'Service of Nine Lessons and Carols' Brings Tradition and Song to New Canaan

By SENTINEL STAFF

St. Mark's Episcopal Church in New Canaan will host its annual "Service of Nine Lessons and Carols" on Sunday, December 15, at 5:00 p.m. This beloved event, which unites the St. Mark's Choir, Choristers, and soloists, invites attendees to experience the story of redemption through scripture and song. Conducted by Director of Music Ned Tipton and accompanied by Dr. Michael Burnette, the service traces the arc of salvation from the Garden of Eden to the arrival of the Magi.

First held at Truro Cathedral in Cornwall in 1880, the "Service of Nine Lessons and Carols" was created by Bishop Edward White Benson as a way to engage parishioners on Christmas Eve. The service gained widespread recognition when it was introduced at King's College Chapel in Cambridge in 1918 by the Rev. Eric Milner-White. Designed to provide spiritual solace in the aftermath of

World War I, the service has since become a global tradition, broadcast annually by the BBC and embraced by congregations worldwide.

The structure of the service weaves nine scripture readings, or "lessons," with carols and hymns. The lessons, read by members of the congregation and clergy, recount humanity's fall, God's promise of a Savior, and the birth of Jesus Christ. At St. Mark's, the rich choral arrangements and congregational hymns create a participatory experience. The theological significance of the service lies in its ability to connect the biblical narrative of redemption with the rhythms of contemporary worship.

The carols, carefully selected to reflect the readings, range from traditional favorites such as "Once in Royal David's City" to lesser-known pieces. At St. Mark's, the choir's intricate harmonies and skilled musical accompaniment transform the nave into a resonant space of worship. By focusing on the journey from Genesis to the Gospels, the

service emphasizes themes of hope, reconciliation, and divine grace.

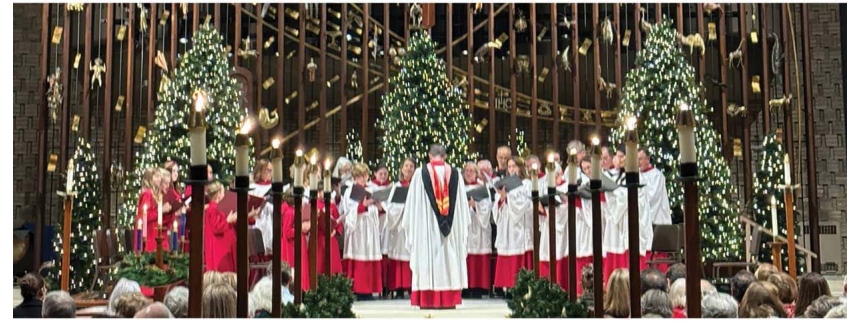
For the New Canaan community, the service serves as a reflective pause in the busyness of the holidays. Families and individuals of all ages are welcome to attend, and a reception will follow in Morrill Hall, offering fellowship and light refreshments. The Director of Music Ministries, Ned Tipton, described the service as "our gift to the community, and opportunity to come together in reverence, joy, and music."

The enduring popularity of the "Service of Nine Lessons and Carols" lies in its ability to bridge centuries of Christian worship with contemporary life. Whether attended by devoted churchgoers or curious newcomers, the service offers an entry point to reflect on the spiritual significance of Christmas.

The event is free and open to the public. For more information, visit St. Mark's Episcopal Church's website: www.stmarksnewcanaan.org.

Whether attended by devoted churchgoers or curious newcomers, the service offers an entry point to reflect on the spiritual significance of Christmas.

A Service of Nine Lessons & Carols for Christmas



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15 AT 5PM
111 Oenoke Ridge, New Canaan, CT



**Make safety your priority on the roads
this holiday season.**



If you or someone you know is struggling with drugs or alcohol, support is available.

- **Contact Al-Anon or Alateen at 1-888-825-2666.**
- **For help with drug abuse, reach out to Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Helpline at 1-800-662-4357.**
- **For additional resources and support, contact New Canaan Human Services at 203-594-3076.**

The New Canaan Health and Human Services Commission wishes you a warm, safe, and joyful holiday season.

Tell it slant...



BY SCOTT HERR

The celebrations of Hannukah and Christmas this year fall simultaneously on December 25th. Both holidays celebrate how “the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light...” (Isaiah 9:2), and how “the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:5). It’s not a coincidence that these holidays come around the Winter solstice, the darkest time of the year in our hemisphere. Both Jewish and Christian scripture readings at this time reflect themes of light and darkness and remind us that while there surely is enough darkness in the world to go around (political chaos, abuse, discrimination, illness, death, warfare, famine, corruption, chilling murders in broad daylight, etc.), the light of God’s truth and justice will prevail.

During the four weeks of Advent preparations, anticipations and expectations, I think of Emily Dickinson’s poem, “Tell all the truth but tell it slant”:

Tell all the truth but tell it slant—

Success in Circuit lies

Too bright for our infirm Delight

The Truth’s superb surprise

As Lightning to the Children eased

With explanation kind

The Truth must dazzle gradually

Or every man be blind —

In the Christian tradition, Advent is a time to reflect on how God comes to us in surprising and not so obvious ways. We sing carols like “Hark the Herald Angels Sing,” with the lyrics, “veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail th’ incarnate Deity...” and tell again the story of the mystery of the incarnation: God showing up in a backwater town called Bethlehem, born in a manger, signaled by a star in the dark sky, announced to shepherds watching their flocks by night... I think Dickinson knew the truth that the revelation of God cannot be given to us bluntly, for it will crush us, but “slantly,” so that it may woo us with “explanation kind” and “dazzle gradually.”

The themes for Advent are traditionally hope, peace, joy and love. This week the theme is “peace.” At last week’s rotary meeting our District Governor,

Robert Friend, shared some of his life journey and commitment to peacemaking. He showed us a “peace pole” that he had made with the words, “May Peace Prevail on Earth.” Of course, we all hope and pray for peace on earth, but we also know that, as one of my rabbi friends taught me, peace is like a camping tent. It’s constantly getting blown over and you have to put it back together again over and over and over.

One of my friends watches “The Lord of the Rings” trilogy during Advent every year. It’s not your typical Hallmark holiday movie series! In one of the most gripping scenes from “The Fellowship of the Ring,” the Fellowship encounters the Balrog, an evil so ancient and terrible that the good wizard Gandalf turns to his friends and says, “This foe is beyond any of you. Run!” As they escape across the bridge of Khazad-dûm, Gandalf holds up his staff and stands between them and commands the Balrog, “You shall not pass!”

In Advent, the readings and even the literal descent into darkness of this season invite us to reflect on our own versions of the Balrog, whatever enemies or obstacles in life, that are beyond our limited power to realize peace in our hearts, our families, our communities, our world. This season is a time to face down the darkness, but also a time to

For those who are not in such a holly jolly mood this holiday season, there is a “Blue Christmas” service on Sunday, Dec. 22, at 4:30 p.m.

remember that there is one who stood between us and every darkness, who faced what we cannot face, and through the “deeper magic” of self-giving love declared to death itself, “You shall not pass!”

For those who are not in such a holly jolly mood this holiday season (for whatever reason), a number of our congregations are joining together to offer a “Blue Christmas” service on Sunday, December 22nd, at 4:30 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church. The service will allow for a time to tell all the truth, but tell it slant; a time to grieve and mourn, as well as to remember the promises of our faith. And we will light candles and remember that “the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

Scott Herr is the Pastor and head of staff at the First Presbyterian Church of New Canaan.

Worship Directory and Services

UPDATE SERVICES AND ADD SPECIAL EVENTS TO THIS CALENDAR AT
www.NewCanaanSentinel.com/worship-calendar-updates

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

682 South Avenue 203.966.5849
www.ComeUntoChrist.org
Sunday Service: 12:00 PM

Congregational Church

23 Park Street 203.966.2651
office@godsacre.org
www.godsacre.org

Sunday Services: 8:00 AM and 10:00 AM. The 10:00 am service is also live streamed and recorded, the video replay will be available throughout the week. Church School is available on Sundays for children ages 3 through 7th grade each Sunday from September through mid-June.

Recurring Events:

Tuesdays at 9:30 AM: Women’s Bible Study

Wednesdays at 9:30 AM: Bible Study

Fourth Thursday from 12-2:30 PM: Meet at the Open Door Shelter in Norwalk to serve a meal.

Upcoming Events:

December 15th at 5 PM: Music Ministries will present A Season of Joy Christmas Celebration Concert. Admission is free and open to the public. A reception will follow in Smith Hall.

December 24th at 11 PM: Experience a candlelight service featuring scripture, sermon, and music. Communion will be served. Usher in Christmas morning surrounded by the peace of God’s Acre.

First Church of Christ, Scientist

49 Park Street 203.966.0293
christiansciencect.org/newcanaaan

Sunday 10:30 AM, in person only. Sunday School is available during Sunday Service and is open to children and young people up to the age of 20. There is also childcare available for children too young for Sunday School.

Wednesday Testimony Meeting: 1st Wednesday of each month, join by zoom or by phone 646 558 8656. Reading Room Hours: Open Mondays 11-2, Call to confirm hours 203-966-0293. All are welcome to the Sunday and Wednesday services, Sunday School, and the reading room.

First Presbyterian Church

178 Oenoke Ridge Road 203.966.0002
fpcnc.org

Sunday Service: 10am in person or via LocalLive. All are welcome. Coffee Hour after the service is also available in person or via Zoom. Dedicated childcare is available for all children via Wee Care Nanny Agency from 8:45-11:30am in the Nursery School. Transcripts of previous sermons are also available via the First Presbyterian Church of New Canaan’s website. Recurring Events: Every Saturday 9:15am (closed) and 10:30am (open): Alcoholics Anonymous. Every Tuesday 8pm: Men’s A.A.

Third Wednesday from 6-7:30 PM: Wednesdays at the Well are intergenerational opportunities to learn and grow in faith together. Dinner will be served and all ages are invited.

Upcoming Events:

December 22nd at 4:30 PM: Blue Christmas, A Service of Hope and Healing. For more information, visit <https://tinyurl.com/ms9hutuu>.

December 24th at 5 PM: Family Service & Pageant.

December 24th at 10 PM: Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.

Saint Aloysius Roman Catholic Church

21 Cherry Street 203.966.0020
www.starcc.com
Service Schedule:

Saturday: Vigil for Sunday 5:00 p.m.

Sunday: 7:00 a.m., 8:30 a.m. 10:00 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. The Sunday 8:30 a.m. mass is live-streamed and recorded.

Monday-Friday: 7:00 am and 5:30 pm

Saturday: 7:00 am

Recurring Events:

Last Monday of every month 7pm: Women’s Praise & Worship Holy Hour

Fridays 7:30am-6pm: Eucharistic Adoration (September-June)
Saturday 8:30am: St. A’s Healing Rosary Prayer Group

Upcoming Events:

December 15th from 2-3 PM: Christmas Concert in the church with a reception to follow in Narthex.

December 24th: Christmas Eve Masses will be held at 4 PM, 5:30 PM, 7:30 PM, and 12 AM. Carols will begin at 11:30 PM.

St. Mark’s Episcopal Church

111 Oenoke Ridge 203.966.4515
churchoffice@stmarksnewcanaan.org
www.stmarksnewcanaan.org

Sunday Services: 8:00am: Indoor Holy Eucharist Rite I; **9:00am:** Outdoor Holy Eucharist Rite II; **10am:** Indoor Holy Eucharist Rite II (Live Stream also available on the St. Mark’s website). Coffee Hour follows the 10am service. Church School during the 10am service: Godly Play for children in kindergarten through second grade; Holy Moly for third and fourth grades; Meet in the Middle for fifth, sixth and seventh grades. Professional childcare is offered for children ages four and under. Families with children who are not yet ready to separate for childcare are invited to use the rocking chairs at the rear of the chapel.

Weekday Services: Monday-Friday, 8:30am: Morning Prayer Rite II by Zoom.

Wednesday at 12:05pm: Noonday Eucharist in the chapel.

Recurring Events:

First Wednesday at 1pm: Laundry Love volunteering opportunity to come alongside people who are struggling financially by assisting them with their laundry.

First & Third Wednesdays from 6-7:30pm: Youth Group

Upcoming Events:

December 15th at 5 PM: A Service of Nine Lessons & Carols. Uniting the St. Mark’s Choir, Choristers, and Soloists, the story of our redemption is told – both in word and song – from the story of Adam and Eve to the arrival of the Magi at the Manger.

December 24th from 5-6 PM: The World’s Greatest Christmas Pageant.

St. Michael’s Lutheran Church

5 Oenoke Ridge 203.966.3913
office@stmichaelslutheran.org
www.stmichaelslutheran.org

Sunday Service at 10:00 am. Following the service there is coffee, cookies and conversation’ in the Fellowship Hall.

Recurring Events:

Thursday 12 PM: Alcoholics Anonymous

Upcoming Events:

December 24th at 4:30 PM: Christmas Eve mini-concert followed by a Christmas Eve worship service.

Trinity Church

New Canaan | Darien

468 South Avenue 203.618.0808
info@trinitychurch.life
www.trinitychurch.life

Join us **Sundays at 11:00 a.m.** at Saxe Middle School for lively worship, thoughtful and applicable teaching, weekly Communion, and an opportunity to make friends and grow in community. Trinity Kids (infants through fifth grade) and Trinity Youth (middle and high schoolers) take place during the service, and coffee and refreshments are served following worship. Trinity also holds services in-person in Greenwich and Larchmont, and on livestream via YouTube on Sundays at 9:45 a.m.; learn more at www.trinitychurch.life.

Upcoming Events:

December 24th at 4 PM: The Christmas Eve Service will be held in the Saxe Middle School Auditorium.

United Methodist Church

165 South Avenue 203.966.2666
office@umcofnewcanaan.org
www.umcofnewcanaan.org

Sunday Service is at 10:00 am followed by coffee and conversation during Fellowship Time. Sunday School is available during Sunday Service. All are welcome.

Upcoming Events:

Now through the end of January: Coffee/Tea Food Drive. Drop your donation of any type of coffee or tea in the donation box in the Narthex to benefit the New Canaan Food Bank.

December 15th at 10 AM: Christmas Pageant. Celebrate the season through a joyful performance filled with hope and holiday spirit.

December 24th at 5 PM: Christmas Eve Service.

Community Baptist Church

174 Cherry Street 203.966.0711
cbcnewcanaan@gmail.com
www.cbcnewcanaan.org

Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoZ2UNa8aH13O_Syp_X0KDg

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CBCNewCanaan/>
Sunday School at 10:00am

Worship Service at 11:00am

Live Facebook Broadcast 11:30 am

Upcoming Events:

December 21st at 2 PM: A family movie night. Please contact the CBC for the location.

