



*Happy Holidays from All of Us at the Clarion*



**WALPOLE WELCOMES BABY JESUS**  
Christmas Eve 2024

## **Live Nativity 2025**

In celebration of Christmas, our community will once again gather on the Walpole Common for the annual Live Nativity on Wednesday, December 24 at 6:30 pm, following the Christmas Eve church services.

This beloved Walpole tradition—now in its fifty-first year—brings together neighbors, families, and friends to honor the birth of Jesus through a simple but meaningful outdoor portrayal of the Nativity. Community members take part as angels, shepherds, and wise men, accompanied by live animals and traditional carols. The scene is illuminated by the lights of the Common and the warmth of those who attend. Following the Nativity, everyone is invited to the Town Hall for hot cocoa and fellowship, a chance to visit with neighbors and share the spirit of the season.

We are looking for volunteers—children, teens, and adults—who would like to participate in this year's Nativity. Roles include angels, shepherds, wise men, and helpers behind the scenes. Costumes are provided. If you or your child would like to be involved or learn more contact Kim Anderson at [kimmyanderson@kw.com](mailto:kimmyanderson@kw.com). We look forward to celebrating this beautiful Walpole tradition with all of you.

— Kim Anderson

## **From Peggy's Desk**

Most writers save their year-end summaries and next year forecasts for the end of December. I choose to do that now – without any promises for 2026. This year, for some reason, has seemed interminable. A Sentinel reporter asked me this week about a Congressional funding grant the Walpole Foundation lost in March – “Was that 2024 or 2025?” I hesitated because it seemed so long ago, but it was only March 2025 when the federal budget passed in March 2025 omitted Congressional Funding.

This week, Walpole learned that the Police Department Grant application has been approved as part of a 2026 USDA Facilities account. We will

- Continued Page 2

### **A WALPOLE CHRISTMAS EVE**

#### **Church Services**

St. John's - 5:00

Congregational - 5:30

Unitarian - 5:00

River Valley Church - 4 & 5:30

#### **Live Nativity**

On the Common - 6:30  
followed by hot cocoa  
and social time  
in the Town Hall

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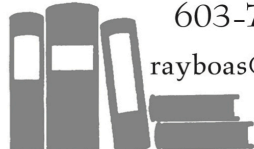
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- Peggy from Page 1

receive confirmation directly from the USDA. This is incredibly welcome news but as our grant writer said, "I will hold my breath until it is confirmed". Currently, actively fundraising in the community the Police Building Committee will be energized by this grant and its activities affirmed.

At the same time, the Walpole Foundation learned they are being considered under the same USDA program for a smaller grant. The Foundation is following up on that application. The Foundation has already broken ground on the new school building for the Walpole Village School, anticipating doors to be opened in time for the 2026 school year.

After thirteen weekends of rain, we anticipated the need for an ark, but that thought was dashed by serious drought conditions as the year progressed. We began to worry about wells running dry, crops suffering and less than colorful fall foliage.

The Hooper Institute Open House Oct. 18 not only celebrated a complete renovation of the House but introduced the new Executive Director Greta Drager, as well as George Gowdy as the new Educator.

On other positive notes, the Highway Department has a full staff for the first time in several years. We are ready for winter! The Highway

Department led by Mike Symonds recently recognized Jim McLean as he retired after about thirty years of service to the Town of Walpole. The Town has been blessed by such loyal service.

The local Police Department also has a full complement of Officers. We are protected by dedicated, knowledgeable officers ready to help us as individuals and as a Town. In the complexities of today's world - fraud, scams, drugs, suicides, burglaries- we need them more than ever. Thank them for their service.

There are new faces in the both the Selectboard office and in the Town Clerks office - introduce yourself- get to know the individuals who keep Walpole on a smooth trajectory every week of the year.

No, I haven't forgotten our Recycling Center - the hub of activity with Shaena Hakey who is the Acting Director! Next year, I promise to write about our Recycling Center because it is another hub of activity sometimes overlooked for its weekly contributions to a healthy town.

This year had been a year of the loss of many Walpole residents- many natives and many more recent residents. All enriched our lives and the larger community. Pause, when remembering each of them, to be grateful for their lives.

## 250th Countdown

It was 250 years ago, December 5, 1775, that Henry Knox, a 25 year-old book-seller from Boston, under orders from General George Washington, departed Fort Ticonderoga, New York, with 59 pieces of captured artillery drawn on sleds by teams of oxen. Knox's destination was Boston where the guns were to be placed in 1776 around the city to force the British to evacuate. Washington called this "a prodigious undertaking" that proved decisive.





## Walpole International Affairs Discussion Group

On Wednesday, December 3, 2025, WIADG will welcome William Wohlforth, Daniel Webster Professor of Government at Dartmouth College, as our next speaker for the 2025-26 season. Professor Wohlforth, co-author (with Jill Kastner) of *A Measure Short of War: A Brief History of Great Power Subversion*, will discuss "The Specter of Subversion: Will Democracies be Undermined from the Inside by Authoritarian Rivals?"

Back by popular demand, this will be Professor Wohlforth's third visit to Walpole. He received his doctorate in political science from Yale University, and, before coming to Dartmouth, taught at Georgetown University and Princeton University. He has held fel-

lowships at the Institute of Strategic Studies at Yale, the Center for International Security and Cooperation at Stanford University and the Hoover Institution. He was the Inaugural Faculty Director for Global Security at the Dickey Center for International Understanding at Dartmouth, and is an expert in Russian Foreign Policy, international security, and great power subversion. He routinely conducts seminars with policy-makers, including defense and foreign policy institutes in Germany, Canada, Portugal, Norway, Russia (before sanctions), and the United Kingdom.

