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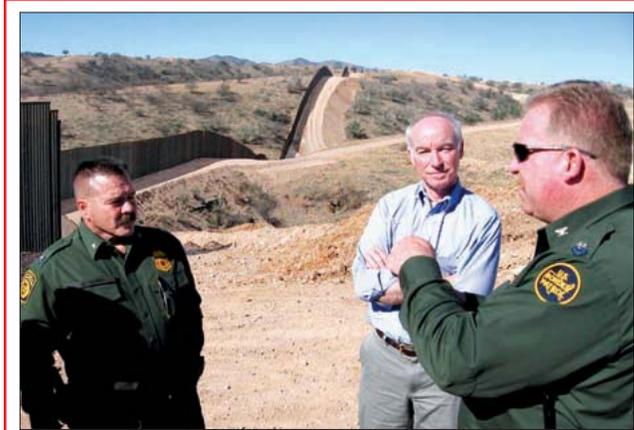
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Complimentary

(860) 928-1818/e-mail: news@villagernewspapers.com

'Life is a promise; fulfill it.'

FRIDAY, MARCH 7, 2008



Congressman Courtney receives a report on Border Protection from one of the officers.

Courtesy photo

Courtney goes on U.S. border patrol

CONGRESSMAN TRAVELS TO U.S.-MEXICO LINE

BY CHENOA PIERCE VILLAGER STAFF WRITER

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Congressman Joe Courtney (D-Conn.) recently spent some time with U.S. Border Patrol and customs workers in Nogales, Ariz., one of the busiest border patrol areas in the country, to get a feel for what needs to be done to help strengthen the system and build a positive reputation.

"It was an interesting trip," Courtney said during a phone interview of his trip to an area he describes as "the weakest link" of the border.

From Feb. 29 to March 1, Courtney spent time at the border of the United States and Mexico, watching Border Patrol officers and customs workers in action and listening to their growing concerns.

When he arrived in Nogales, he said he was not surprised at the flaws in the current system or the small number of workers. He did say he was surprised at the professionalism shown by the workers, despite their frustrations.

Turn To COURTNEY, page 9



Congressman Joe Courtney looks over a table of fake IDs used by immigrants trying to gain access into the country. Due to the ever-changing nature of identification in the United States, it can be difficult to determine what forms of ID presented are real, which is why Border Patrol agents support the passport requirement.

Courtesy photo

Quiet Corner sweetens it up

MAPLE SUGAR DAYS TO BE HELD TWO CONSECUTIVE WEEKENDS

BY MASON A. WOOD VILLAGER STAFF WRITER

For the second year, the Quiet Corner will get a little sweeter when The Last Green Valley holds its Maple Sugar Days throughout the region March 8-9 and March 15-16.

The event began in the Sturbridge, Mass., area last year by Janice Putnam, who formerly worked at Old Sturbridge Village, according to Charlene Cutler of The Last Green Valley, based in Putnam. It was decided that Sturbridge did not have the capacity to carry on the event and that it would be stronger in Connecticut, she said.

"Buy local," said Cutler of what she hopes the goal of the event will be. "Much of what we used is grown locally and that agriculture needs to be supported with our purchases if

we want to keep our community's rural character."

Sugarhouses in Woodstock, Thompson, Brooklyn, Pomfret and Eastford will invite members of the community to sample and tour the maple sugar shacks on this weekend and next. Restaurants in the area will also put together maple-sugar-themed meals.

Before you think this is all about rotting your teeth and getting your sugar buzz, consider that maple sugars and syrups are different than your typical processed sugars.

"Maple syrup and sugar are all-natural sweeteners that are a healthy alternative to processed sugars and high-fructose syrups," Cutler said of the advantages and

Turn To MAPLE, page 9

ACT officials meet and discuss possible Pomfret partnership

BY CHENOA PIERCE VILLAGER STAFF WRITER

POMFRET — Officials from the Arts at the Capital Theatre magnet high school in Willamantic paid a visit on Monday, March 3, to the Pomfret Board of Education to discuss a possible partnership between the town and the ACT school.