Grace Community Church

9:30am Service @ New Canaan High School, 11 Farm Road, New Canaan
203-966-7600

info@gracecommunity.info
www.gracecommunity.info

Welcome to Grace Church, where we strive to build a church of action, founded on Biblical truth, characterized by faith, grace, community, service, authenticity, clear thinking, and cultural relevance. Grace Community Church is an exercise in knowing God, knowing truth, and building community that extends to our full lives, not just to our Sunday mornings. Join us **Sunday mornings at 9:30am** or via GCC’s Facebook page or YouTube page. Nursery care and Sunday school/teen programming is available for babies through 12th grade. Coffee and bagels available in the lobby after the service, all are welcome.

Upcoming Events:

December 24th: Holiday Jazz begins at 3:15pm, followed by a 4 pm service featuring scripture readings, the Children’s Choir, carols, and a message from Senior Pastor Cliffe Knechtle. Nursery care will be available for children ages four years old and younger.

Talmadge Hill Community Church

870 Hollow Tree Ridge Road; Darien, CT
203.966.2314

talmadgehillchurch@gmail.com
www.talmadgehill.org

Ministers: Rev. Carter Via and Rev. Cheryl Bundy **Sunday worship service at 10:00am** in person. All are welcome! We encourage everyone to stay for coffee hour after the service. Sunday School is every Sunday during the service and uses the Godly Play curriculum. Please reach out with any questions utilizing information listed above!

Recurring Events:

Thursdays at 9:30am: Bible Study

First Saturday at 8am: Men’s Group

Second Saturday at 10am: Women’s Circle

Upcoming Events:

December 24th at 5 PM: Christmas Eve Service.

Chabad New Canaan Jewish Center

137 Putnam Rd

info@chabadnewcanaan.org
www.newcanaanjewish.org

The Chabad New Canaan Jewish Center is dedicated to strengthening and building the New Canaan Jewish Community by offering local Jewish resources that bring more positivity, Jewish education, charitable activity, good deeds and blessing to our lovely town.

We are about Judaism, not affiliation. Regardless of your background, and however you choose to define your level of Jewish observance or identity, the Chabad New Canaan Jewish Center can add spirituality, joy, study, community and connection for you and your family. The programs of the Chabad New Canaan Jewish Center are held in various locations, all located in New Canaan.

Upcoming Events:

December 15th from 2-4 PM: Celebrate and Learn about Chanukah. Join members of the community to celebrate and learn about Chanukah with hands-on games and crafts, a special story walk, and tasty treats. This program is ideal for the whole family.

Temple Sinai (Reform Synagogue)

458 Lakeside Drive; Stamford, CT 06903
203.322.1649

www.templestainaistamford.org

Service Schedule:

1st, 3rd & 5th Friday – 6pm in person and via zoom
2nd & 4th – 7:30pm

Recurring Events:

Fridays at 12 PM: Torah Study

Second Saturday at 10:30 AM: Mussar

First and Third Fridays at 5:30 PM: Shabbat Service for Families with Young Children

First Saturday at 8 AM: Avodat Halev Discussion Group

Temple Shalom

300 E. Putnam Ave. Greenwich, CT 06830
203-869-7191

www.templesholom.com

Services: In-person and virtual Friday night Shabbat services, 6:30pm & Saturday morning Shabbat services, 10:30am.

Recurring Events:

Saturdays at 9 AM: Shabbat Study via zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/94358392426?pwd=bFJQem9HWfCxU0EzZUM2VENEZmgYUT09#success>



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
NEW CANAAN

A Blue Christmas Service

Sunday, December 22
4:30 pm

at First Presbyterian Church of New Canaan

*"The light shines in the darkness, and the
darkness did not overcome it."
(John 1:5)*

Are you:

- Sad
- Lonely
- Divorced
- Navigating a loss

In partnership with: Community Baptist
Church, Methodist Church of New Canaan,
& other local faith communities

Sunday Worship/Sunday School – 10am
Visit fpcnc.org or call us 203-966-0002 ext 1

*The Parish Family of St. Aloysius
wishes You and Yours
a Blessed Christmas and
Peace in the New Year*



Christmas Mass Schedule

December 24th ~ Christmas Eve

- 4:00 PM In the Church, with Children's Pageant immediately following
- 4:00 PM Stapleton Hall
- 5:30 PM Church
- 7:30 PM Church
- Midnight Church ~ Carols with the Choir beginning at 11:30 PM

December 25th ~ Christmas Day

7:00 AM, 8:30 AM, 10:00 AM, and 11:30 AM
in the Church

Please note: There is no Evening Mass on Christmas Day.

SAINT ALOYSIUS PARISH

Roman Catholic Church • Diocese of Bridgeport
21 Cherry Street, New Canaan, CT 06840
starcc.com

Now Showing: Moana 2 and Wicked



Now Showing

This week, the Playhouse is thrilled to present an exciting lineup of films that cater to all tastes.

Enjoy special holiday movies *The Polar Express*; *It's a Wonderful Life*; *Elf*; and *Love Actually*.

Plus The Playhouse is also showing *Wicked* and *Moana 2*.

WICKED



The highly anticipated film adaptation of the Broadway phenomenon *Wicked* soars onto the big screen this weekend, reimagining the untold story of the witches of Oz. Directed by Jon M. Chu (*Crazy Rich Asians*), the movie stars Cynthia Erivo as Elphaba and Ariana Grande as Glinda, showcasing their journey from unlikely friends to eventual adversaries. The

dazzling production blends with sweeping visuals, immersing audiences in the richly detailed world of Oz. With themes of identity, ambition, and morality, *Wicked* revisits a timeless tale with emotional depth and fresh perspective, promising a spectacle that resonates with both devoted fans and newcomers.

AND Set sail on a new epic adventure with *Moana 2*! The beloved heroine returns to explore uncharted waters, meet new friends, and face challenges that test her courage and determination. This animated feature promises stunning visuals, catchy songs, and heartwarming moments that will delight audiences of all ages.

MOANA 2



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Wilton Historical Society Hosts Magical Polar Express Night

All aboard for an enchanting evening! The Wilton Historical Society invites families to join us for Polar Express Night, a special event filled with holiday cheer and unforgettable experiences. On Friday, December 20th and Friday, December 27th from 6pm to 8pm, embrace the winter spirit with The Polar Express and the Great Trains Holiday Show. Guests will gather around for a cozy reading of this timeless children's classic, bringing the story to life in a festive setting. After the story, craft your own keepsake "Believe" Bell Ornament to take home as a memory of this special night, and remember as you ring the bell you can

keep the spirit of the holidays alive!

Finally enjoy a late-night viewing of the Great Trains Holiday Show: Explore the beloved train display - including a miniature Polar Express train - under the glow of the twinkle lights, a holiday tradition that sparks joy for visitors of all ages. Attendees can complimentary popcorn and hot cocoa; delicious treats to warm your heart and soul and to fit right in with the characters of The Polar Express!

This is the perfect way to celebrate the holiday season with family and friends.

Registration required, tickets for WHS Members are \$20.00 and Non-members are \$30.00. Space is limited, so don't miss the train! Tickets are for one of the two evenings, so choose the night that works best for you. Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult.


Buy Tickets for December 20th session: <https://wiltonhistorical.org/events/event/polar-express-night/>

Buy tickets for the December 27th session: <https://wiltonhistorical.org/events/event/polar-express-night-2/>

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Sentinel Reader Captures Stunning Moments from New Canaan Rams

Rich Brown, a Sentinel reader who answered our call for sports photos, captured spectacular moments from the New Canaan Rams' decisive victory over Bridgeport Central on November 15, 2024. The Rams demonstrated their strength with a commanding 42-6 win, showcasing excellence on both offense and defense.

In one striking image, linebacker Will Sullivan (above right) is seen

rushing the Bridgeport quarterback, reflecting the Rams' aggressive defensive strategy that stifled Central's offense throughout the game. Another photo (above) highlights sophomore linebacker Ethan Kremer in action, grappling with a Bridgeport running back, underscoring the team's defensive dominance.

And at left quarterback Quinn Jens also shone on the offensive

side, throwing a touchdown pass to Charlie Koch, as captured in another of Brown's photos. The Rams' seamless execution on both sides of the ball proved too much for Bridgeport Central to handle.

Rich Brown's photos bring to life the energy and precision of New Canaan football, and we thank him for sharing these memorable moments with Sentinel readers.



NEWS BRIEFING
CONTINUED From Page 1



Recently, Meili Farm received pumpkins from Planet New Canaan's annual collection to feed their Tamworth-Berkshire hogs. The final trailer of pumpkins is ready for delivery, concluding this year's pumpkin collection. Photo credit: Planet New Canaan Instagram.

Silver Hill Sponsors GAP Fellow



Silver Hill Hospital is now sponsoring Antonio (Tony) Beayno as a Fellow of the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry (GAP), which recognizes outstanding psychiatry residents. As a Fellow, Beayno will engage in research, writing, and collaboration with leading psychiatrists. Silver Hill leaders presented his certificate, highlighting their commitment to supporting future psychiatric professionals. Photo credit: Silver Hill Hospital.

SCHOOLS

Saxe Students Perform Elf Jr.



Saxe Intermediate School's fifth and sixth graders performed "Elf Jr." on December 6th and 7th. The musical, based on the 2003 film, follows Buddy the Elf's journey to New York City to discover his identity. The production highlighted Buddy's mission to share Christmas cheer. Photo credit: New Canaan Public Schools.

Winners of NCCS Geography Challenge

Recently, New Canaan Country School 8th grader Nathan won first place in the 2024 Upper School Geography Challenge, with 9th grader Luke earning second place. The event featured students from 7th-9th grade Advisories and concluded with a 15-round final. Participants were recognized for their efforts and achievements.

Filling in the Blanks Club Returns

New Canaan High School is relaunching its Filling in the Blanks club, which supports a nonprofit providing weekend meals to children facing food insecurity. Student leaders, including juniors Emma Barnard and Lyla Cody, are reviving the club with support from advisor Ms. Sapienza. The club aims to increase student involvement through activities such as meal packing and fundraising.

East School Visits Waveny



East School students visited Waveny Inn to participate in holiday-themed activities with residents. They made crafts, read seasonal books, and created holiday cards. Photo credit: New Canaan Public Schools Facebook.

NCCS Lemonade Stand



On December 10th, first and second graders at New Canaan Country School ended their "My First Lemonade Stand" class by running a lemonade stand for faculty and staff. The activity allowed students to practice business skills like pricing and money management. The program, part of the school's Plus Program, is run in partnership with SPARK Business Academy. Photo credit: New Canaan Country School Instagram.

SPORTS

New Canaan Advances to Final

New Canaan football, led by one of Coach Lou Marinelli's smallest senior classes in 44 years, defeated Newtown 35-20 in the CIAC Class L semifinals. Senior Michael Smith played a pivotal role with two interceptions, a blocked PAT, and a touchdown, helping the Rams advance to their 20th state final. They will face Darien in a rematch of last year's championship game.

ACROSS CT

MadeGood Recall

MadeGood is voluntarily recalling certain granola bars produced between January and November 2024 due to the potential presence of a metal fragment. There have been no reported injuries, and the recall is being conducted with regulatory authorities. Customers can check product codes for specific recalled items at <https://tinyurl.com/yckhee7a> and return affected items to the place of purchase for a refund.

OUR NEIGHBORS

Person to Person Receives Grant



Person to Person was named a 2024 Bank of America Neighborhood Builder and awarded a \$200,000 grant. The funding will support initiatives such as a second Mobile Food Pantry in Stamford and leadership training. Bank of America representatives presented the grant to the organization's leadership team. Photo credit: Person to Person Instagram.

PLAYING THIS WEEK AT

THE PLAYHOUSE

MOANA 2

WICKED

93 Elm Street
New Canaan

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for showtimes and tickets

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JOIN OUR FAMILY OF COMMITTED VOLUNTEERS
Helping people in their critical time of need is an incredibly rewarding experience. New Canaan EMS is a 100% volunteer, non-profit community organization celebrating 50 years in service.

CLASS RUNS JANUARY TO EARLY MAY @ NEW CANAAN EMS HQ

MONDAYS & WEDNESDAYS
6PM-10PM, SOME SATURDAYS

CERTIFICATION: EMT & CPR

QUESTIONS, EMAIL:
EMTCLASS@NEWCANAAANEMS.ORG

AWARDED, 2024 CONNECTICUT VOLUNTEER AGENCY OF THE YEAR

REAL ESTATE DASHBOARD

REAL ESTATE DASHBOARD EDITOR

John Engel | John.Engel@Elliman.com

REAL ESTATE DASHBOARD CONTRIBUTORS

Christa Kenin | Christa.Kenin@Elliman.com

Robyn Bonder | Robyn.Bonder@Elliman.com

NEW LISTINGS

Address	List Price	SqFt	Price/SqFt	AC	BR	FB
None this week						

NEW SALES

Address	Original List	List Price	Sold Price	DOM	BR	FB	Acres
79 Locust Avenue, #213	\$415,000	\$415,000	\$425,000	21	1	1	
330 Elm Street, #11	\$1,195,000	\$1,195,000	\$1,225,000	14	2	2	
180 Park Street, #204	\$1,525,000	\$1,525,000	\$1,525,000	1,465	2	2	

FEATURED OPEN HOUSE

Get Your Open Houses Into the MLS by Wednesday at Noon for a Listing Here

Address	Price	Day	Time	Broker
107 Weed Street	\$3,998,000	SUN	1:00PM-3:00PM	Higgins Group

Decision-Making, Fast and Slow



BY JOHN ENGEL

This week we explore timely Decision-Making and Commitment as we reflect on 2024 and set goals for 2025. December is when the phone rings. “What’s my house worth?” and “When should I list?” and “How can I prepare?” people ask. Sometimes the timing is not to our liking; buying and selling is a reaction to a major life event. But for many, the decision is a choice with the luxury of time. There are many motivations and equally many paths to a decision.

In his 1971 book, *The Science of Hitting*, Ted Williams describes the baseball player’s decision-making process when standing at the plate, “Everybody knows how to hit – but very few really do.” Ted is one of the greatest who ever played. His .482 on-base percentage is the highest of all time and his success, he argues, comes from being a student of the game, studying opponent behavior, and remembering past outcomes to predict the next pitch.

In the game of real estate – and life – we know it helps to study, to know context: info about the area, the seller, the listing agent, the other bidders, the competition, and recent sales. We make more informed decisions, aware that “past performance does not guarantee future results.”

The cover of his book features Ted Williams at the plate along with a color-coded grid showing his batting averages for any pitch. While Ted is a .400 hitter down the middle, he’s only a .230 hitter when the pitch is less than ideal. The baseball player makes his decision to swing in the first two tenths of a second, and he must swing at less-than-ideal pitches because in baseball there is what’s known as the “called strike.”