Join us at 6:30 pm for a reception at Walpole Town Hall prior to Dr. Wohlforth's talk at 7:00 pm. A lively Q & A will follow. For those of you who haven't experienced WIADG, this is not your usual lecture series! First time visitors are free, so bring all your friends. Annual membership is \$25. We hope to see you there!

- Tara Sad



The Savings Bank of Walpole (SBW) and the Monadnock Media Group/KNE-FM are once again teaming up with Douglas Cuddle Toys to spread holiday cheer and raise money for local causes through the annual Good Friends campaign, which will benefit three Monadnock Region nonprofits: Feeding Tiny Tummies, The Community Kitchen, and Keene Housing Kids Collaborative.

Throughout the holiday season, all SBW branch locations will serve as points of sale for plush stuffed animals generously donated by Douglas Cuddle Toys. Each cuddly "Good Friend" can be purchased for \$10, with 100% of the proceeds split equally among the three benefiting organizations. "These organizations each play a vital role in supporting children and families in our region," said Danielle Ruffo, Vice President of Community Engagement and Marketing at Savings Bank of Walpole. "The Good Friends campaign is one of our favorite holiday traditions because it reminds us how much good we can accomplish when local businesses, nonprofits, and neighbors come together for our community."

The campaign's success is made possible through the generosity of Douglas Cuddle Toys, which donates the stuffed animals, and the partnership of Monadnock Media Group and KNE-FM, helping promote the campaign.



Santa's Land USA, Our 68th Season Featuring NIGHTTIME MAGIC! Experience this classic roadside attraction in the evening with Santa and his friends.

Set in the southern foothills of Vermont, Santa's Land USA has been a New England family tradition for generations. In 2025 we exclusively go into evening operations for Nighttime Magic! Our guests will walk through a landscape of lights in the Santa Land forest.

Stop along the way at the various buildings to see elves fast at work, Rex the talking Reindeer, write a letter to Santa in the school house and of course talk and take photos with Santa himself! Top off the experience at the Candy Cane Cupboard for a burger and fries, and don't forget a hot chocolate and treat at Santa's Sweet shop or an ornament at our gift shop!

Santa's Land USA Nighttime Magic runs every Friday and Saturday through December 27th. December 5, 6, 12, 13, 19, 20, 26, 27 (5:00-9:00 PM). Admission 4 and Up: \$12.00 per person Seniors 65+ 10.00 per person. Tickets may be purchased online - <https://www.santaslandusa.com/>

This is an outdoor experience, wear proper footwear. Patrons will be walking through a darkened environment with various grades. Weather permitting, no refunds, check website for details. This attraction does not have rides. We look forward to seeing you this season at Santa's Land Nighttime Magic! Santa's Land is located a few miles off Interstate I-91 at 655 Belows Falls Rd (US Route 5). Putney, Vermont.







# Walpole Worships

First Congregational  
Sunday, 10:00 am

Bible Study - Wed. 4-5 pm on Zoom  
<https://walpolenhucc.org/>

St Peter's Church - North Walpole  
Mass Schedule: Friday 8:30 am  
Saturday 4:00 pm - Sunday 8:30 am

St. John's Episcopal  
Sunday, 10:00 am  
<http://stjohnswalpole.org>

Walpole Unitarian  
Sunday, 10:00 am  
<https://walpoleuuchurch.wixsite.com/walpoleunitarian>

River Valley Church  
Sunday  
9:00 am and 10:30 am  
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For Service Schedules  
visit the church websites.

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## Sending Sunshine

a local movement to connect with others  
by sending greeting cards through the mail.

### December Schedule:

at the Flat Iron Cooperative - 51 Square - Bellows Falls, VT

Thursday, December 4 - Friday, December 5  
Thursday, December 11 - Friday, December 12  
Thursday, December 18 - Friday, December 19

11 am - 3 pm all six days

**Bring** names and addresses of people to whom you would like to send greetings.  
**Select** cards designed by local artisans or **Create** a card. **Write** greetings.  
**Walk** to the Post Office and **mail** your cards.

Host: Priscilla Reyns — Questions may be directed to [preyns@yahoo.com](mailto:preyns@yahoo.com)



## Labyrinth of Lights

This December, the Walpole Unitarian Church is pleased to offer our beautiful Labyrinth of Lights to the community again this year. Constructed of greens and tiny lights, the labyrinth offers both the walker and the observer a time of deep peace during some of the hectic days of December. This much-loved tradition had been offered for more than 20 years in the second floor ballroom of Hastings Memorial Parish House, 14 Union Street.

This year, the labyrinth will be open from 5:00 - 7:00 pm December 21 & 22 (Sun-Mon); December 27, 28 & 29 (Sat-Mon.) If you are new to the Labyrinth, one of our hosts will assist you in getting started. Please plan to wear slippers or socks in the ballroom and leave your shoes downstairs. In the case of inclement weather, a recorded message will be available by 3:00 pm when calling the church phone: 603-756-3961.

-Wendy Harty

## First Congregational

December 21 -3:00 pm - First Congregational Church will host a Free Christmas Concert by the Westmorland Town Band. A freewill offering will be received to benefit the Fall Mountain Food Shelf. Feel free to give cash, a check, or non-perishable food items.