In recent months, ACT officials have also visited the Putnam and Killingly Boards of Education. As of right now, Putnam has agreed to enter into the partnership.

The partnership in question involves the plan to open a full-day magnet high school program for students with special interests in the all areas of film, theater and media production. Right now, the full-day program has about 20 ninth-graders that attend.

The plan is to extend the program each year until a full high school program is implemented. Currently, a full program is available to high school students in all grades through the half-day program.

The school day for students in the full-day program begins at 9 a.m. and goes until 5 p.m.

"The attendance is very good," Cronin said.

Core classes, such as math and English courses, are held in the morning and the full-day students join those in the half-day program for the arts component held in the afternoon.

Right now, according to ACT's Director of Student Services Tom Cronin, there are currently 70 incoming ninth-grade students who are interested and have applied to attend the ACT school in the fall. He said only 60 of them actually be accepted in the school.

When asked how the school determines what students get accepted, Cronin said the students go through an extensive process that includes an interview, so that they know, long before officially attending the

Turn To ACT, page 13

One new word a day

SENEXET GRANGE DONATES DICTIONARIES TO LOCAL THIRD-GRADERS

BY CHENOA PIERCE AND MASON A. WOOD VILLAGER STAFF WRITERS

Third-grade students at local schools received a very vocabulary-enhancing surprise on Wednesday, Feb. 27.

Senexet Grange 40 members Tom Perry, his wife Debby and his mother Joan, all from Woodstock, and Jennifer Anderson of Thompson visited St. Mary School, Putnam Elementary School, Pomfret Community School and Woodstock Elementary School and gave each third-grader, third-grade teacher and third-grade teacher's aides their

very own dictionary. According to Joan Perry, this is the fourth year that Senexet Grange 40 has participated in the "Dictionary Project."

"It started out as a national project for the national Grange, and [we] jumped in four years ago," said Joan.

According to Tom, 239 dictionaries were handed out in the four schools on last Wednesday. According to the Grange members, 17 students at St. Mary School and

Turn To GRANGE, page 14



LEFT: Mason Deforcay of Woodstock puts his name down in the dictionary, signifying it belongs to him.



RIGHT: Tom Perry hands out dictionaries to third-graders at Woodstock Elementary School Wednesday, Feb. 27.

Mason A. Wood photos

INSIDE A10-11.....OPINION A 12SPORTS SECT. BOBITUARIES SECT. BCALENDAR SECT. BRELIGION

LEARNING FRIDAY NIGHT SPORTS RADIO PAGE A6



SPORTS GRIFFIN HOCKEY PAGE A12



VILLAGER TRIVIA

Who was the first feline featured on Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous? Answer on page 2.

Courtney travels to U.S. - Mexico border

COURTNEY

continued from page A1

"I was surprised, in a pleasant way, how professional and committed the people in [the] agencies were," he said. "[The] folks [were] really dedicated and hard working."

While talking with Border Patrol officials, Courtney discussed the initiative that will require Americans to have passports in order to travel to Canada and Mexico, which Border Patrol officials support because determining real and fake identification is a tough job.

The current system, while successfully confiscating thousands of fake birth certificates, Social Security cards, drivers' licenses and other forms of identification, is tough because of the variety of identification out there. Courtney cited birth certificates as an example, noting that certificate colors have changed throughout the years.

"Making it a passport system will make the job of identifying [phony identification] more effective," said Courtney.

The goal of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) is to strengthen border security while also making it easier for legitimate foreign visitors, as well as U.S. citizens, to travel into the United States. By requiring every traveler to have a passport or other standardized entry documentation, CBP officers will be able to spend more time scrutinizing those travelers who may aim to cause U.S. citizens and visitors harm, according to the Customs Border Patrol Web site, <http://www.cbp.gov>.

Border Patrol officers also expressed their frustrations with the system that has over-crowded the areas used to hold drug smugglers and other violators.

The apprehension center, which Courtney described as "a busy place," processes and records two offenders at a time before sending many of them back to their homes.

"[The] volume of interdiction exceeds capacity" in Arizona, according to Courtney, so many violators are sent back to Mexico after being fingerprinted and recorded. Only "extremely high volume culprits" are held, he said.