Warren Buffett refers to the book in his 1997 letter, saying the lack of “called strikes” makes his job easier than Ted’s. “We try to exert a Ted Williams kind of discipline...the business pitches we now see are just catching the lower outside corner. If we swing we will be locked into low returns. But if we let all of today’s balls go by there can be no assurance that the next ones we see will be more to our liking,” wrote Buffet. “Unlike Ted, we can’t be called out if we resist three pitches that are barely in the strike zone; nevertheless, just standing there day after day, with my bat on my shoulder is not my idea of fun.”

In the world of investing, there are no “called strikes.” You can wait for your pitch. If you don’t like the price of Bitcoin today, you can try again tomorrow. This is not the case in real estate. Today’s house will be gone tomorrow, but we can wait for the perfect house. While there are no “called strikes,” I wonder if decision-making changes in a market with so little inventory, and where demand outstrips supply. Some buyers play like Warren. They wait at the plate with the bat on

their shoulder, waiting for the perfect pitch.

Warren concludes by reinforcing this idea of decision-making discipline, saying he only bets on what he knows and understands. If they gave every college graduate a punch card of only 20 decisions to make in their adult life, they’d think very hard about each of them, and he says it only takes four or five really good decisions to be considered fabulously successful.

Daniel Kahneman won the Nobel Prize for his research on decision-making. In his book, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (2011), he describes two systems.

Fast thinking is automatic, intuitive, and emotional. It works effortlessly, relying on instinct, gut reactions, and mental shortcuts (heuristics). Fast thinking handles routine, everyday tasks and snap judgments, but not the purchase of a house.

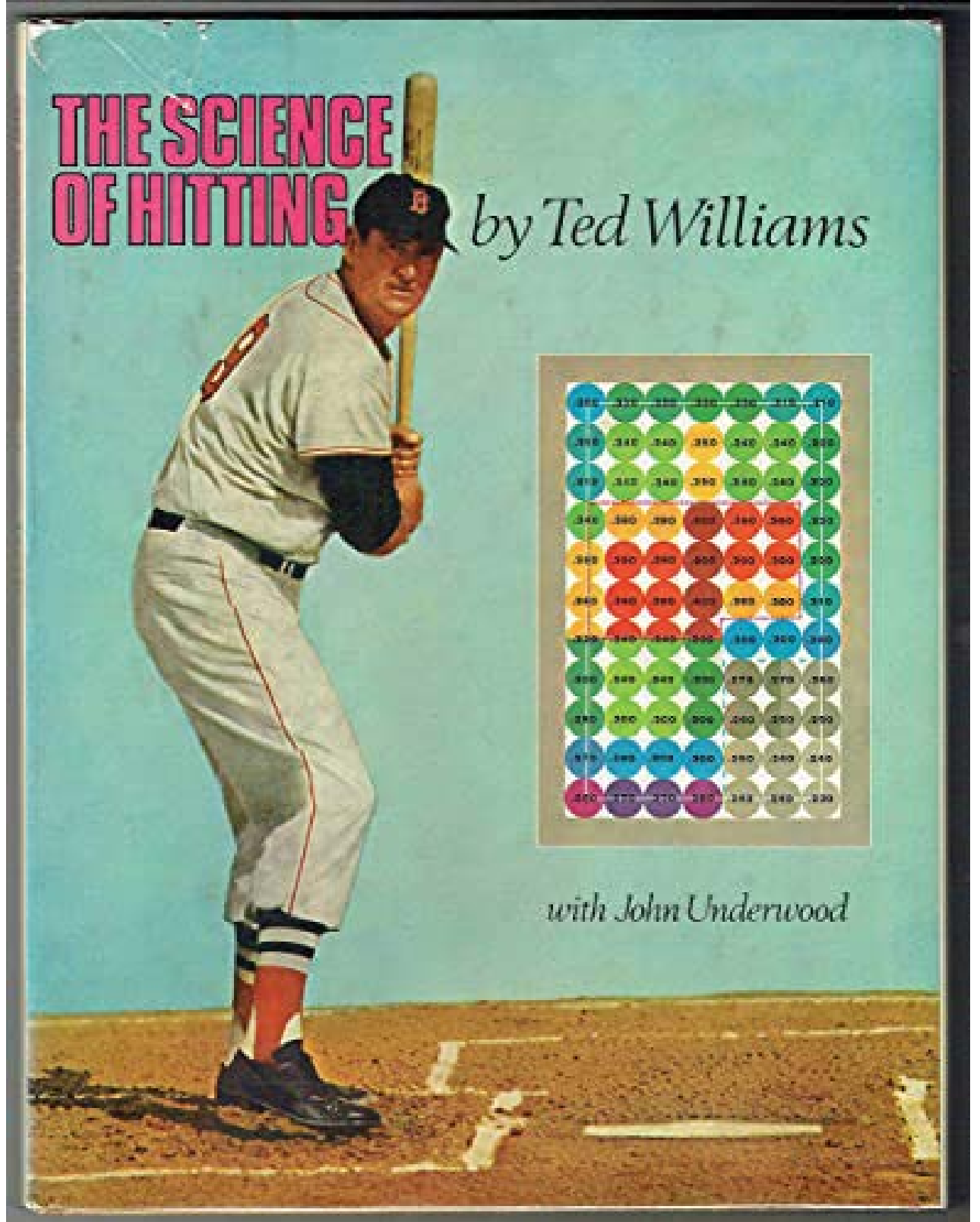
Slow thinking is deliberate, analytical, and effortful. It requires conscious effort and logical reasoning. This system is activated when we solve complex problems, evaluate arguments, or make difficult decisions.

Our brains default to fast thinking because it conserves energy and requires less effort. But fast thinking leads to errors in judgement. Daniel says take it slow, wait for your pitch.

But it’s possible to wait too long. Henry James’s masterpiece, *The Beast in the Jungle* (1903), tells the story of John Marcher, a man who lives his entire life believing that something extraordinary, a “beast in the jungle,” is destined to happen to him. He waits in anxious anticipation for this monumental event. It turns out the “beast” he was waiting for was not a life-transforming event; it is his failure to live, seize love, and embrace the present moment. It’s the story of decision-making and missed opportunities. Henry James says to swing that bat; he would have made a good realtor.

Robert Heinlein reminds us in his novel, *Starship Troopers*, “Doing something constructive at once is better than figuring out the best thing to do hours later.” This principle emphasizes the value of seizing the present moment, taking action with imperfect information, and learning through doing, rather than waiting for a “perfect” opportunity or plan to emerge. Heinlein’s quote promotes decisive action in the face of uncertainty, while John Marcher in *The Beast in the Jungle* embodies the tragic consequences of inaction and hesitation.

The military is the one example I can offer in contemporary society where timely decision-making is trained. “Make a decision, Lieutenant, make a decision!” In college and business, we are taught problem-solving and communication skills, and training on decision-making is a lost art. Not so in my house. My wife quotes this line at me more often than I would care to admit — “Make a decision,



“A man has to have goals—for a day, for a lifetime—and that was mine, to have people say, ‘There goes Ted Williams, the greatest hitter who ever lived.’”

Lieutenant,” so for some of us, it is still being trained.

I recently sold a house in Westport to a young couple. They bought the first house they looked at, on the first day, for full price. While that may appear to be fast thinking, it’s a great house, they knew their own mind, and they made a great and timely decision. So many others tour dozens of houses over a span of years, make offers, even have their offers accepted and eventually get cold feet, pulling out of every deal.

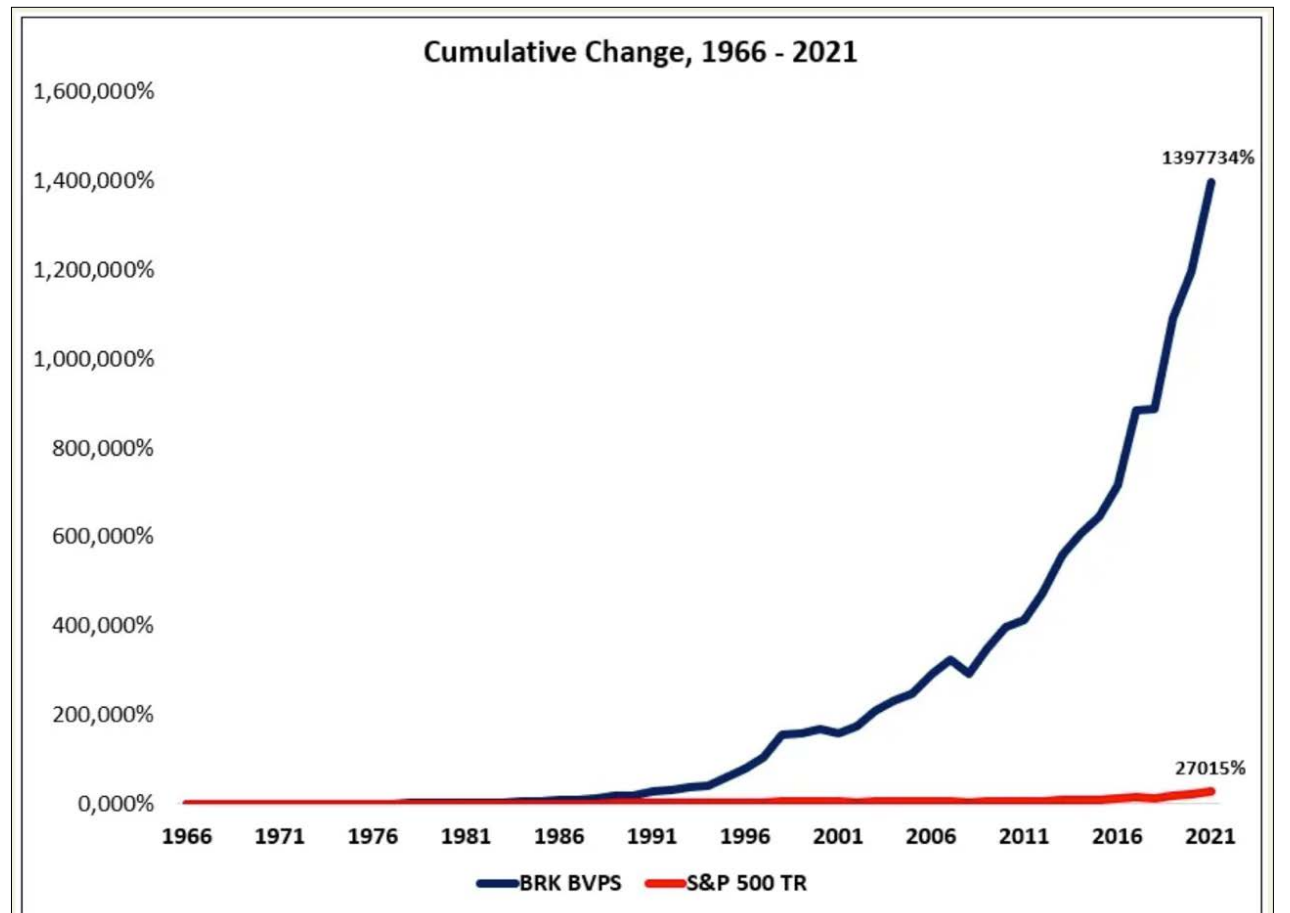
Heading into 2025, let’s ask

the experts: Ted Williams says study up, arrive prepared, and know your strike zone. Warren Buffett says be disciplined and wait for your pitch because there are no called strikes. Conversely, Henry James and Robert Heinlein will warn you against waiting too long. But what do they know? they wrote fiction for a living.

Notes from the Monday meeting: This weekend, I listed a house. Forty-three people toured, seven made offers, and six of them were competitive. The 7th stood out for spending

three hours at the house before submitting a 58% offer. Nobody swings at the 58% pitch.

John Engel is a broker on The Engel Team at Douglas Elliman, and this month, the range of circumstances of his clients is quite extraordinary: five siblings settle and sell an estate; another sells furnished; while one was potentially under-water. Buyers are equally varied; from Denver to Norwalk to Tribeca, they look for an escape, a project, and sometimes just a home, upsizing, downsizing and right-sizing.



Warren Buffett’s Berkshire Hathaway Outperforms the S&P with Slow Thinking.

Christmas Eve on God's Acre



TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24

4:00pm Family Service
with Nativity Pageant

6:00pm Worship Service

6:30pm Caroling on God's Acre

7:00pm Worship Service

11:00pm Candlelight Worship Service

LIVESTREAM WORSHIP IS AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE.

 **The Congregational Church of *New Canaan***

23 Park Street, New Canaan, CT 06840
(203) 966-2651 www.godsacre.org

Calendar of Events for Your Fridge

Submit your events at:
newcanaansentinel.com/submit-an-event/

TOWN MEETINGS

Monday, December 16

Inland Wetlands Commission
 7-8 p.m., Town Hall Meeting Room

Tuesday, December 17

Board of Selectmen
 8:30-10 a.m., Town Hall Meeting Room

EMS Commission
 6-7 p.m., EMS Headquarters

Planning & Zoning Commission
 7-9 p.m., Town Hall Meeting Room

Utilities Commission
 7-9 p.m., Location not posted at time of publication. Please contact the Town Clerk at 203-594-3070.

Wednesday, December 18

Police Commission
 6-7 p.m., Location not posted at time of publication.

December 13

COFFEE AND CONVERSATION
8:30 - 9:30 AM at the Lapham Center
Sponsored by the New Canaan Sentinel for a weekly community coffee and conversation.

Holiday Movie and Hot Cocoa: Love Actually
 12 PM at the Lapham Center
 Love Actually - Follows the lives of eight very different couples dealing with love and life in various, loosely interrelated tales set during a frantic month before Christmas in London, England. 2h 15m.

Get Started With Your Digital Library
 1-2 PM at the New Canaan Library, McLaughlin Meeting Room
 In this class, reference librarian James will walk you through downloading and using the most popular apps that put books, audiobooks, movies, magazines and more at your fingertips. Learn how to make the most of these incredible resources. For more information and to register, visit <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/get-started-your-digital-library-112361>.

Silvermine Holiday Art & Craft Sale
 5:30-8:30 PM at the Silvermine Auditorium
 Stroll through the auditorium where you can sip on wine, nibble on delicious treats, and discover the perfect gifts for everyone on your list. More information is available at <https://www.silvermineart.org/online-exhibition/silvermine-holiday-sale-fundraiser/>.

The Nutcracker Ballet - Day One
 7 PM at the New Canaan High School

Auditorium
 New England Academy of Dance and New Englanda Dance Theater Presents "The Nutcracker Ballet" featuring The Norwalk Symphony Orchestra. A Ballet that tells the story of Clara and her Nutcracker Prince and their battle with the evil Mouse King on their journey to the Land of the Sweet. This family favorite full length production is a holiday must see. Tickets prices start at \$30/person and are available at <https://cur8.com/761/project/125933>.