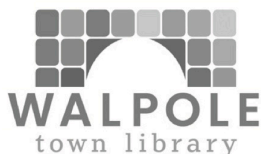
Christmas Eve - 5:30 pm -Christmas Eve Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols, including an original Nativity story.

Bible Study will resume next year after taking a holiday break.

### Reminder

**Come to the Walpole Town Hall, Thursday, December 4, 12 noon to 1:00 pm to learn what Cheshire Medical Center is planning for the future of healthcare in our region.**

**Dr. Joseph Perras, CEO and President; and Tricia Zahn, MPH, Senior Director of Population Health will discuss their future plans for CMC and answer your questions. See November page 4.**



For more information,  
visit the library website -  
<https://walpoletownlibrary.org>  
or call 603-756-9806.

Links may also be clicked from the  
**Clarion** On-Line Resources page.

## December at the Library

**Color a Mitten Bunting.** Wednesday, December 3, 10 am, Main Library.  
Join Us for a Special DIY Winter Craft for caregivers and children to make together.

**Lunch and a Movie: The Holdovers.** Thursday, December 11, 1 pm, Main Library.

**Code Club for Kids in Grades 2-5.** Registration for the Spring 2026 Code Club begins Monday, December 15. Kids can sign up for one of the following sessions: Tuesdays, 3:30 pm – 4:30 pm, North Walpole Branch, Wednesdays, 3:15 pm – 4:15 pm, Main Library, Fridays, 3:15 pm – 4:15 pm, Main Library (For beginners and those in the beginner class last session). Space is limited. Call the library or email [rios@walpoletownlibrary.org](mailto:rios@walpoletownlibrary.org) to sign up.

**December Holiday Hours:** The library will close at 3 pm on December 24 and 31. We will be closed all day on December 25 and January 1.



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Merry Christmas

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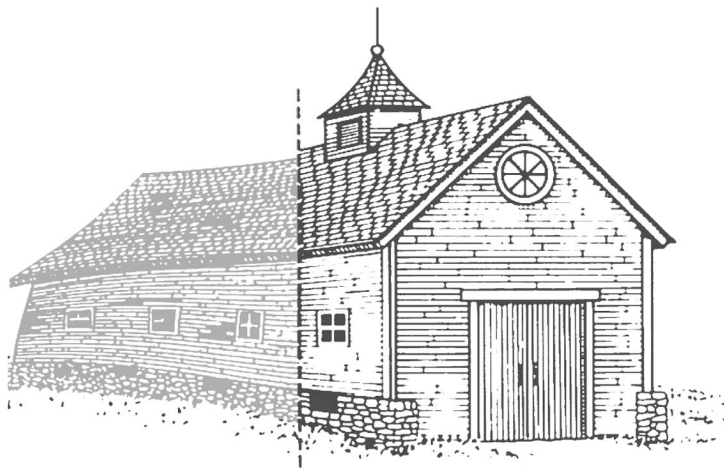


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## Did You Know That...?

Explorations into Walpole People, Places & History with Ray Boas

...the modern Christmas tree tradition, with its ornamentation, originated in Germany in the 16th century? The early German trees, known as Tannenbaums (fir trees) were decorated with simple natural items on its boughs including apples, nuts and marzipan cookies. Soon for color and light for a more festive display, candles and color paper flowers were added. These early ornaments were meant to represent and celebrate the beauty of nature and the hope of eternal life.

The tradition of decorating Christmas trees spread throughout much of Europe by the 17th and 18th centuries. Handmade decorations became elaborate, with colored paper, gilded nuts, and intricately shaped sweets. Glass ornaments marked a turning point in the history of Christmas decorations in the mid-19th century. Glassblowers from the German town of Lauscha (sixty miles north of Nuremberg in the Thuringian mountains) began creating small, hand-blown glass spheres known as *baubles*. Soon figures were made with molds. These ornaments were often silvered on the inside with mercury or tin to give them a reflective sheen and then hand-painted with colorful designs. By the late 1800s these ornaments were being exported throughout Europe.

Christmas trees rose in popularity following the publication, in 1848 by the *Illustrated London News*, of an engraving of Queen Victoria and Prince

Albert standing with their children around a decorated tree. In 1850, *Godey's Lady's Book* adapted that engraving and published it for its American readers. *Godey's* fashion-setting editor, New Hampshire's Sarah Hale, in 1853 and again in 1855, discussed the customs of Christmas trees. In the December 1860 issue, she published a story by Lizzie McIntyre depicting a family on Christmas Eve around their tree. The story gave a detailed description of the tree decorations available at the time which included: candles, food, ribbon, small toys and homemade decorations. The article concluded: "...various mysterious packages wrapped in paper and marked Grace, Marion, or Papa were put aside that all the delicious mystery of Christmas might be preserved."

In the 1860s, glass ornaments arrived in the US with German immigrants. Early in the 1870s, a New York glassmaker made and sold his "American-made silvered glass balls." In the 1880s, F. W. Woolworth (of 5¢ and 10¢ fame) discovered Lauscha's *baubles* during a visit to Germany and began



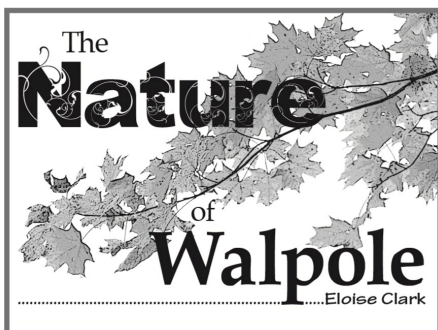
importing them, making a fortune selling them in all his stores. An 1883 toy catalogue listed fancy glass balls in bright colors to add to Christmas trees to enhance the effect of softening and reflecting the light from candles hung on a tree. Early commercial ornaments made of tin provided the same fairyland effect.