"The system is very uneven in terms of resources," he said.

One of the biggest frustrations Courtney identified in his conversations with the Border Patrol was the lack of communication between Mexico and the United States regarding border enforcement.

"Mexico is not a full partner in" border patrol enforcement, said Courtney, who noted that there is no continuous communication between both countries in terms of border activity. Strengthening border enforcement



LEFT: Congressman Courtney watches as a customs officer pulls cocaine hidden under the hood of a car. Drug smuggling is a huge problem at the border, but new technology is helping the Border Patrol catch the culprits.



RIGHT: Congressman Courtney takes a tour of the Border Patrol Command and Surveillance Center in Arizona.

communications with Mexico could help cut down on the number of violations.

While on patrol, Courtney witnessed a drug bust and watched as a team of hopeful immigrants was emptied and its 60 passengers sent back to their homes.

"It's very real," he said of the situation.

He even got to see the truck screening system at work and said he was "impressed" by it. According to Courtney, every truck entering the country must go through the screening process two to three times before entering, which detects nuclear material, radiation and other violations. Following California's lead, Arizona has also set up additional checkpoints in the state to check the incoming trucks again to make sure that nothing was overlooked.

"I actually found that pretty impressive and reassuring," Courtney said.

All food entering the country is inspected as well to make sure diseases and foreign bugs don't come into the United States.

Courtney also got to take a look at the new fencing that is being erected along the border to replace what he called the current "ugly as sin" opaque sheet metal fencing.

According to Courtney, the new fencing is made of stainless steel bars with concrete in the middle that are spaced a few inches apart

to allow Border Patrol officers to see through it. The fencing stands about 15 feet tall and is buried 5 feet deep in the ground.

Unlike the old fencing, which was easy to penetrate, hide behind and climb, the new fencing will stand strong against cars and is nearly impossible to climb.

One would need to be an "Olympic class gymnast" to climb it, said Courtney.

Now that he's visited the U.S.-Mexico border and saw first hand what is being done and what needs to be done, Courtney is already counting the ways the system could advance.

For instance, a total of 6,000 new Border Patrol officers are going to be added to the force this year. Strengthening communications between both countries is also a must.

Other changes have included technological advances that include unmanned aerial vehicles in the remote areas of the border that can spot a person and track their movements without that person knowing they are being tracked.

"This is "a change the border patrol was excited about," said Courtney.

Other improvements include the implementation of cameras and sensors, among other things. Dogs and horses are also used to help.

"We should be listening to the agents about what works," said Courtney, after referring

the recent embarrassment that was the Boeing SBI Border Plan, one he called "a bust." The Secure Border Initiative (SBI) aimed "to stem the flow of illegal immigration through an integrated mix of increased staffing, more robust interior enforcement, greater investment in detection technology and infrastructure, and enhanced coordination on federal, state, local and international levels," according to <http://www.cbp.gov>.

The Border Patrol agents wished to extend their thanks to the members of the Connecticut National Guard who took part in "Operation Jump Start" that traveled to the border to help the patrol officers and improve the current infrastructure of the border. According to Courtney, their work included helping to transport equipment over brutal terrain that the Border Patrol agents may not have been able to navigate themselves.

"I cannot tell you how appreciative the Border Patrol agents were of the work the National Guard did," he said.

Chenoa Pierce may be reached at (860) 928-1818, ext. 112, or by e-mail at chenoa@villagernewspapers.com.

Local sugarhouses, businesses to take part in Maple Sugar Days

MAPLE

continued from page A1

difference in the sugars.

The Mik-Ran Sugarhouse and Specialty Show on 86 Stetson Road, Brooklyn, will host free tours and demonstrations. There will be a special breakfast each morning of the event from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. to benefit the Relay For Life of Northeastern Connecticut. The gift shop will also be open and many of the house's products, such as maple syrup, maple candy, maple butter and maple peanut brittle, will be for sale.

The Fabyan Sugar House, located at 384 Fabyan Road, North Grotonville, will provide a complete showing of the sugarhouse and demonstrate the candy-making process with its brand-new candy machine. Visitors will be able to watch the candy become molded into shapes and sizes such as maple leaves, log cabins and moose heads. Candy demonstrations begin each Saturday and Sunday at 1 p.m.