December 14

Town Farmer's Market
 10 AM - 2 PM at Lumber Yard Lot, 224 Elm Street
 There are many vendors with various local items available including specialty food, fresh meat, produce, soap, eggs, and honey!

Silvermine Holiday Art & Craft Sale
 10 AM - 4 PM at the Silvermine Auditorium
 Make holiday shopping a breeze by enjoying a stress-free shopping experience. Drop your kids off in our art studios at the "Drop and Shop" event. Children of all ages can participate in a variety of free art activities - Ornament and gift bag decorating, card crafting, and a collaborative Winter Wonderland mural. More information is available at <https://www.silvermineart.org/online-exhibition/silvermine-holiday-sale-fundraiser/>.

Writing Tips: Ekphrastic Writing - Global Voices
 10:30 AM- 12 PM at the New Canaan Library, McLaughlin Meeting Room
 Ekphrastic writing is a vivid, often dramatic, verbal description of a selected work of art that evokes a happening, place or character that is either real or imagined by the writer. To do this project, participants will take a short field trip to the library's Lightburn Gallery on the first floor to be inspired by the current exhibition from the Creative Connections: My Story Revealed: The Art of Global Culture & Identity. For more information and to register, visit <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/writing-tips-98275>.

Gardening Workshop| Decorating with Air Plants
 11 AM- 12 PM at Grace Farms
 Make a one-of-a-kind holiday decoration from living plants and other natural materials with the Grace Farms Garden Team. This workshop will include epiphytes, the fascinating low-maintenance plants that acquire nutrients and moisture from the air and water around them. Tickets are \$12/members, \$15/non-members, and available at <https://gracefarms.org/event/gardening-workshop-decorating-with-air-plants>.

Winter Wonderland 2024
 11 AM- 2 PM at the New Canaan Nature

Center
 The New Canaan Nature Center will transform into a Winter Wonderland filled with fun and exciting winter holiday activities for the entire family. Come enjoy the warm festive feel the Nature Center puts on this time of year. There will be visits & photos with Santa, holiday trains, a campfire, crafts and more. Tickets are \$15/person and available at <https://newcanaannature.org/winter-wonderland/>.

The Nutcracker Ballet - Day Two
 11 AM and 4 PM at the New Canaan High School Auditorium
 New England Academy of Dance and New Englanda Dance Theater Presents "The Nutcracker Ballet" featuring The Norwalk Symphony Orchestra. A Ballet that tells the story of Clara and her Nutcracker Prince and their battle with the evil Mouse King on their journey to the Land of the Sweet. This family favorite full length production is a holiday must see. Tickets prices start at \$30/person and are available at <https://cur8.com/761/project/125933>.

Knit & Crochet Meet Up
 2-4 PM at the New Canaan Library, Anderson MakerLab
 This meetup is a cozy environment for continuing a work in progress around others excited about yarn and also an opportunity for beginners to deepen skills with support from more experienced textile artists. Join for any amount of time during the 2-hour block of the meetup. For adults and teens. Ages 10-12 welcome with an adult. Register at <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/knit-crochet-meet-117032>.

Behind the Scenes Tour | Timber
 2:30-4 PM at Grace Farms
 Take a walking tour with Grace Farms Architecture Advisor, Toshihiro Oki, for a closer look at how wood was utilized as one of the main building elements, how trees felled onsite during construction were repurposed into the communal wood tables in the Commons, chairs, and other furniture, and more. Tickets are \$25/non-members, \$20/members, and available at <https://gracefarms.org/event/behind-the-scenes-tour-timber>.

December 15

The Nutcracker Ballet - Day Three
 1 and 4 PM at the New Canaan High School Auditorium
 New England Academy of Dance and New Englanda Dance Theater Presents "The Nutcracker Ballet" featuring The Norwalk Symphony Orchestra. A Ballet that tells the story of Clara and her Nutcracker Prince and their battle with the evil Mouse King on their journey to the Land of the Sweet. This family favorite full length production is a holiday must see. The childrens show is at 1 pm. Tickets prices start at \$30/person and are available at <https://cur8.com/761>

project/125933.

December 17

Open Tech
 2-4 PM at the New Canaan Library, McLaughlin Meeting Room
 If you need help with email, smartphones/tablets, social media, or accessing the digital library, stop by for one-on-one support from a tech librarian. All technology-related questions are welcome. Tech assistance is limited to 20 minutes per session and is provided on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Nutcracker: Hear the Story, See a Performance, Learn a Dance
 5-6 PM at the New Canaan Library, Jim & Dede Bartlett Auditorium
 The New England Academy of Dance (NEAD) brings the magic of The Nutcracker ballet to New Canaan Library showcasing dancers from the company as well as esteemed professionals from New York City. The demonstration will include a reading of The Nutcracker book by the Sugar Plum Fairy, followed by a variation performance. Register at <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/nutcracker-hear-story-see-performance-learn-dance-113213>.

December 18

New Canaan High School Madrigals A Holiday Performance
 1 PM at the Lapham Center
 Come and celebrate the holidays with the festive music of the NCHS Madrigals. This talented group of singers is sure to delight, as they perform a variety of seasonal songs. Light refreshments will be served. To register please call 203-594-3620.

December 19

Skating Lessons for Adults
 12:15 PM at Boucher Community Ice Rink
 These group lessons for older adults will focus on mastering skating fundamentals in a relaxed, social setting. Instructors will work with each participant based on his or her skill and comfort level; all participants should be comfortable moving across the ice without support. The rink will be closed to other skaters during this time. Class size is limited to ten with a minimum of four students. Tickets are \$120 per session. For more information call the Lapham Center at 203-594-3620.

Life Reimagined
 1 PM at the Lapham Center
 Purposeful living promotes happiness, better sleep, longevity, a healthier heart and reduces the risk of Alzheimer's and other diseases. Hosts Marcy Rand and Robin Rockafellow, LCSW, will lead an informal and friendly group discussion of who we were, who we are, and the creative ways to explore our interests, abilities, knowledge, and activities in connection with the community around us. For more information and to register, call the Lapham Center at 203-594-3620.

45th Annual Photography Show Deadline
 All day at the Carriage Barn Arts Center
 Submission is open to regional photographers - amateur, professional, and student. All original photographic media, including film and digital images accepted (excluding A.I. generated images). More information and registration is available at <https://carriagebarn.org/event/45th-annual-photography-show-deadline/>.

SAVE THE DATE

December 20
COFFEE AND CONVERSATION
8:30 - 9:30 AM at the Lapham Center
Sponsored by the New Canaan Sentinel for a weekly community coffee and conversation.

Afternoon Tea
 3-4:30 PM at Grace Farms
 Gather with your friends, neighbors, and fellow community members for an afternoon of conversation over a delicious pot of ethically- and sustainably-sourced tea from Grace Farms Tea & Coffee, a public benefit LLC and a Certified B Corp. The lite fare menu includes a seasonal assortment of tasty English and Japanese-inspired bites created by the Grace Farms Culinary Team. Tickets are \$30/non-members, \$24/members, and available at <https://gracefarms.org/event/afternoon-tea-3/2024-12-20>.

December 21

Town Farmer's Market - Final Day!
 10 AM - 2 PM at Lumber Yard Lot, 224 Elm Street
 Stock up on your favorite holiday foods and gifts from your favorite vendors. There

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Calendar of Events for Your Fridge

are many vendors with various local items available including specialty food, fresh meat, produce, soap, eggs, and honey!

Holiday Sing-along

3-3:45 PM at the New Canaan Library, Jim & Dede Bartlett Auditorium

This program will include fun holiday songs, and everyone is welcome to sing along. Ideal for families with preschool and early elementary children. Register at <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/holiday-sing-along-115663>.

December 26

Open Arts Studio | Wintry Landscapes

10 AM- 12 PM at Grace Farms

Play with the reflection of light through glass and trace the shadow lines to create a drawing or painting inspired by Grace Farms' winter landscape. For ages 4 – 11 with adult caregivers. Tickets are \$5/non-members, free for members, and available at <https://gracefarms.org/event/open-arts-studio-wintery-landscapes/2024-12-26>.

December 27

Songs of the Season | Alita Moses Day One

3-4 PM at Grace Farms

This performance features Brooklyn-based singer and songwriter Alita Moses. Moses is known for her soulful voice and remarkable versatility. She is a band leader, educator, and vocalist who earned a degree in Jazz Vocal Performance from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. More information is available at <https://gracefarms.org/event/songs-of-the-season-alita-moses/2024-12-27>.

December 28

Songs of the Season | Alita Moses Day Two

3-4 PM at Grace Farms

This performance features Brooklyn-based singer and songwriter Alita Moses. Moses is known for her soulful voice and remarkable versatility. She is a band leader, educator, and vocalist who earned a degree in Jazz Vocal Performance from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. More information is available at <https://gracefarms.org/event/songs-of-the-season-alita-moses/2024-12-28>.

January 2

Arts at the Library: The Art of Calligraphy Course

2-3:30 PM at the New Canaan Library, Craig B. Tate Conference Room

New Canaan Library is pleased to offer a new 8 session weekly course this winter in Calligraphy. Calligraphy is the art of fine hand lettering. In this class, you'll learn "chancery cursive script," which dates back to the 14th century and was created by scribes to develop a comfortable and aesthetically pleasing writing style. You must be present at the first class or your registration will be dropped. More information is available at <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/introduction-chancery-calligraphy-adults-119073>.

January 4

Yoga and Movement with Pilin Anice

10:30 AM- 12 PM at Grace Farms

Step into the light-filled Court to experience an immersive, breath-centered yoga practice accompanied by live acoustics led by renowned mindfulness and wellness expert, Pilin Anice. This class is paired with a cup of tea for an enhanced whole body wellness experience. Tickets are \$22 and available at <https://gracefarms.org/event/yoga-and-movement-with-pilin-anice-3/2025-01-04>.

January 7

Art Gottlieb's History Discussions: The Court Marshal of Billy Mitchell

10-11 AM at the Lapham Center

After serving with distinction in France during WW I, Billy Mitchell became an outspoken advocate of Air Power. He was Courts martialed in 1925 for insubordination after accusing military leaders of traitorous actions and a dereliction of effective leadership. To register please call 203-594-3620.

January 8

Meditation Class

9 - 9:45 AM at the Lapham Center

Sign up for this free meditation class that recharges, settles and soothes, while enhancing the feeling of deep peace that occurs when the mind is silent. For more information and to register, call the Lapham Center at 203-594-3620.

January 9

Skating Lessons for Adults

12:15 PM at Boucher Community Ice Rink

These group lessons for older adults will focus on mastering skating fundamentals in

a relaxed, social setting. Instructors will work with each participant based on his or her skill and comfort level; all participants should be comfortable moving across the ice without support. The rink will be closed to other skaters during this time. Class size is limited to ten with a minimum of four students. Tickets are \$120 per session. For more information call the Lapham Center at 203-594-3620.

Ask the Attorney with Nedder and Associates, by appointment

2-4 PM at the Lapham Center

An attorney from Nedder and Associates, LLC will be available for a free, private, fifteen-minute consultations to answer your legal or financial questions. Please call 203-594-3620 to schedule your appointment.

January 14

Art Gottlieb's History Discussions: Neville Chamberlain and Appeasement

10-11 AM at the Lapham Center

As Prime Minister of Great Britain during the 1930's, Neville Chamberlain desperately hoped to avoid conflict with Nazi Germany. Remembered for his pre-war negotiations with Hitler, Chamberlain's tragic legacy is one of naïve appeasement. To register please call 203-594-3620.

January 15

Meditation Class

9 - 9:45 AM at the Lapham Center

Sign up for this free meditation class that recharges, settles and soothes, while enhancing the feeling of deep peace that occurs when the mind is silent. For more information and to register, call the Lapham Center at 203-594-3620.

Take Action to Protect Your Online and Financial Security with Allison Donaldson

12:30 PM at the Lapham Center

Incidents of fraud and identity theft are on the rise. A helpful list of action items was created so you can implement now, in order to safeguard your personal and financial information. This is a free lunch and learn event. For more information and to register, call the Lapham Center at 203-594-3620.

January 16

Life Reimagined

1 PM at the Lapham Center

Purposeful living promotes happiness, better sleep, longevity, a healthier heart and reduces the risk of Alzheimer's and other diseases. Hosts Marcy Rand, LMSW, Director, New Canaan's Human Services Department, and Robin Rockafellow, LCSW, will lead an informal and friendly group discussion of who we were, who we are, and the creative ways to explore our interests, abilities, knowledge, and activities in connection with the community around us. For more information and to register, call the Lapham Center at 203-594-3620.

January 22

Meditation Class

9 - 9:45 AM at the Lapham Center

Sign up for this free meditation class that recharges, settles and soothes, while enhancing the feeling of deep peace that occurs when the mind is silent. For more information and to register, call the Lapham Center at 203-594-3620.

February 5

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide

10 AM - 3 PM at the Lapham Center

IRS trained and certified AARP Tax Counselors will provide free, income tax preparation on Wednesdays, February 5th through April 9th. There will be a focus on adults aged 50+ with a low to moderate income. AARP membership is NOT required. You can choose to have an IRS-certified volunteer prepare your taxes for you or provide guidance, so you can prepare them yourself. This program is by appointment only. Information about scheduling appointments will be available in mid-January. For more information, please call (203) 674-9336.

Winter Bingo with a Valentine's Theme

1 PM at the Lapham Center

Bingo and prizes with a Valentine's Day theme. Reserve your spot early by calling (203) 674-9336.

February 21

Move with Grace Farms x lululemon | Yoga with Jane Krantz

10:30 AM at Grace Farms

Join instructor Jane Krantz for a fluid yoga class centered on moving through transitions with grace and finding stability in order to move with freedom, awareness, and expression. Starting with grounding

breathwork, Jane will guide you through movement that will ignite a little bit of heat and a lot of joy, ending in a restful savasana. Tickets are \$20/non-members, \$16/members, and available at <https://gracefarms.org/event/move-with-grace-farms-x-lululemon-yoga-with-jane-krantz-2>.

Opening Night- Terra Nova

7:30 PM at the Town Players of New Canaan

In the winter of 1911-12, five Englishmen and five Norwegians raced each other to the bottom of the Earth. Only the Norwegians returned. Terra Nova is the story of Captain Scott's expedition to the South Pole. Tickets are \$35/adults, \$30/seniors, and available at <https://www.onthestage.tickets/show/town-players-of-new-canaan/6683833d63f94a0e4061a23a/tickets#/productions-view>.