Production of the German glass ornaments flourished in the late 19th century and were made and decorated in many different shapes and forms including birds, bears, trumpets, Santa figures, and even a "Christmas Pickle." World War I, however, disrupted the flow of the German ornaments to the US, and American companies, such as Corning Glass Works, began to fill the void for the holidays. With mass production coming by the 1930s, the glass balls became affordable and widely available. In 1900, one family out of five in America had a Christmas tree. By 1930, a tree was almost universally found in American homes. Besides glass *baubles*, today's decorations are made of many materials, personalized, themed and often hand-made. Each tree represents its family and their traditions, maybe even the tradition of a "Christmas Pickle."

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Do you have your bird feeders up? NH Fish and Game thinks it's safe to set them up as black bears have retired for the season. It's really fun to see these beautiful animals closely and observe their behavior.

There are myriad designs for bird feeders. You can also make your own of wood or recyclables. Stand alone or hanging from a tree, covered or uncovered platforms, plastic or wire tubes, you must determine the most practical for your situation. My most successful feeder is a covered platform feeder mounted on a pole. The secret to its success is a squirrel baffle. It's much more difficult to exclude these clever creatures from feeders hanging from a tree branch.

There are a smorgasbord of food choices birds enjoy. I stay away from the millet based mixes. Those are the ones filled with round yellow seeds and cracked corn with a smattering of sunflower seeds. I find most of the millet goes to waste. Other choices are tiny Nyger or thistle seeds for the finches. Desiccated meal worms are

the latest fad. Bluebirds prefer them. Others have learned to relish them as well.

I use black oil sunflower seeds. They are a high calorie seed appetizing to a host of species, including the finches. The chickadees and titmice swoop in and pluck a seed, then depart to a nearby branch to extract the meat. Bluejays will stake out a corner of the platform to eat their fill and fend off all intruders. For this reason, I have more than one feeder. Mourning doves and cardinals will feed on spillage to the ground, as will juncos and other sparrows.

You'll need suet to attract woodpeckers. It's easy to find the square cakes in the grocery or feed stores. They are made of hardened grease and filled with cracked corn, sometimes berries and fruit. It's a bit unpredictable which flavor of cake the woodpeckers will like. If the cake is not popular, it languishes and the birds disappear. Buy real suet from the meat section at the grocery store and cut it to fit the wire holders. Nuthatches, bluebirds and wrens also appreciate this high calorie treat.

The clientele at the feeder has shifted through the years and now includes more southern species that like our warmer winters. Carolina wrens and red-bellied woodpeckers have recently joined the cafeteria.

We occasionally have birds who migrate south from the boreal forest to our area. These "irruptions" occur because of the failure of the cone



crop in the north. It's predicted we are likely to see flocks this year. Be on the lookout for pine siskins, redpolls and purple finches. Perhaps some crossbills and grosbeaks will join us? Some years red-breasted nuthatches add to the lively scene.

It's important to consider where you site your feeder. Birds like cover close by. This could be the edge of the woods or a cluster of shrubs. Little birds need a place of escape. Each year I prop our old Christmas tree near the feeders. One morning, I watched some juncos suddenly disappear into its dark branches. What should alight on the ground nearby but a sharp-shinned hawk? The hawk stalked around the base of the evergreen, but the juncos didn't panic and the hawk eventually flew away.

Watching the birds brings us comedy, drama, intrigue, beauty and wonder, all for the price of birdseed! Could a birdfeeder be the complete home entertainment system for you?

**Left - Platform Bird Feeder  
Above - Chickadee enjoying  
Thistle Seeds**





## Walpole Village School & Community Room

*A brighter, safer space for our youngest learners and a gathering place for the whole community*

Community support is needed to help complete the new Walpole Village School and Community Room located at 75 Westminster Street in Walpole.

We hope you will consider a donation and encourage others to give this holiday season!

Visit [www.thewalpolefoundation.org/wvs](http://www.thewalpolefoundation.org/wvs) for more ways to give.



**WE BROKE GROUND!**



**\$3.6 Million (95%)**  
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Funding Gap



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E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ My gift is anonymous

This donation is restricted to the Walpole Village School and Community Room project.



## Holidays in Bellows Falls 2025

The Bellows Falls Downtown Development Alliance (BFDDA) invites the community to celebrate the season with **Holidays in Bellows Falls 2025**, a two-week event designed to bring people downtown to shop, explore, and enjoy the holiday spirit. From **November 28 through December 13**, downtown Bellows Falls will be filled with festive activities, shopping promotions, and community cheer.

At the heart of the event is the **Holiday Bingo Game**, encouraging shoppers to visit participating businesses, complete Bingo squares, and enter for a chance to win in the **Holiday Raffle** — one of the event's most popular features. Raffle prizes range from **\$25-\$100+**, generously donated by local businesses and community supporters.

**New this year:** The **Festive Fashion Weekend Instagram Contest** on **December 6-7** invites pets, people, and groups to dress in their holiday best and ugly sweaters. Participants can have their photos taken professionally at Hetty Green Park, post them on Instagram, and compete for prizes in the raffle baskets. The contest is open to all, and the public can vote for their favorite entries.