Norman's Sugarhouse on 387 County Road, Woodstock, will provide free samples of several of its products and a wide array of demonstrations. Buster's River's Edge in Thompson and the Vanilla Bean Cafe in Pomfret will join the activities with their maple-themed menus. The Celebrations Gallery in Pomfret Center will also join other local businesses taking part in the weekend. At the Celebrations

Gallery, each \$25 purchase will get customers a maple leaf-embossed Belgian dark chocolate with maple crunch center made by Lake Champlain Chocolates.

The highest quality grades of maple syrup come from northeastern North America and is traditionally harvested by tapping a maple tree through the bark and into the wood phloem, then letting the sap run into a bucket, which is collected each day. More current "technology" uses a continuous plastic pipeline. Peak production of gathering maple syrup is between February and March depending on conditions, as nights must reach freezing temperatures and warm days are needed, this is what creates the sap flow, according to the Maple Syrup Producers Association of Connecticut.

Maple trees need to be at least 30 years of age in order to produce maple sap, and it takes more than 30 gallons to produce a single gallon of pure maple syrup.

Connecticut produces, on average, approximately 100,000 gallons of maple syrup, according to Maple Syrup Producers Association of Connecticut.

For a complete listing of all events and open houses in the area, visit The Last Green Valley's Web page at www.visitthelastgreenvalley.info.

Mason A. Wood may be reached at (860) 928-1818, ext. 111, or by e-mail at mason@villagernewspapers.com.



Andrew Massey and his son Sam, of Woodstock, check out the process of how maple syrup is made at Norman's Sugarhouse in Woodstock during last year's Maple Sugar Days. The event will again sweeten the Quiet Corner in the coming weekends.

PULLING STRINGS

L	A	S	T	F	E	E	L	N	A	P	S
A	N	O	N	C	R	E	D	O	G	L	E
K	N	O	T	B	Y	A	L	O	N	G	S
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A	O	N	E	S	O	N	S	R	I	P	E
T	A	T	S	N	E	W	S	R	O	S	A

Do You Suffer From "Too Much Computer?"

All those online hours can take a toll on your eyes. Studies show more and more people using video display terminals at work develop eyestrain and other vision problems.

The most common symptoms are:

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GAME SHOW
March 7 & 8, 2008

The public is invited to Marianapolis Preparatory School's performance of the adult comedy "Game Show," a play that goes both behind the scenes and in front of the cameras as it follows five fascinating contestants as they compete for the grand prize.

Who wins the big money? Is there a romance kindled? Who was the only bachelor president? These and other questions will be answered at this fun and humor-filled performance.

7 p.m., Fri. & Sat, March 7 & 8 in the Chapel
Admission: \$3 per person or \$5 per couple

Proceeds will benefit Multiple Sclerosis in support of Marianapolis alumnae & drama club member Shannon Thompson

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Selectmen discuss Covell Road Bridge repair

PARK RECOMMENDATIONS
REVIEWED

BY CHENOA PIERCE
VILLAGER STAFF WRITER

POMFRET — The cost to repair the rapidly deteriorating Covell Road Bridge is about \$1.3 million. First Selectman Jim Rivers announced at the March 3 Board of Selectmen's meeting.

Pomfret would pay about \$258,000, with an 80 percent reimbursement from the state. At this point in time, the town has put aside \$125,000 for the project.

The bridge is, according to Rivers, a "top priority" and will be fixed in or around July.

In addition to the above costs, there is a \$250,000 inspection fee that covers the cost of sending a state inspector to observe the work being done at the site.

"We're in a bit of a debacle here," said Rivers, noting that inflation and other factors have contributed to the increase in the cost and will come out of taxpayer pockets. "... It is tax money, any way you look at it. \$1.3 million is going to be tax money."

Rivers suggested that Selectmen Tim McNally and David Smutnick visit the site and take a look at it. Rivers is going to talk with residents of the area to get their feedback and determine where to go from here.

A concerned resident who lives on Covell Road said during the meeting that the whole road is in disrepair and needs to be fixed.