BLOOD DRIVES

Wednesday, December 18

VFW

465 Riverside Avenue

Westport, CT 06880

1:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Monday, December 23

Green's Farms Church

71 Hillandale Road

Westport, CT 06880

12:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Tuesday, December 24

American Legion

60 County Road

Norwalk, CT 06851

8:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Greenwich Blood

Donation Center

99 Indian Field Road

Greenwich, CT 06830

7:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Thursday, December 26

Strong Comstock

Community Center

180 School Road

Wilton, CT 06897

9:30 AM – 6:30 PM

Westport Woman's Club

44 Imperial Ave

Westport, CT 06880

9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Greenwich Blood

Donation Center

99 Indian Field Road

Greenwich, CT 06830

7:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Support Services & Meetings

December 18

Blood Sugar & Blood Pressure Clinic

12:30 PM at the Lapham Center

Ellen Samai from New Canaan's Department of Health provides in-person blood sugar and blood pressure testing. Walk-ins welcome. If you plan to have your blood sugar level tested, it is recommend you fast for four hours prior to testing. For more information and to register please call 203-594-3620.

Alzheimer's Support Group with the Waveny LifeCare Network

2 PM at the New Canaan Library, Craig B. Tate Conference Room

Family members, caregivers, and friends are invited to meet for informative and supportive group sessions to help navigate changes related to memory loss and cognitive decline. Attendees can find guidance, offer support, and ask questions in a safe environment. Register at <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/alzheimers-support-group-waveny-lifecare-network-109609>.

December 20

Suicide Prevention Training: Question, Persuade and Refer

11 AM- 1 PM at the New Canaan Library, McLaughlin Meeting Room

In partnership with the Health Department of New Canaan, the library presents a suicide prevention QPR class. Those trained in QPR learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help. This training will certify you as a QPR gatekeeper. This is a free event and registration is available at <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/suicide-prevention-training-question-persuade-and-refer-82870>.

January 13

Advances in the Diagnosis and Treatment of Heart and Vascular Disease

11 AM at the Lapham Center

Dr. Argenziano will discuss current technology for less invasive treatment options, including minimally invasive surgery and catheterbased procedures. Also the importance of early diagnosis of coronary and valve disease, and the ease of testing, including calcium score, stress tests, and echocardiograms. For more information and to register please call 203-594-

3620.

February 19

Transitioning from Hospital to Subacute Care: Key Questions and Essential Information

12 PM at the Lapham Center

Know what to expect, what questions to ask and what information to gather to ensure a smooth transition

when being discharged from a hospital to a skilled nursing facility for rehab. This free lunch and learn will be presented by Kathy Collins, LMSW.

Every Friday

AA Speaker Meeting Wheelchair Access

Fridays at 7:30 AM

Congregational Church of New Canaan

23 Park St, New Canaan

Every Saturday

AA Meeting-Sober Citizens Group

Saturdays at 9:15 AM

First Presbyterian Church

178 Oenoke Ridge Rd., New Canaan

AA Meeting-Laundry and Dry Cleaning Group

Saturdays at 10:30 AM

First Presbyterian Group

178 Oenoke Ridge, New Canaan

Lost Then Found NA Meeting

Wheelchair Accessible

Saturdays at 7 PM

United Methodist Church (back entrance) 165

South Avenue, New Canaan

Every Monday

AA Meeting

Wheelchair Access

Mondays at 7:30 AM

Congregational Church of New Canaan

23 Park St, New Canaan

Adult Child Al-Anon Meeting

Mondays at 12 PM

St. Mark's Church, Youth Room

111 Oenoke Ridge Rd., New Canaan

Every Tuesday

Adult Child Alanon Meeting

Tuesdays at 12 PM

St. Mark's Parish House, Conf. Room

111 Oenoke Ridge Rd., New Canaan

Every Wednesday

AA Step Meeting

Wheelchair Access

Wednesdays at 7:30 AM

Congregational Church of New Canaan

23 Park St, New Canaan

Al-Anon Parent's & Newcomer's Mtg.

Wednesdays at 7:30 PM

Silver Hill, Jorgenson House

208 Valley Rd., New Canaan

Every Thursday

AA Big Book Meeting, Wheelchair Access

Thursdays at 7:30 AM

Congregational Church of New Canaan

23 Park St, New Canaan

New Canaan Parent Support Group

7- 8:30 PM

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

New Canaan

Our Neighbors

December 14

A Christmas Carol - Day One

7:30 PM at the United Church of Rowayton Community Room, 210 Rowayton Ave, Norwalk

This production is staged reading benefit directed by Nick Urda. Funds raised from this benefit will go toward producing Shakespeare on the Sound's summer mainstage production, and touring their educational programs to underserved communities. Tickets are available at <https://shorturl.at/6uLFs>.

December 15

A Christmas Carol - Day Two

3 PM at the Pequot Library

720 Pequot Ave, Southport

This production is staged reading benefit directed by Nick Urda. A reception with light food and drinks following the performance. Funds raised from this benefit will go toward producing Shakespeare on the Sound's summer mainstage production, and touring their educational programs to underserved communities. Tickets are available at <https://shorturl.at/ZG9kU>.

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
NEW CANAAN**

A Blue Christmas Service

Sunday, December 22
4:30 pm

at First Presbyterian Church of New Canaan

*"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."
(John 1:5)*

Are you:

- Sad
- Lonely
- Divorced
- Navigating a loss

In partnership with: Community Baptist Church, Methodist Church of New Canaan, & other local faith communities

Sunday Worship/Sunday School – 10am
Visit fpcnc.org or call us 203-966-0002 ext 1

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
NEW CANAAN**

'Tis the Christmas Season at FPCNC! Celebrate With Us!

4 DEC	8:30 AM	Soul Shop Workshop
8 DEC	4:00 PM	Charis Chamber Voices Concert
11 DEC	7:00 PM	Webinar on Navigating Loss w/ VOICES
11 DEC	7:00 PM	NCHS Choirs' Concert
18 DEC	6:00 PM	Wednesdays at the Well
22 DEC	4:30 PM	Blue Christmas Service
24 DEC	5:00 PM	Family Service & Pageant
24 DEC	6:30 PM	God's Acre Caroling
24 DEC	10:00 PM	Candlelight Service

Please Plan to Join Us for Some or All of These Events!

178 Oenoke Ridge
Sunday Worship/Sunday School – 10am
Visit fpcnc.org or call us at 203-966-0002 ext 1

Sudoku for Kids

	3		
1	2	3	
	1	4	
		1	3

	1		
2	3	4	
			3
3		1	4

4			1
2	1		
	4		
3	2		4

1			
		1	
4		2	3
3	2		1

SUDOKU

Each row, column, nonet can contain each number only once. Answers below.

Easy

	1	3					7	
9						5		
	7	5		1	3			8
		4		5				
			3		8			
			6		7			
	5		9	7		1	4	
		2						3
4						6	5	

Hard

				8	3	2		
	9	4			7			
		1		3	6		9	
				6	2			
	5					8		
		8	1					
5		3	8		4			
		4		7		6		
6	2	5						

Very Hard

	5							1
		6						
	1			5	6			2
2	4	1						3
			1	6	3	2	4	9
9	6	3						5
	3			2	8			9
		8						
7								8

Easy

		8		4			7	
		1	7			3	4	6
			5					
	3	9						
	2		6		8		5	
						8	1	
					5			
3	1	4			6	7		
	8			3		6		

Hard

	4		6	8		9		5
5					9			
	8			1		2		
4				1		5		
		7		4				
	1	3						4
		4		3			9	
			9					3
9	2		4	8		1		

Very Hard

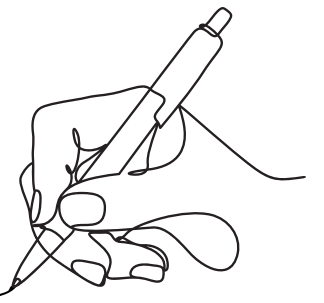
					8	9	5	1
					3			
		5						
		2				3	7	
6				7				8
	9	7				4		
						1		
				6				
4	6	1	2					

Sudoku answers

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
7	6	5	4	3	2	1		
6	5	4	3	2	1			
5	4	3	2	1				
4	3	2	1					
3	2	1						
2	1							
1								

Calling all sophisticates, literary enthusiasts, and our very clever Sentinel readers!
Enter to Win Cash Prizes in our Contest!

Sentinel Literary Competition



November 2024 Competition

The November competition, "Modern Etiquette for the Digital Age," offered participants the opportunity to dissect our online quirks and craft clever rules for navigating them. Entries ranged from spot-on advice to hilarious exaggerations, all reflecting the absurdity and relatability of our digital lives. The submissions proved that whether we're debating the nuances of Zoom backgrounds or the perils of group chats, humor is the universal coping mechanism for the modern world.

With so many sharp entries, judging wasn't easy. Some contributors leaned into the personal and anecdotal, while others offered a sweeping manifesto for our tech-centric times. After much deliberation (and a lot of laughing), we've chosen our top three entries, followed by a few honorable mentions.

The Winners

First Place: Jeffrey Kiczek "Just Keep Scrolling"

As a wise fish once said, "just keep scrolling". I think she said scrolling, but I can't be sure, because we both have terrible memories. Anyway, the key to social media is that the best meme, picture, video, etc. is just a quick scroll away. No matter how long you've been scrolling, no matter how past your bedtime it is, you gotta "just keep scrolling". Trust me, eventually you'll find that perfect dopamine hit and it will all be worth it. And then, after you find it, you'll wonder if there's another one out there just as good. And the only way to know, for sure, is to... JUST KEEP SCROLLING!

Jeffrey's entry tapped into the universal truth of endless scrolling, turning it into a mantra worthy of its own Pixar sequel. His clever nod to Dory and the cycle of dopamine hits resonated with anyone who's fallen victim to the infinite scroll. The repetition and rhythm gave this entry a comedic edge, while its subtle commentary on social media addiction hit home.

Second Place: Andrea Kiczek "The Introvert's Guide to Family Group Chats"

So, you've been added to your significant other's family group chat, but you're an introvert. This is both a blessing and a curse, and you must tread carefully. You want to be witty, so they think you're smart, but not too witty, or else they'll expect you to talk a lot in person. You need to

participate, but also fade into the background. It's a tough needle to thread, but here are some tips:

Don't think you can get away with just "liking" or adding emojis to other texts; that may have worked five years ago, but they're onto us!

Good natured teasing of your significant other is common ground, but don't overdo it.

Easiest way to hit your texting quota is to be the first one to wish everyone a happy holiday. You have to be first, or else it looks like you're copying, so set an alarm to wake up early!

If all else fails, send pictures of your dog. If you don't have a dog (and they live far enough away), just take pictures of your neighbor's dog!

Andrea perfectly captured the delicate balancing act of navigating group chats, particularly when they involve in-laws. Her mix of humor and genuine advice (texting quotas, alarms for holiday greetings) struck a chord with introverts everywhere. The suggestion to borrow a neighbor's dog for photo-sharing was a brilliant touch, earning her a well-deserved second place.

Third Place: Zeena Hine "Modern Wordle Etiquette"

On Facebook, please do not post your latest Wordle score unless you completed the game in one or two tries. For that matter, don't post your Wordle score at all. People would rather see videos of your dog befriending the neighborhood possum or a parrot singing the national anthem.

On Zoom calls, if you're trying to look engaged but you're really reading a funny book that's on your lap, remember to mute yourself when you feel a giant guffaw starting.

Zeena's take on Wordle scores and Zoom guffaws was succinct and hilarious. Her commentary on the oversharing culture of social media was sharp without being mean-spirited, and her advice about muting oneself during a laugh-out-loud moment felt like a public service announcement we all needed. Zeena's signature wit shines through once again.

Honorable Mention Kayla and Amalia Kiczek

I'm ten, so I don't have a phone yet, but I asked my older cousin, and this is what she said. "If your mom texts you, there's no need to respond, because it's not important. If it was important, she'd call. If she then calls, it's probably still

not that important, and you can still decline the call immediately. If she calls a second time, it's important, but if what you're doing is also important, then that cancels each other out. If she pings your phone, you're in trouble for not picking up, and you better call her back!"

Kayla, with the help of her older cousin, turned the eternal parental text dilemma into a comedy routine. Their entry not only delivered laughs but also brilliantly captured the child-parent dynamic in the age of smartphones.

Why We Do It

Competitions like these are more than a chance to showcase wit—they're a celebration of our shared experiences. In an increasingly digital world, we all struggle with the same dilemmas: What's the right Zoom background? How do you gracefully exit a group chat? Why does Wordle make us so competitive? Through humor, these entries bring us together, making the peculiarities of modern life a little easier to navigate.

This competition reminds us that no matter how complex our lives become, laughter remains the simplest way to connect.

New Challenge!

New Year, Same Me: Resolutions We'll Never Keep

Prompt: Write a humorous take on New Year's resolutions that are destined to fail—or ones that are so specific they could only work for you. Think about the absurd promises we make to ourselves and how they unravel by January 2nd.

Examples:

"This year, I vow to limit myself to one Netflix binge per week. Unless the show has more than three seasons, in which case it's still technically one binge."

"I'm giving up carbs. Except for bagels, pasta, pizza, sandwiches, and anything that comes with a croissant. So, basically, I'm giving up toast."

"I promise to stop procrastinating... starting tomorrow."

Deadline: Friday, December 27, 2024. The winner receives \$100, with second and third place taking home \$50 and \$25, respectively.

Thank you to everyone who participated this month. Your creativity and humor remind us why we love doing this. We can't wait to see what resolutions (or non-resolutions) you come up with for December!



**GET YOUR HOME
HOLIDAY-READY.**



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WINDOW TREATMENTS • FLOORING &
CARPETS • PATIO CUSHIONS

203-957-3838 | HomeCarebyFabricare.net

Make safety your priority on the roads
this holiday season.



If you or someone you know is struggling with drugs
or alcohol, support is available.

- Contact Al-Anon or Alateen at 1-888-825-2666.
- For help with drug abuse, reach out to Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Helpline at 1-800-662-4357.
- For additional resources and support, contact New Canaan Human Services at 203-594-3076.

The New Canaan Health and Human Services
Commission wishes you a warm, safe, and joyful
holiday season.



**Your eye health is critical
to your overall well-being.**



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THE HOUSE AT POOH CORNER BY A.A. MILNE

CHAPTER I IN WHICH A House Is Built at Pooh Corner for Eeyore

One day when Pooh Bear had nothing else to do, he thought he would do something, so he went round to Piglet's house to see what Piglet was doing. It was still snowing as he stumped over the white forest track, and he expected to find Piglet warming his toes in front of his fire, but to his surprise he saw that the door was open, and the more he looked inside the more Piglet wasn't there.

"He's out," said Pooh sadly. "That's what it is. He's not in. I shall have to go a fast Thinking Walk by myself. Bother!"