"We hope every business, resident, and visitor will take part — whether it's hosting an event, joining the Holiday Bingo game, or just stopping in to say hello downtown," said Casey Griffin, Executive Director of the BFDDA. "We know money can be tight and times are hard right now, but even small choices — visiting a local shop, sharing a post, showing up to a community event and having a good time — make a big difference individually and in our community."

For more information, including a full schedule of events, participating businesses, and raffle details, visit: <https://bellowsfallsvt.org/holidays-in-bellows-falls-2025/>

## Holiday Home Tour

What says Christmas more than a festive wreath on a front door, twinkling ornaments on a perfect tree, the scent of mulling spices in the air, and a beautifully set table ready for Christmas Eve? This December, the town of Walpole, New Hampshire invites you to experience all of that and more during its Holiday Home Tour, Saturday, December 13 and Sunday, December 14 from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm.

The event is hosted by the Women of Walpole, a charitable and social organization dedicated to community enrichment. Tickets will be available for purchase the day of the tour at Walpole Town Hall.

The idea for the event was born after several local women attended a Holiday Home Tour in Massachusetts. On the drive home, inspiration struck: "We can do this in Walpole!" Within a week, plans were underway. When the group presented the proposal to the Women of Walpole board, enthusiasm spread quickly—and the Holiday Home Tour became the organization's newest fundraiser.

Visitors can look forward to exploring a delightful range of homes, including a working dairy farm, a residence listed on the National Register of Historic Places, a custom-designed farmhouse, the coach house of a former estate, and a modern home boasting a spectacular view. So mark your calendars, gather your friends, and enjoy a weekend celebrating the season in true Walpole style.

-Maggi Suttles



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# Support the Walpole PD Building Fund

## “Westminster Street”

by Howard Hill



The original painting of Westminster Street was generously loaned by **Savings Bank of Walpole** for prints to be generated. Savings Bank of Walpole originally commissioned the artist, Howard Hill, to paint this iconic scene of Walpole's Westminster Street as it was in 1992.

Original can be viewed at the Savings Bank of Walpole - Walpole Village Branch on Westminster Street, Walpole, NH.

Many thanks to **Debbie Hill**, artists widow, for giving her permission to create prints of both paintings ( Westminster Street & Walpole Town Hall) for this fundraiser.

Purchase your raffle ticket(s) to own this beautiful print of “Westminster Street”. It is produced on a 24” x 34”, Matte Canvas with a custom frame generously donated by by **Inkberry in Surry NH**.

Raffle tickets **\$10.00 each** or **3 for \$25.00**

To purchase: **Robin Sanctuary 603-313-9165** or email:

**sanctuary5farm@gmail.com**

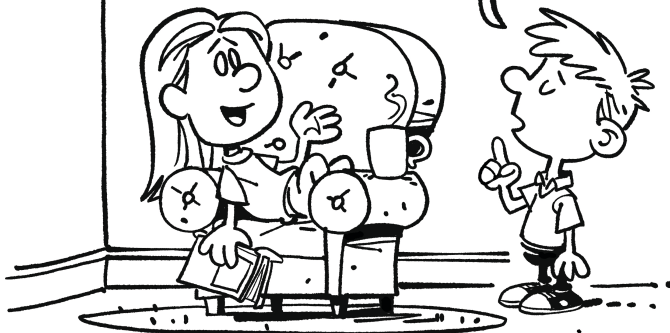
Drawing to be held on December 23, 2025

## CHESHIRE KIDS

by Erik Doescher

I CAN'T BELIEVE  
THAT CHRISTMAS  
IS ONLY A FEW  
WEEKS AWAY!

YOU MEAN  
587 HOURS,  
27 MINUTES  
AND 32  
SECONDS,  
DON'T YOU?



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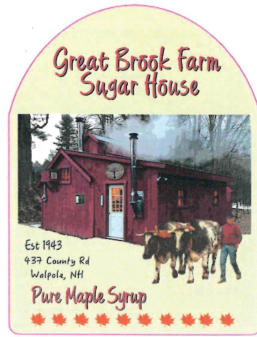
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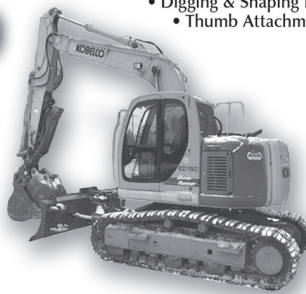
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## WES Celebrates Halloween with Zombie Run

By Nolan Palmer (6th grade) and Isaac Putney (7th grade)

On Halloween day this year, the kids at Walpole Elementary School ran a course called the zombie run. In the zombie run, the teachers dress up as zombies and try to pull the flags of the kids running by, sort of like when playing flag football. Walpole has had this tradition for the last several years. It is always something that students and staff alike look forward to, especially since the day of Halloween is a half day for students. This year, there were two courses that students ran through, and both had different teachers chasing you down and attempting to take their flags.

There was a different route from last year and it was easier to access by students. It was hard to avoid the teachers because they were in close proximity to each other. The first route had the harder one because Mrs. Ronning and Mr. Gagnon were next to each other and working together,

along with Mrs. Baird-Torney capturing a lot of ground and flags. The other route had teachers spread out and in more open spaces. Since there were two routes, it was shortened from last year and both routes combined took about half the time the original route took.

Each teacher was ready to steal your flag and stop you from going further. If you could safely make it past both routes, you could choose to do it again. If you did it again, it was likely that you would get tagged the second time because you were tired. Most students completed the race while wearing their costumes, which added to the fun.