"[It's] literally falling apart," said the gentleman, who noted that his front yard moves whenever a tractor-trailer truck passes his home.

In other business, selectmen reviewed the recommendations presented to them by the Recreation Park Development Committee. The committee has been debating whether new restroom facilities should be built that are closer to the baseball field at Pomfret Recreation Park. William Begin, a member of the commission, asked selectmen to make the decision as to what should be done.

The town had asked for a \$85,000 Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant last year; part of which would go toward replacing restrooms currently at Pomfret Recreation Park, according to Rivers. Money from the grant has also gone toward the new septic system at the park and the digging of a new well.

Rivers said he has applied for another STEAP grant in the amount of \$150,000 that would include installing outhouse-style bathrooms in the park. The amount of the grant that has been set aside for this, if the grant is received, would be \$40,000.

Rivers offered a solution that would allow for the installation of the outhouse bathrooms near the baseball field at the park, as well as replace-

ment of the bathrooms in the already existing facility. Even if the town does not receive the grant, Rivers said that part of the \$10,000 that goes toward the park could be used toward installing an outhouse-style facility in the park.

Also during the meeting:
• John Lewerenz, a retired citizen of Pomfret, went before the board to ask for tax abatement on the interest of her taxes, which she said is currently 18 percent. This is the second time she requested tax abatement on interest; the last time she did so was for the 2002 to 2003 fiscal year. She was granted the abatement on the interest of her taxes for the coming fiscal year, using the grand list from 2006.

• John Lewerenz was appointed to the Recreation Site Committee. He will replace Paul Roy, the person who currently holds the position. Rivers said he is having trouble getting in contact with Roy, from whom he is seeking a written resignation. They are currently working to try and obtain it, because the position is an elected one.

• Derek May, Larry Lane and Steven Radcliff were granted the pistol permits they applied for after the board members took a few moments to review their applications.

Chenoa Pierce may be reached at (860) 928-1818, ext. 112, or by e-mail at chenoa@villagernewspapers.com.

EASTFORD REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

From the March 3 Board of Selectmen's meeting

"The town will look to liquidate some of its existing stock of equipment from the town garage. Items include a generator, plow and other various equipment items. A complete list can be found at the Town Office Building. The items will be auctioned off at a date to be determined by First Selectman Dick Woodward.

Woodward noted that a revised Small Town Economic Assistance Program Grant (STEAP) was sent to the state. The

grant has been submitted in hopes of obtaining funds to construct a small building to house town equipment.

Woodward brought forward the possibility of recognizing that Eastford was once the home to Connecticut's largest tree. According to a book, which he brought to the meeting, the tree no longer exists in Eastford. Woodward considered creating some type of plaque or memorial on the location of where the tree was once located.

— Mason A. Wood

COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

Children's author to visit library

POMFRET — On Saturday, March 8, at 10 a.m., award-winning author Tony Abbott will visit the Pomfret Public Library.

The author of more than 60 books for children, including the Golden Saddle Award winner Firegirl, Abbott writes the extremely popular Secrets of Dron series. Join library staff as he talks about his craft of writing and storytelling. Books will be available for sale.

On Thursday, March 27, at 7 p.m., the library book club will meet to discuss Iris Murdoch's *The Nice and the Good*. Copies of the book are available at the library. All are welcome to attend.

Story time continues to meet every Tuesday at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. for 3- to 5-year-olds, and on Thursdays at 10 a.m. for 1- to 3-year-olds.

To register for a program or for more information, call the library at (860) 928-3475, or just stop by.

QVCC Foundation's online auction supports scholarships

DANIELSON — Turn on your computer, get out your credit card and log on to the annual Online Auction sponsored by the Quinebaug Valley Community College (QVCC) Foundation.

Bidding got underway Saturday, March 1, with the proceeds benefiting scholarship funds at the college. Each year, the foundation provides more than \$100,000 in direct scholarship, financial aid and emergency funds to QVCC students.

Auction items include jewelry, art, sports tickets, restaurant gift certificates, rounds of golf, wine and many others. New items will be added weekly. The foundation is still accepting donations of items. People interested in donating should contact Monique Wolanin, director of college development, at 412-7328.