But first he thought that he would knock very loudly just to make quite sure ... and while he waited for Piglet not to answer, he jumped up and down to keep warm, and a hum came suddenly into his head, which seemed to him a Good Hum, such as is Hummed Hopefully to Others.

The more it snows
(Tiddely pom),
The more it goes
(Tiddely pom),
The more it goes
(Tiddely pom),
On snowing.
And nobody knows
(Tiddely pom),
How cold my toes
(Tiddely pom),
How cold my toes
(Tiddely pom),
Are growing.

"So what I'll do," said Pooh, "is I'll do this. I'll just go home first and see what the time is, and perhaps I'll put a muffler round my neck, and then I'll go and see Eeyore and sing it to him."

He hurried back to his own house; and his mind was so busy on the way with the hum that he was getting ready for Eeyore that, when he suddenly saw Piglet sitting in his best arm-chair, he could only stand there rubbing his head and wondering whose house he was in.

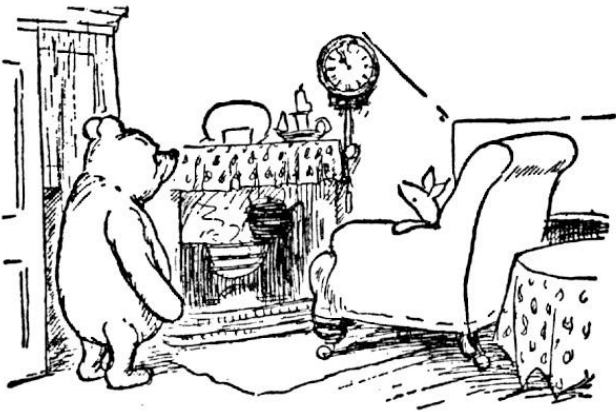
"Hallo, Piglet," he said. "I thought you were out."

"No," said Piglet, "it's you who were out, Pooh."

"So it was," said Pooh. "I knew one of us was."

He looked up at his clock, which had stopped at five minutes to eleven some weeks ago.

"Nearly eleven o'clock," said Pooh happily. "You're just in time for a little smackerel of something," and he put his head into the cupboard. "And then we'll go out, Piglet, and sing my song to Eeyore."



"Which song, Pooh?"

"The one we're going to sing to Eeyore," explained Pooh.

The clock was still saying five minutes to eleven when Pooh and Piglet set out on their way half an hour later. The wind had dropped, and the snow, tired of rushing round in circles trying to catch itself up, now fluttered gently down until it found a place on which to rest, and sometimes

the place was Pooh's nose and sometimes it wasn't, and in a little while Piglet was wearing a white muffler round his neck and feeling more snowy behind the ears than he had ever felt before.



"Pooh," he said at last, and a little timidly, because he didn't want Pooh to think he was Giving In, "I was just wondering. How would it be if we went home now and practised your song, and then sang it to Eeyore tomorrow—or—or the next day, when we happen to see him?"

"That's a very good idea, Piglet," said Pooh. "We'll practise it now as we go along. But it's no good going home to practise it, because it's a special Outdoor Song which Has To Be Sung In The Snow."

"Are you sure?" asked Piglet anxiously.

"Well, you'll see, Piglet, when you listen. Because this is how it begins. The more it snows, tiddely pom——"

"Tiddely what?" said Piglet.

"Pom," said Pooh. "I put that in to make it more hummy. The more it goes, tiddely pom, the more——"

"Didn't you say snows?"

"Yes, but that was before."

"Before the tiddely pom?"

"It was a different tiddely pom," said Pooh, feeling rather muddled now. "I'll sing it to you properly and then you'll see."

So he sang it again.

The more it
SNOWS-tiddely-pom,
The more it
GOES-tiddely-pom
The more it
GOES-tiddely-pom
On
Snowing.
And nobody
KNOWS-tiddely-pom,
How cold my
TOES-tiddely-pom
How cold my
TOES-tiddely-pom
Are
Growing.

He sang it like that, which is much the best way of singing it, and when he had finished, he waited for Piglet to say that, of all the Outdoor Hums for Snowy Weather he had ever heard, this was the best. And, after thinking the matter out carefully, Piglet said:

"Pooh," he said solemnly, "it isn't the toes so much as the ears."

By this time they were getting near Eeyore's Gloomy Place, which was where he lived, and as it was still very snowy behind Piglet's ears, and he was getting tired of it, they turned into a little pine wood, and sat down on the gate which led into it. They were out of the snow now, but it was very cold, and to keep themselves warm they sang Pooh's song right through six times, Piglet doing the tiddely-poms and Pooh doing the rest of it, and both of them thumping on the top of the gate with pieces of stick at the proper places. And in a little while they felt much warmer, and were able to talk again.



"I've been thinking," said Pooh, "and what I've been thinking is this. I've been thinking about Eeyore."

"What about Eeyore?"

"Well, poor Eeyore has nowhere to live."

"Nor he has," said Piglet.

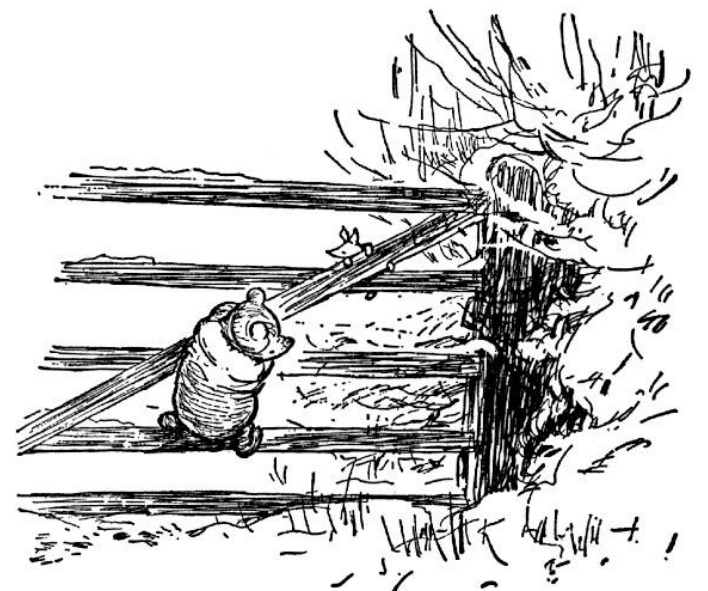
"You have a house, Piglet, and I have a house, and they are very good houses. And Christopher Robin has a house, and Owl and Kanga and Rabbit have houses, and even Rabbit's friends and relations have houses or somethings, but poor Eeyore has nothing. So what I've been thinking is: Let's build him a house."

"That," said Piglet, "is a Grand Idea. Where shall we build it?"

"We build it here," said Pooh, "just by this wood, out of the wind, because this is where I thought of it. And we will call this Pooh Corner. And we will build an Eeyore House with sticks at Pooh Corner for Eeyore."

"There was a heap of sticks on the other side of the wood," said Piglet. "I saw them. Lots and lots. All piled up."

"Thank you, Piglet," said Pooh. "What you have just said will be a Great Help to us, and because of it I could call this place Poohanpiglet Corner if Pooh Corner didn't sound better, which it does, being smaller and more like a corner. Come along."



So they got down off the gate and went round to the other side of the wood to fetch the sticks.

Christopher Robin had spent the morning indoors going to Africa and back, and he had just got off the boat and was wondering what it was like outside, when who should come knocking at the door but Eeyore.

"Hallo, Eeyore," said Christopher Robin, as he opened the door and came out. "How are you?"



"It's snowing still," said Eeyore gloomily.

"So it is."

"And freezing."

"Is it?"

"Yes," said Eeyore. "However," he said, brightening up a little, "we haven't had an earthquake lately."

"What's the matter, Eeyore?"



"Nothing, Christopher Robin. Nothing important. I suppose you haven't seen a house or what-not anywhere about?"

"What sort of a house?"

"Just a house."

"Who lives there?"

"I do. At least I thought I did. But I suppose I don't. After all, we can't all have houses."

"But, Eeyore, I didn't know—I always thought——"

"I don't know how it is, Christopher Robin, but what with all this snow and one thing and another, not to mention icicles and such-like, it isn't so Hot in my field about three o'clock in the morning as some people think it is. It isn't Close, if you know what I mean—not so as to be uncomfortable. It isn't Stuffy. In fact, Christopher Robin," he went on in a loud whisper, "quite-between-ourselves-and-don't-tell-anybody, it's Cold."

"Oh, Eeyore!"

"And I said to myself: The others will be sorry if I'm getting myself all cold. They haven't got Brains, any of them, only grey fluff that's blown into their heads by mistake, and they don't Think, but if it goes on snowing for another six weeks or so, one of them will begin to say to himself: 'Eeyore can't be so very much too Hot about three o'clock in the morning.' And then it will Get About. And they'll be Sorry."



"Oh, Eeyore!" said Christopher Robin, feeling very sorry already.

"I don't mean you, Christopher Robin. You're different. So what it all comes to is that I built myself a house down by my little wood."

"Did you really? How exciting!"

"The really exciting part," said Eeyore in his most melancholy voice, "is that when I left it this morning it was there, and when I came back it wasn't. Not at all, very natural, and it was only Eeyore's house. But still I just wondered."

Christopher Robin didn't stop to wonder. He was already back in his house, putting on his waterproof hat, his waterproof boots and his waterproof macintosh as fast as he could.

"We'll go and look for it at once," he called out to Eeyore.

"Sometimes," said Eeyore, "when people have quite finished taking a person's house, there are one or two bits which they don't want and are rather glad for the person to take back, if you know what I mean. So I thought if we just went——"

"Come on," said Christopher Robin, and off they hurried, and in a very little

time they got to the corner of the field by the side of the pine-wood, where Eeyore's house wasn't any longer.

"There!" said Eeyore. "Not a stick of it left! Of course, I've still got all this snow to do what I like with. One mustn't complain."

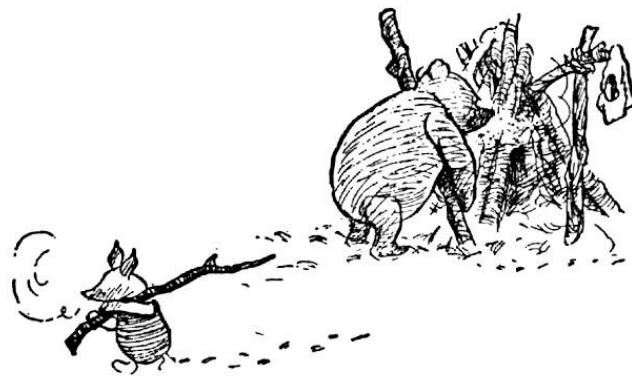
But Christopher Robin wasn't listening to Eeyore, he was listening to something else.

"Can't you hear it?" he asked.

"What is it? Somebody laughing?"

"Listen."

They both listened ... and they heard a deep gruff voice saying in a singing voice that the more it snowed the more it went on snowing, and a small high voice tiddely-pomming in between.



"It's Pooh," said Christopher Robin excitedly....

"Possibly," said Eeyore.

"And Piglet!" said Christopher Robin excitedly.

"Probably," said Eeyore. "What we want is a Trained Bloodhound."

The words of the song changed suddenly.

"We've finished our HOUSE!" sang the gruff voice.

"Tiddely pom!" sang the squeaky one.

"It's a beautiful HOUSE...."

"Tiddely pom...."

"I wish it were MINE...."

"Tiddely pom...."

"Pooh!" shouted Christopher Robin....

The singers on the gate stopped suddenly.

"It's Christopher Robin!" said Pooh eagerly.

"He's round by the place where we got all those sticks from," said Piglet.

"Come on," said Pooh.

They climbed down their gate and hurried round the corner of the wood, Pooh making welcoming noises all the way.

"Why, here is Eeyore," said Pooh, when he had finished hugging Christopher Robin, and he nudged Piglet, and Piglet nudged him, and they thought to themselves what a lovely surprise they had got ready.

"Hallo, Eeyore."

"Same to you, Pooh Bear, and twice on Thursdays," said Eeyore gloomily.

Before Pooh could say: "Why Thursdays?" Christopher Robin began to explain the sad story of Eeyore's Lost House. And Pooh and Piglet listened, and their eyes seemed to get bigger and bigger.

"Where did you say it was?" asked Pooh.

"Just here," said Eeyore.

"Made of sticks?"

"Yes."

"Oh!" said Piglet.

"What?" said Eeyore.

"I just said 'Oh!'" said Piglet nervously. And so as to seem quite at ease he hummed Tiddely-pom once or twice in a what-shall-we-do-now kind of way.

"You're sure it was a house?" said Pooh. "I mean, you're sure the house was just here?"

"Of course I am," said Eeyore. And he murmured to himself, "No brain at all some of them."

"Why, what's the matter, Pooh?" asked Christopher Robin.

"Well," said Pooh.... "The fact is," said Pooh.... "Well, the fact is," said Pooh.... "You see," said Pooh.... "It's like this," said Pooh, and something seemed to tell him that he wasn't explaining very well, and he nudged Piglet again.

"It's like this," said Piglet quickly.... "Only warmer," he added after deep thought.

"What's warmer?"

"The other side of the wood, where Eeyore's house is."

"My house?" said Eeyore. "My house was here."

"No," said Piglet firmly. "The other side of the wood."

"Because of being warmer," said Pooh.

"But I ought to *know*——"

"Come and look," said Piglet simply, and he led the way.

"There wouldn't be two houses," said Pooh. "Not so close together."

They came round the corner, and there was Eeyore's house, looking as comfy as anything.



"There you are," said Piglet.

"Inside as well as outside," said Pooh proudly.

Eeyore went inside ... and came out again.

"It's a remarkable thing," he said. "It is my house, and I built it where I said I did, so the wind must have blown it here. And the wind blew it right over the wood, and blew it down here, and here it is as good as ever. In fact, better in places."