## 8th Grade Visits Gaines Farm to Celebrate Halloween

By Addie Hearne and Sawyer Dumont (8th grade)

On the evening of October 17th, the Walpole 8th grade students went on their annual field trip to Gaines Farm in Guilford, Vermont. The two events we did as a grade were the

haunted corn maze and the haunted hayride. When we arrived, we waited until the sky was pitch black to enter the corn maze. The maze was fun but also, with the Halloween theme, pretty scary in parts. Especially when the actors chased you and especially when they were holding chainsaws.

"It was very fun, but also scary," said Taylor Caron.

"I liked the scary stuff," agreed classmate Sadie Fay.

McKinley Ruskowski said her favorite part was pushing her friend, London Swain, into the corn as they were running away from one of the actors. When polled, a majority of the eighth graders gave this field trip a score that averaged 8/10. "(It was) super fun. A lot of laughing," said Swain. "The clowns were scary."

After we finished the maze, we got on the haunted hayride. For some students, this was the best part. "My favorite part was the hayride," said Lily Vickers. The entire experience was extremely fun. I guarantee you the entire 8th grade would gladly do it again. All in all, the Gaines Farm trip was unforgettable and very fun. I would recommend going there if you haven't gone yet, and make sure to go at night.

## Staff of the Month: Mrs. Baird-Torney

By Allie Vickers, Harper Rodenhauser, and Junie Jenkins (6th grade)

Shawna Baird-Torney is our Physical Education teacher at Walpole Elementary School. She teaches all sorts of units such as football, soccer, basketball, cross country skiing, and more. We asked her what her favorite unit was and she said "My favorite unit is the December to Remember unit. My favorite part of my job is teaching students to be physically





literate so they can grow up and be able to live their best lives.”

She enjoys reading books like *Wonder*, *Into the Woods*, *Night*, and *Ishmael* and her favorite color is green and blue. During her class, she asks for song recommendations that we can listen to while doing activities, and I wondered what her favorite song to play was. “We No Speak No Americano.”

Although she enjoys teaching PE to grades K-8, she also likes to hike, read, watch movies, play volleyball, play drums, listen to music, cook, and get cooked playing Basketball against her family.

Now, she wasn’t always going to be a PE teacher. “In High School I was planning to be a fashion designer, I used to draft outfits and toured fashion design schools and wanted to attend FIT (Fashion Institute). My senior year I had a change of heart and



realized I wanted to do something more for the world than design clothes. I always loved my PE teacher in school, and she inspired me to be one.”

Her favorite part of Walpole is that Walpole has the best students and families. When asked for any advice she would give to her students or to anybody, she said this:

“School and life can be very challenging. It is easier for some people but feels impossible for others. Don’t let yourself give up or do what is easiest all the time. Challenge yourself and you’ll get more out of life and give more to others.”

## Walpole School Hosts Second Annual Career Day

By: Reagan Westover (6th grade)

On Friday October 24th, 2025, Walpole Elementary School invited some community and local businesses into our school to teach students about their work. These businesses taught students about their chosen careers and fields and answered many questions that students asked of them. Career Day was aligned with what students in grades 5-8 had been learning about in advisory. The focus for the month of November was community. The essential questions for the month have been: what is community, how can we build community, and why does community matter?

Some of the businesses included Salon 448, Walpole Creamery, E.E. Houghton, American Precision Museum, Walpole Vet, Walpole Valley Farm, Walpole Fire and Police, Benson Wood, Eastern Propane, MCVP, Matt Beam Plumbing and Heating, Katie Beam for Galloway Real Estate, Shannon Latham for Clark Mortensen Insurance Hilb Group, Craig Vickers for State Farm Insurance, Alyson’s Orchard, Dog Daze, and more. There was an engineer, a showcase of how a drone works, a live haircut, and places to interact with such as building horseshoes and Hooper educators discussing the local environment. There was a person teaching about foraging, a state police representative, and our former school nurse, Erin Carr, teaching about nursing.

The students spent about two hours that afternoon, moving around between all of the stations in the gym and in the

parking lot. They asked questions, engaged with the presenters, and learned a lot about careers that they might want to pursue in the future. It was another successful event that brought the Walpole and surrounding communities closer.

## Review of The Live Action How to Train Your Dragon

By Wilder Moffit (6th grade)

In my opinion, the live action *How to Train Your Dragon* was amazing. It was the best thing I have ever seen in my 11 years of life but I have to admit the animated version is still really good. To fully enjoy the heartwarming and action-packed journey, you should watch both movies. In the live action film especially, *Toothless*, the main dragon, looks amazing. The visuals really make the film special. Mason Thames is the actor that plays Hiccup and he did pretty well getting into that character. Nico Parker played as Astrid and she was also amazing in the movie. While those actors were great, the best of them all was Gerard Butler as Stoick (Hiccup’s dad).

A fun fact is that he actually voiced Stoick in the animated version. He did amazing as Stoick. The movie was so successful that there is already a plan for there to be a second movie in 2027, which I’m looking forward to seeing.

**Below —Fifth and seventh graders join together to explore the career day presenters outside of Walpole Elementary School.**





After Ben's departure, Walpole Recycling experienced staff shortages. With the dedicated volunteers, we were able to keep the operation going. Within weeks we hired Steve O'Connor. Steve is local with a good work ethic, and we are happy he is a part of the team!