The auction will run through March 31. Log on to www.qvccfoundation06.comarket.com to join the fun and support QVCC students. The Web site has information on how to bid or donate/sponsor an item.

The mission of the QVCC Foundation is to raise funds so that all residents of northeastern Connecticut are provided the opportunity to attend QVCC regardless of income, and to support educational excellence, technological advancement and professional development at the college.

VILLAGER ALMANAC

QUOTATION OF THE WEEK

"We should be listening to the agents about what works."

— Congressman Joe Courtney, on who the government should be talking to when deciding what to do about U.S.-Mexico border patrol.

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Wednesday noon - 7:30 p.m.
Friday 8:30 a.m. - noon

LIBRARIES

Abington Social Library
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Saturday 10 a.m.-noon

Pomfret Public Library
..... 10 a.m.-7 p.m.
Thursday 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Friday 2 p.m.-7 p.m.
Saturday 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL

Monday Tuesday, Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Wednesday 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Friday 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

TOP TEN

TOP 10 HARDCOVER FICTION BOOKS

1. The Appeal, John Grisham
2. People of the Book, Geraldine Brooks
3. The Reserve, Russell Banks
4. The Senator's Wife, Sue Miller
5. World Without End, Ken Follet
6. Duma Key, Stephen King
7. Stranger in Paradise, Robert B. Parker
8. 7th Heaven, James Patterson and Maxine Paetro
9. A Thousand Splendid Suns, Khaled Hosseini
10. Life Class, Pat Barker

TOP 10 TRADE PAPERBACK FICTION

1. Water for Elephants, Sara Gruen
2. The Gathering, Anne Enright
3. Nineteen Minutes, Jodi Picoult
4. The Double Bind, Chris Bohjalian
5. Atonement, Ian McEwan
6. Body Surfing, Anita Shreve
7. The Friday Night Knitting Club, Kate Jacobs
8. The Pillars of the Earth, Ken Follet
9. No Country for Old Men, Cormac McCarthy
10. What is the What, Dave Eggers

— For the week ending Feb. 24

Book Sense/New England Independent Booksellers
Bestsellers List as provided by Wordland Books of Putnam

TRIVIA AND QUOTE

This week's front page quote is attributed to:
Mother Theresa

Trivia Answer: Morris the Cat

AT THE AUDUBON

Week of Feb. 18:
Bird sightings this week at Connecticut Audubon and Wyndham Land Trust properties in the northeast corner of Connecticut: rough-legged hawk, bald eagles, Northern shrike, yellow-billed sapsucker, hairy woodpecker, horned larks, purple finch, hooded Merganser.

WEEKEND WEATHER

Saturday — Showers possible. Highs in the low 40s and lows in the low 20s.
Sunday — Plenty of sun. Highs in the low 30s and lows in the low 20s.

— provided by the NOAA Weather Service

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TO SUBMIT A LETTER TO THE EDITOR:
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send to Villager Newspapers,
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TO SUBMIT CALENDAR ITEMS:
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EDITORIAL STAFF

EDITOR-AT-LARGE
WALTER BIRD
(860) 928-1818, EXT. 103
wbird@villagernewspapers.com

EDITOR
STEPHANIE JAVIS
(860) 928-1818, EXT. 109
sjavis@villagernewspapers.com

REPORTER
MASON A. WOOD
(860) 928-1818, EXT. 111
mason@villagernewspapers.com

REPORTER
CHENOA PIERCE
(860) 928-1818, EXT. 112
chenoa@villagernewspapers.com

REPORTER
JOHN SAWLES
(860) 928-1818, EXT. 110
johsaw@villagernewspapers.com

PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER
FRANK G. CHLINSKI
(860) 928-1818, EXT. 104
frank@villagernewspapers.com

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
RON TREMBLAY
(860) 367-9896, EXT. 102
rtremblay@stonebridgepress.com

ADVERTISING STAFF

ADVERTISING
MAJOR ACCOUNT MANAGER
JEAN ASHTON
(800) 367-9098, EXT. 104
janet@stonebridgepress.com

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