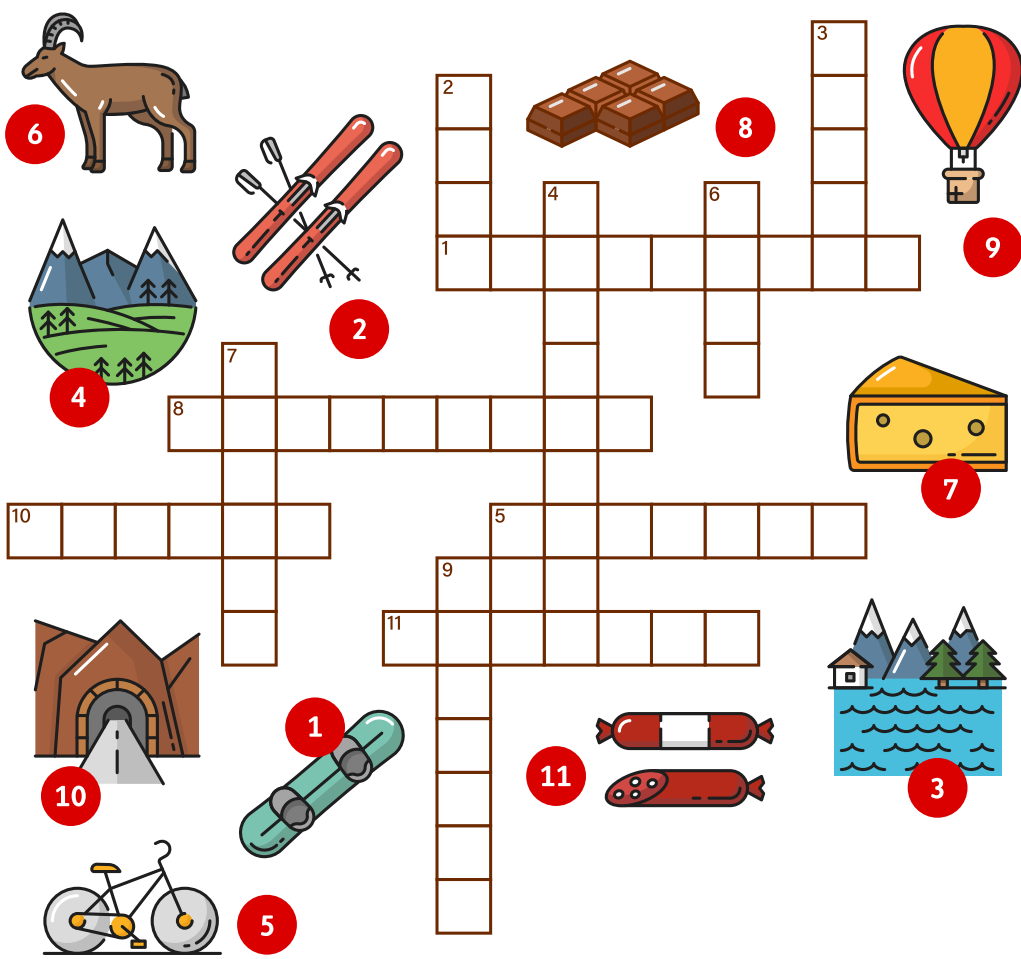
"Much better," said Pooh and Piglet together.

"It just shows what can be done by taking a little trouble," said Eeyore. "Do you see, Pooh? Do you see, Piglet? Brains first and then Hard Work. Look at it! *That's* the way to build a house," said Eeyore proudly.

So they left him in it; and Christopher Robin went back to lunch with his friends Pooh and Piglet, and on the way they told him of the Awful Mistake they had made. And when he had finished laughing, they all sang the Outdoor Song for Snowy Weather the rest of the way home, Piglet, who was still not quite sure of his voice, putting in the tiddely-poms again.

"And I know it *seems* easy," said Piglet to himself, "but it isn't *every one* who could do it."

CROSSWORD



WHAT IS A Mountain?

Mountains are huge landforms that stand much higher than the land around them. They can look like giant, sharp, rocky teeth or be more rounded, sometimes covered with snow or green forests.

Mountains form through several processes:

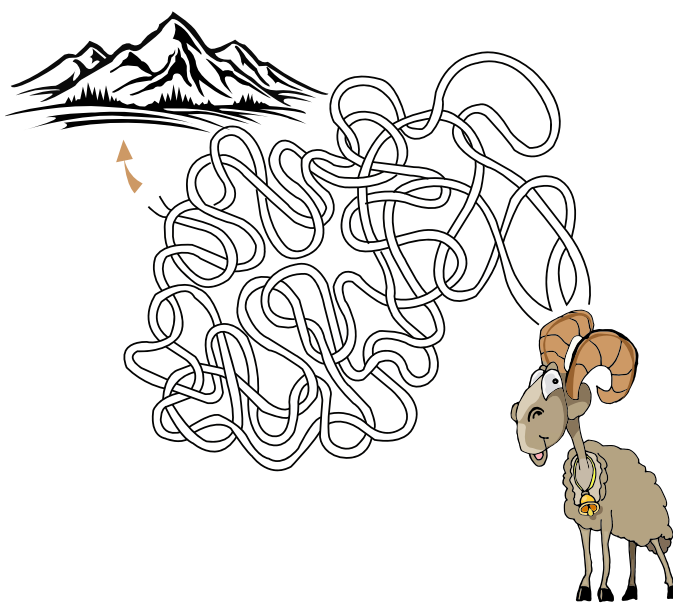
Tectonic Activity: Earth's surface is made up of giant plates that move around very slowly. When these plates crash into each other, one can slide under the other, pushing the land upward. This creates mountains. The Himalayas, for example, formed when the Indian Plate collided with the Eurasian Plate.

Volcanic Activity: Sometimes, mountains are born from volcanoes. When molten rock (magma) from beneath the Earth's crust erupts and cools, it can build up over time to form a mountain. The Hawaiian Islands are examples of volcanic mountains.

Erosion: Over millions of years, wind, water, and ice can carve and shape mountains, making them taller or changing their shape. This happens slowly, wearing down some parts while exposing new rock.



Help the mountain goat get to the mountains!



Here are some of the world's most famous mountain ranges:

Himalayas: Located in Asia, they host Mount Everest, the highest peak on Earth, reaching 8,848 meters.

Andes: These mountains run along the western side of South America. This is a long chain and includes many active volcanoes. Aconcagua, in Argentina, is the highest peak in the Andes.

Rocky Mountains: In North America, the Rocky Mountains stretch from Western Canada through the United States. This mountain chain is known for its scenic beauty and biodiversity.

Alps: In Europe, the Alps are famous for skiing, hiking, and climbing. Mont Blanc is the highest mountain in the Alps.

Ural Mountains: These mountains form part of the boundary between Europe and Asia in Russia.

Mountains are not just big rocks; they affect weather patterns, are home to unique ecosystems, and are sources of rivers that water vast areas. They also play a big role in human culture and history.

HOW MANY?

puzzle game

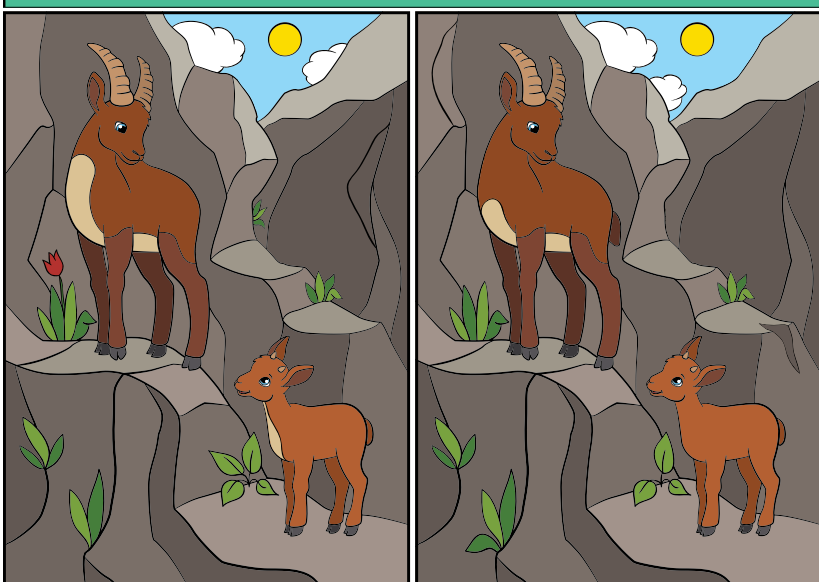
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HOW MANY?

puzzle game

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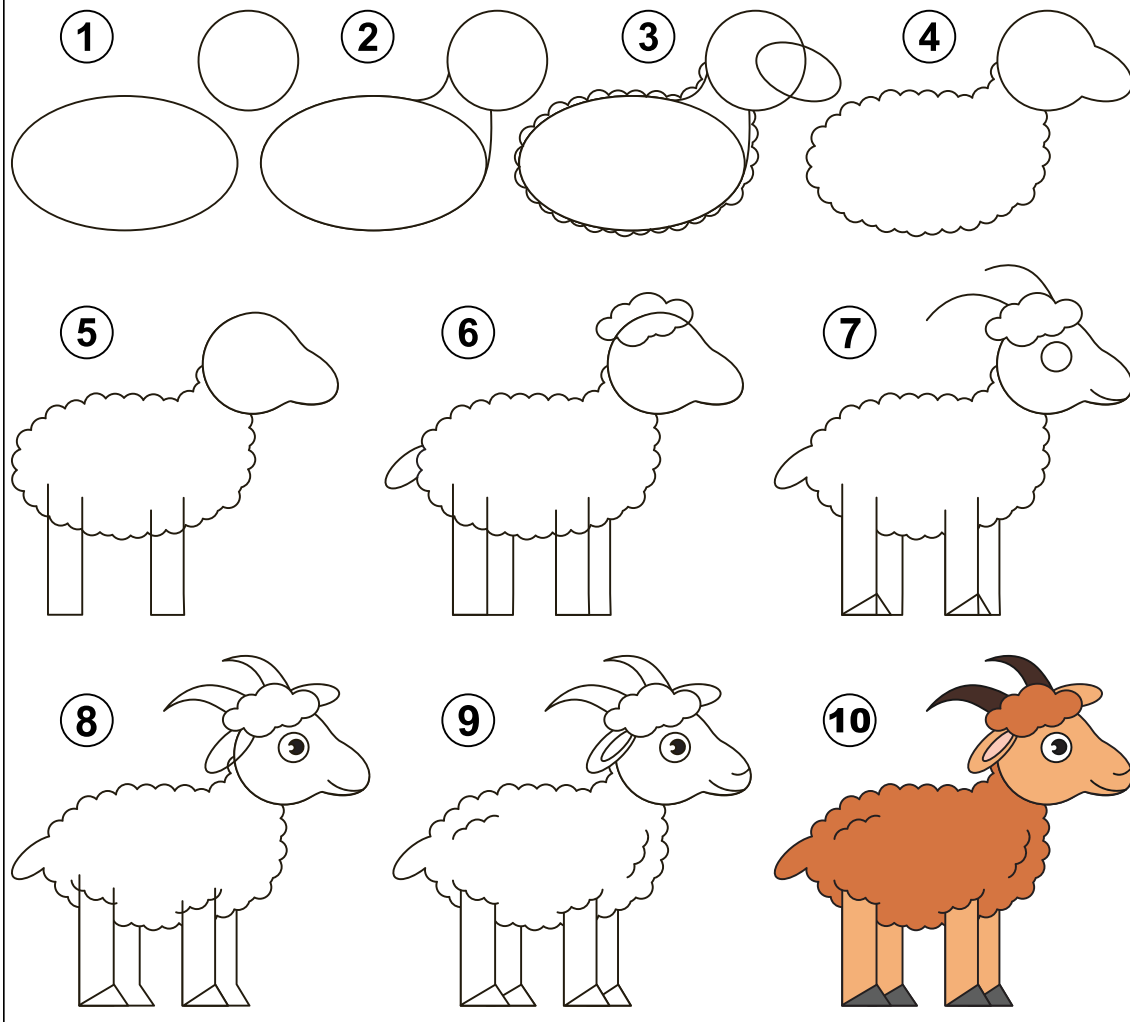
Find 12 differences