Walpole Recycling has worked hard over the years to recycle as many items as we can. The company Plastic Recycled had been taking our plastic caps and plastic film/bags. They are no longer in business. We have found an outlet for our plastic bags, but not plastic caps. So, moving forward, please leave caps on plastic bottles.

As we move into the colder season, we appreciate the used oil that has been helping us stay warm. We are thinking about the winter months ahead and we have been working on getting the yard cleaned up for snow removal. In the middle of November, we sent out 19 aluminum bales and a box of wires.

At the end of every year the Town of Walpole generates enough plastic bales to send out a 53-foot truckload. Our #1s, #2s and #5 plastic bales usually go to GFL in Canada. There are only a few vendors who take plastic bales, and only GFL take the #5 bales. We hope they stay in business and continue to help us recycle our plastic.

A big thank you to the wonderful, dedicated volunteers and staff. Happy holidays to everyone, and keep recycling Walpole!

-Shaena Hakey - Recycling Manager

## Pinnacleview 4-H

November was a busy month for Pinnacleview 4-H. On Sunday November 2, at 4:00 pm, the members held their monthly meeting to elect their officers for the next season at the Walpole Town Hall. The club elected Savannah Anderson as the president, Emma-Anne Lee as the vice president, Alanna Haskell as the secretary, Paisley Bigelow as the treasurer, Alyssa Frederic as the reporter, and Sophia Formica as the scrapbook keeper. The next meeting will be sometime in December to make holiday creations and have a Yankee swap.

On Saturday November 8, from 8:30 am-4:00 pm was UNH Youth Dairy Day. The club had Reagan Westover, Brady Westover, Sawyer Roina, and Khole Gauthier attend. The UNH Youth Dairy Day is a yearly event used to expand people's knowledge on all things

dairy. This year our members were able to take a tour of the barns, decorate an ear tag, and practice judging cows. Reagan said "We went because we wanted to learn something and see what they do."

The next day was the Cheshire County 4-H Award Ceremony, held at the Keene Ice Rink. Several members attended to recognize the hard work of 4-H members, leaders and volunteers from the past season. Receiving awards were leaders Crystal Phillips and Virginia Foote, along with members Emma-Anne Lee and Savannah Anderson.

- Alyssa Frederic

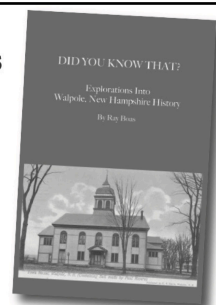
**Below — 4-H New Officers -  
From left to right: Savannah Anderson, Emma-Anne Lee, Alanna Haskell, Paisley Bigelow, Alyssa Frederic, Sophia Formica.**



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Thank you all for the tremendous show of support during our Grand Reopening! It was wonderful to see so many people enjoying our newly-renovated space. We always welcome visitors to the building and are happy to provide tours for anyone who missed our event. To schedule a visit, email [hooper.director@gmail.com](mailto:hooper.director@gmail.com).

If you'd like another chance to experience our space, come join us for a workshop! A few spots remain for our annual wreath-making workshop, where you can create your own natural holiday wreath. Join us on December 5 from 5:00 to 8:00 pm, or December 6 from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. Registration is required, check out our website or email us at [hooper.director@gmail.com](mailto:hooper.director@gmail.com) to reserve your spot now.

We're also excited to announce our new Winter Explorers Camp! This hands-on nature camp will give kids the chance to explore the wonders of winter, including snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, animal tracking, nature crafts, and more during February break. Head to our website or social media for registration details. Spots are limited.

With our 100th anniversary approaching in 2026, we're reflecting on our rich history and looking toward the future, ensuring that the Hooper Institute continues to inspire and nurture the next generations. Keep an eye out for special centennial events, beginning in January with our Winter Fun Day.

From all of us at the Hooper Institute, thank you for your continued support during our first 100 years serving Walpole. Let's make the next century as vibrant and impactful as the last.

- Greta Drager

## A Pickle – In Your Tree?

There is a little-known tradition that many have adopted in their Christmas traditions. And that is hiding a glass pickle ornament in your Christmas tree. Yes, a pickle for some fun. But first how did this tradition come about?

It had been thought this tradition passed from generation to generation in Germany, but in fact few Germans know of the tradition. It is not practiced there, only in the US (and now, hopefully, in Walpole). Repeated many times, and tying in with the German connection, is the story of a Bavarian Civil War soldier who, as a prisoner on the brink of starvation, pleaded with a compassionate guard for a final pickle before his looming death by starvation. The guard granted his request and handed him a pickle. Miraculously, that pickle brought him back to a semblance of health, enabling him to survive all odds, both physical and mental. The pickle thus was seen as a good luck piece. And, as the legend goes, pickles were soon hidden in Christmas trees, and brought good luck was bestowed on the finder.

The most likely origin of the hiding of a pickle in the holiday fir, the one that I will subscribe to is that the tradition came from a marketing scheme. In the late 19th century, when Woolworth stores began importing hand-blown glass tree ornaments from Germany, the ornaments, besides being made as balls or animals, were also shaped as fruits and vegetables. Most were popular but few customers wanted the pickle shaped ornaments. Who wanted to decorate their Christmas tree with a



pickle ornament? With so many surplus glass pickles something had to be done, and a wise salesman appears to have come up with the answer. He made up a story to go along with the pickles, explaining it was an age-old German custom to hide a pickle in the tree for one lucky family member to find, thus bringing good luck, or one more present. The pickles sold, and many more were ordered for the following Christmas.

So, how do Walpoleans start their Christmas Pickle Tradition? First on Christmas Eve a pickle-shaped Christmas ornament must be hidden deep within the branches of your Christmas tree. But not so deep that on Christmas morning family members - particularly the children - in searching will find the green pickle among the green boughs and other ornaments. You can decide the reward for finding the pickle. Some possibilities may include: an extra present or a special gift; the privilege to be the first one to open a present; good luck for the coming year; and the honor of being the champion pickle finder. Ready to start this year? Feel free to send your Christmas Morning Pickle tales to the CLARION.

-Ray Boas

## Scouting for Food Thank You

Boy Scout Troop 299 and Cub Scout Pack 299, would like to thank everyone for your very generous donations to our Scouting for Food event.

We collected 1283 pieces of food and \$5009.00 in monetary donations. Checks were presented to the Fall Mountain Food Shelf Saturday, November 22 at their Thanksgiving boxes preparation.

-Debra Pawelczyk

## Women of Walpole

The Women of Walpole met on Wednesday afternoon November 19 in the Studio 8 Barn. Member Linda DuChene led a hands-on interior design learning session including the opportunity to design layouts in model rooms. Many thanks to Bruce and Karen Blanchette for the use of their studio and gallery space. The December WOW meeting is our holiday pot luck at noon on December 17 at the home of Peg Dion. Details will be provided in the member email.

The Holiday Home Tour will soon be here, on December 13 and 14 to visit six festively decorated member homes. See the separate Clarion article for more details. Women of Walpole welcomes any woman living or working in Walpole to join us. If you would like to learn more or be put on our email distribution list please contact Mary Feeney (508-397-2583) or Carolyn LeBail (714-717-4184).

-Mary Feeney

The Way the Christmas and  
New Year Holidays  
fall on the Calendar this Year  
The January 2026 CLARION  
May not be in your mailbox until  
after the New Year  
BUT will be on-line  
December 30



## FROM THE CLARION

**A sampling of way we've reported in more than 14 years of publication:**

**One Year Ago (December 2024)** - Have you heard the news? The Hooper Institute is about to begin a building renovation. ...

**Three Years Ago (December 2022)** - At the Association of Fundraising Professionals-Northern New England Chapter's recent National Philanthropy Day celebration John A. Hubbard and The Hubbard Family were bestowed the honor of the National Philanthropy Day, 2022 Outstanding Philanthropists award.

**Five Years Ago (December 2020)** - The Fall Mountain Regional School District School Board discussed the rise of COVID-19 in NH, and discussed the best alternative for all concerned. It was decided the district "will be moving to a remote model of instruction beginning Monday, November 30 and returning to schools Tuesday, January 19 [2021].

**Seven Years Ago (December 2018)** - The response to the Walker Road Conservation project at the Gateway to Walpole has been extremely positive. Donations towards the land's conservation, in such a short period of time, are impressive. Just after Thanksgiving Day, over \$223,000 towards the goal of \$280,000 had been received.

**Nine Years Ago (December 2016)** - Herb Hurlburt, pillar of the Walpole Fire Department, passed on November 8 - after a long battle with Lou Gehrig's Disease (ALS). On November 12 more than 300 family, friends and first responders gathered at the Walpole Fire Station to honor Herb and his memory.

**Eleven Years Ago (December 2014)** - The Walpole family restaurant with the shamrock on its wooden sign served its last lunch at the end of December. Originally dubbed The Gathering Place when it first opened its doors in 1980, Murray's became Murray's two years later and has been a Walpole fixture ever since.

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## The WALPOLE Clarion

A monthly for the Walpole Community

Ray Boas, Publisher

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## Walpole Photo Winner LOVE ABOUNDS

The Savings Bank of Walpole recently announced the winners of their seventh annual photo contest. Selected photos will be featured in the Bank's 2026 Community Calendar as well as on the Bank's website, social media profiles, and on other marketing projects throughout the year to come. Images will also be included in desk calendars, holiday cards, and note cards. Calendars (free of charge) are available to the public in all seven branch offices.

"For the seventh year in a row, the photo contest was a big hit," noted Danielle Ruffo, Vice President Community Engagement & Marketing at Savings Bank of Walpole. "The variety of photos we received not only capture the unique character of our state and our community, but they truly showcase the talent of our local photographers. While going through the selection process, it was nice to see many new names mixed in with folks who have won in years past."

Walpole's Tracey Martin is among this year's winners. Although her photo, "Love Abounds," will not be on the calendar, it will be used for promotional material or other items at the bank.



## PUBLISHER'S CORNER

It was exactly a year ago, November 20th, that I sat down to write to you in this column. Again, my year has flown by and I did not get out and explore the outside world as much as in the past, but where did the time go? I was so busy. I have enjoyed keeping busy with much of my time devoted to learning from my many books, planning virtually my explorations and working on bringing each month's paper to you. Yes, there were some travel explorations, but for some reason, I've not had the time to write about them and share them with my travel website readers.

This is time for reflection at the end of the year, although any time of year is good to reflect back at your blessings and good fortune. My late Cathy and I felt so fortunate and blessed to land in Walpole, and I hope you feel the same way. The world is not the same in many ways as when I grew up many decades ago, and not the same as the two-plus decades ago when we did land here. But in our microcosm of the world - Walpole - for the most part things do stay safe and the same, and for that we should all be thankful.

Please reflect back, count your blessings, and may you all have a wonderful and healthy holiday season and best wishes for the New Year.

—Ray Boas, Publisher

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Can you find the pickle? See page 17