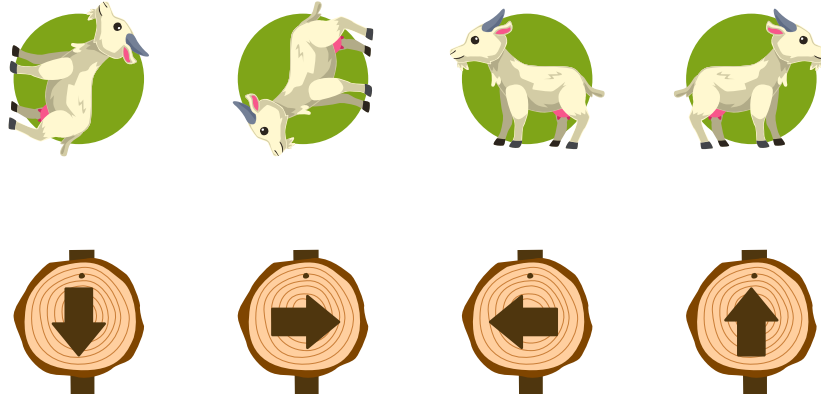
Find 9 differences



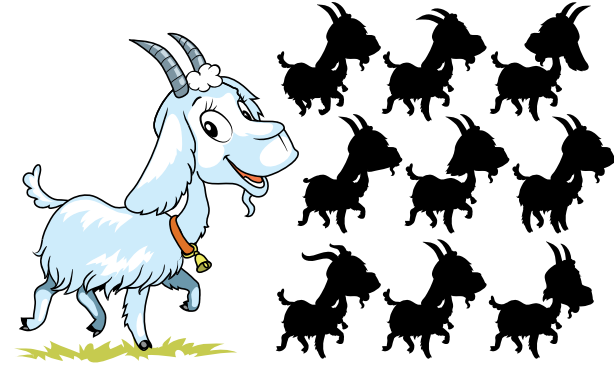
Draw a mountain goat, step by step



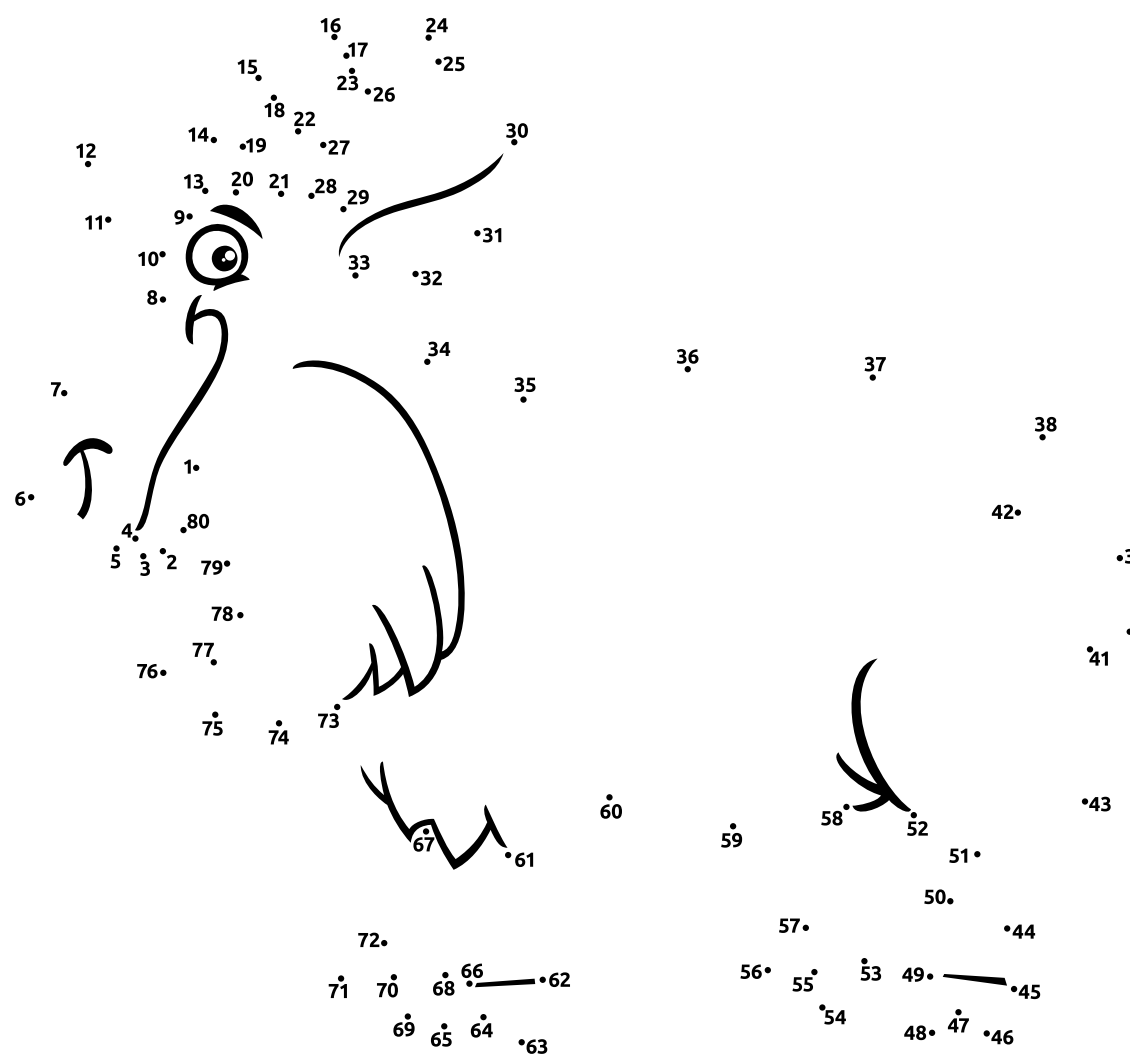
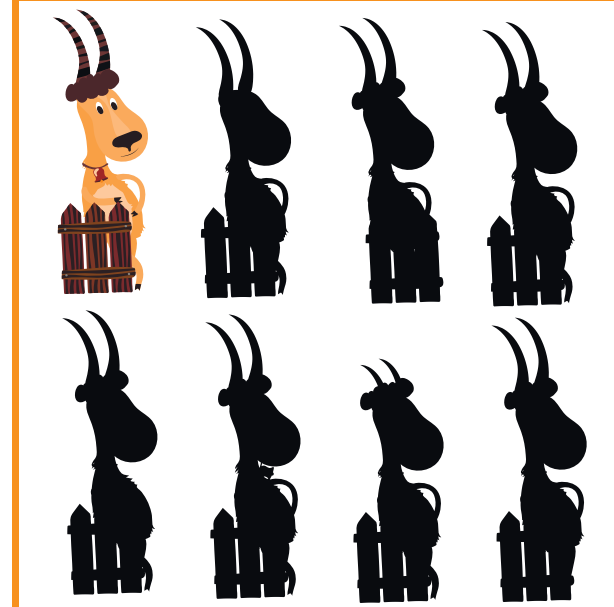
MATCH BY DIRECTION



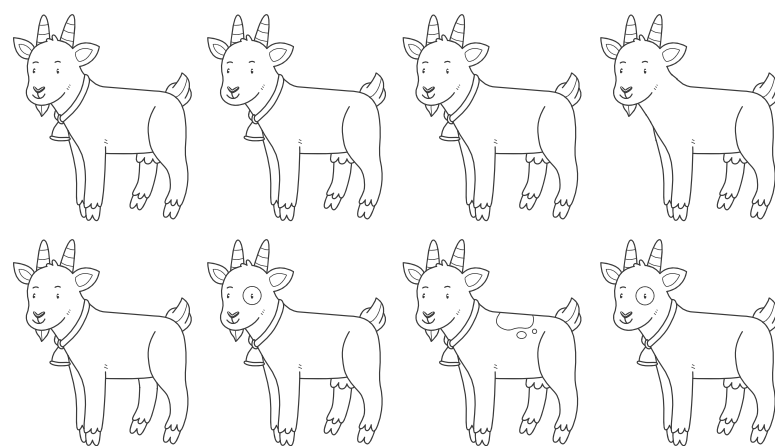
FIND THE CORRECT SHADOW



Find the shadow animal?

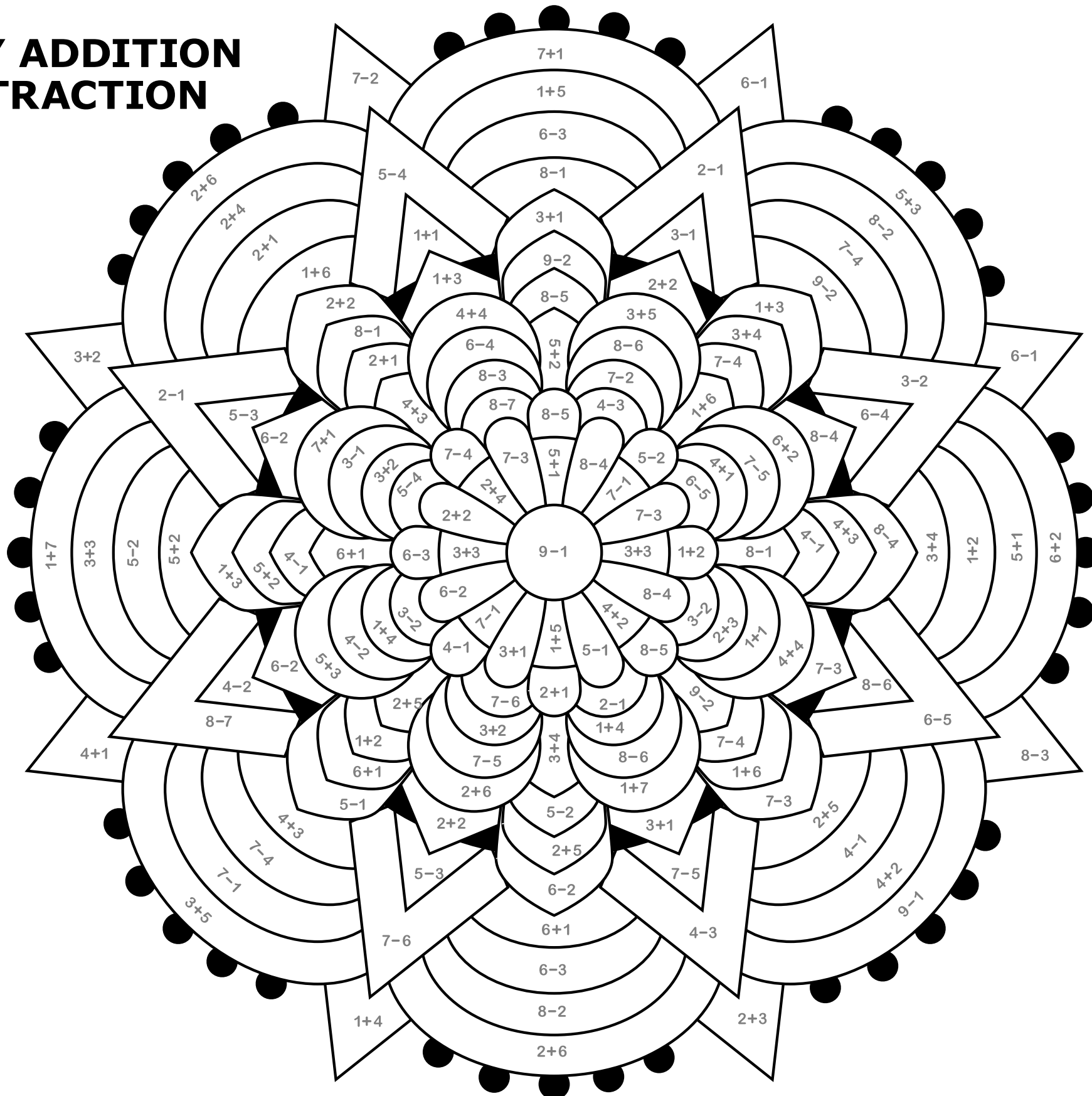


FIND 2 SAME PICTURES



COLOR BY ADDITION AND SUBTRACTION

- 1=PURPLE
- 2=LIGHT BLUE
- 3=YELLO
- 4=ORANGE
- 5=GREEN
- 6=PINK
- 7=DARK BLUE
- 8=RED



The Sentinel Education Pages

COLUMN | WILDLY SUCCESSFUL: THE MOUNTAIN GOAT

An Ethereal Beast That Inhabits the Highest Peaks

By JIM KNOX

We had been scanning the sheer cliff faces of Alberta's Banff National Park for the better part of the day without success. The creature that eluded our binoculars and spotting scopes in Yellowstone National Park more than 800 miles to the south, remained just as elusive in the stone vastness of the Canadian Rockies.

With the azure afternoon sky surrendering to the golden Alpenglow of evening, every pale boulder or remnant of snow on the mountain's flanks caught our eyes—capturing the light and beckoning a closer look. We had just about given up as the inexorable indigo of night began to cloak the shoulders of the glowing jagged peaks.

"There!" my colleague Carolyn called out excitedly. I followed her outstretched arm pointing to the tiny white dots far upslope. There, on the cliff face several hundred feet above, we saw them—a small band spread out along the impossibly steep terrain. After weeks of searching, we'd finally sighted these Ghosts of the Granite in their element.

The Mountain Goat, *Oreamnos americanus*, is an ethereal beast inhabiting the reaches of the highest peaks, dwelling in that zone where stone meets sky. Found exclusively in North America in some of the world's most inaccessible alpine habitats—from the Southern Rockies through the Canadian Rockies to Alaska's Chugach Range—this creature is an icon of the stunningly beautiful, rugged wilderness it roams. Due to its precise habitat requirements, its mere presence is an indicator of true wilderness and pristine conditions. To spy a Mountain Goat in its lofty domain is to glimpse the very wildness of the North American Mountain West.

Looking simultaneously familiar yet unique, the Mountain Goat is a true original. In fact, it is the sole North American member of the goat-antelope family, which includes the European Chamois and the mysterious Asian Goral. Mountain Goats are instantly recognizable by their bright all-white woolly coat, long beard, spiked black horns, muscular frame, and a crest of long woolly hairs extending over their shoulders, along their spines, rumps, and down their legs. Female goats attain weights of up to 180 pounds and males attain weights of 280-300 pounds, with the record male tipping the



The Mountain Goat

lead a largely solitary life.

As creatures which seem to defy hurricane-force winds, lethal cold, and the very constraints of gravity, Mountain Goats are well worth emulating. So, what can we learn from these "alpine antelope"? Life will invariably bring fierce headwinds our way from time to time. We will be confronted by forces that test our mettle and our resolve. At times we will feel as if we are knocked off balance. When those times confront us—because they certainly will—we must look to the Ghosts of the Granite. We must summon strength against those winds, plant ourselves firmly, seek the balance we possess, and resolve to rise above those daunting challenges. With the Mountain Goat as our guide, we can scale any height to breathe the well-earned rarefied air, and survey life from the summit.

Jim Knox is Curator of Education at Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo where he directs education and conservation initiatives to advance the protection of wildlife in Connecticut and beyond.

After weeks of searching, we'd finally sighted these Ghosts of the Granite in their element.

scales at a staggering 385 pounds! Though just three feet at the shoulder and five feet in length, "Rock Goats" appear even larger due to their dense two layered coat which enables them to withstand temperatures plummeting to 51 degrees below zero and winds reaching 100 miles per hour!

As the largest mammal dwelling within the alpine zone beyond 13,000 feet above sea level, Mountain Goats possess highly specialized adaptations enabling them to survive and thrive where others cannot. In addition to their signature two layered coats, these beasts possess a remarkable hoof structure that equips them for life on the slopes. Their cloven hooves can spread far apart to readily grab rock faces and maintain balance. This spreading grip is further enhanced by hooves with hard keratinous sheaths housing flexible rubbery inner pads which provide suction cup-like traction on ice and stone. If those adaptations weren't enough, they also possess sharp dewclaws which function like a mountaineer's spiked crampons, to secure a fast life-saving grip in the dizzying heights. In fact,

they are so sure-footed, and their muscular frames generate so much power, they can scale near vertical ascents of more than ¼ mile in a mere 20 minutes!

Equipped with these high-altitude adaptations, Mountain Goats can evade virtually all predators by roaming where they cannot follow. Other than descending to lower elevations in late winter or during extended stormy periods to feed on conifers and lichens, Mountain Goats range high, avoiding most bears and wolves. This leaves them to contend with the occasional Cougar or Golden Eagle, thus improving their odds of survival. When push comes to shove, the goats can shove back—with records of Mountain Goats using their 11-inch spiked horns to kill Grizzlies in defense!

Born into a life amid the peaks, the young or "kids" can walk and jump within an astonishing 10 minutes of birth! Constantly flanked by attentive—and protective—females or "nannies," these herbivores forage for sedges and grasses. As they mature, males, known as "billies," leave their family band to disperse to



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This season, take the hustle and bustle out of holiday shopping and treat yourself to The J House "Shop & Save" Package! 15% Off Rooms, Free Transportation & More!



HOLIDAY ROOM PROMO

Stay with us on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day and receive a gift from under the tree along with 12% off your room rate!

BRUNCH WITH SANTA

Join us at Tony's on Sunday, December 15th for a special Holiday Brunch Buffet! Indulge in your favorite brunch specials, enjoy live music and take pictures with the one and only, Santa Claus! Adults: \$79, Children: \$35



CHRISTMAS AT TONY'S

Spend your Christmas Eve or Christmas Day at Tony's! Set Menu for Adults & Children, Holiday Specials, Specialty Drinks & More! Adults: \$125, Children: \$35

NYE AT THE J HOUSE

Happy New Year! On December 31st, spend the night at The J House, reserve dinner at Tony's, and book a service at the spa!



DON'T FORGET! THIS HOLIDAY, GIVE THE GIFT OF LUXURY, RELAXATION & WORLD-CLASS DINING! PURCHASE A GIFT CARD FOR THE J HOUSE, THE J SPA OR TONY'S TO SPREAD CHRISTMAS CHEER THROUGH A MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE!