The WALPOLE Clarion

A Monthly Community Publication - Volume XVI, Issue 12 - December 2026

Happy Holidays from All of Us at the Clarion



A WALPOLE CHRISTMAS EVE

Church Services

St. John's - 5:00
Congregational - 5:00
Unitarian - 5:00
River Valley Church - 5:00
at the Town Hall

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

North Walpole School Update

At its October 26, 2026 meeting, the Fall Mountain Regional School District Board, acting on the recommendation of the SAU 60 administration, approved a motion to place a warrant article on the 2027 School District ballot proposing the return of the North Walpole School property to the Town of Walpole.

What does this mean for the voters of Walpole, North Walpole, and Drewsville? Voters will have an opportunity to decide whether the Town of Walpole should accept ownership of the North Walpole School property. If passed, school will have to go back to the Town of Walpole

- Continued Page 2

Live Nativity 2026

The community is once again invited to gather on the Walpole Common for the annual Live Nativity Christmas Eve at 6:30 pm, following Christmas Eve church services. Now in its 52nd year, this beloved Walpole tradition brings together neighbors, families, and friends to celebrate the birth of Jesus through a simple and meaningful outdoor portrayal of the Nativity. Community members of all ages participate as angels, shepherds, and wise men, accompanied by live animals and the singing of traditional Christmas carols. On the Common, the Nativity offers an opportunity to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas and share in the joy of the season. Following the Nativity, everyone is invited to the Walpole Town Hall for hot cocoa, refreshments, and fellowship to share in the warmth and joy of the Christmas season. Volunteers of all ages—children, teens, and adults—are welcome to participate in this year's Nativity. Opportunities include portraying angels, shepherds, and wise men, as well as assisting behind the scenes. Costumes are provided, and no previous experience is necessary. For more information about the event or to volunteer, contact hello@rivervalleychurch.com We look forward to celebrating this cherished Walpole Christmas tradition with the entire community.

-Justin Barney

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- School from Page 1

because the bonds used to pay for the school originally were paid by the entire town. Before that decision is made, it is important that voters have a clear understanding of the building's current condition, potential maintenance and operating costs, and possible future uses.

Once the Select Board receives additional information, a public informational meeting will be scheduled to review the condition of the building, discuss potential uses, and answer questions from residents. Our goal is to ensure that voters have the information they need to make an informed decision. Additional information will be provided after the first of the year.

-Walpole Select Board

Understanding New Hampshire's New School Tax Cap Law

In July 2026, New Hampshire passed a new law, HB 1300, designed to give voters greater control over school property taxes and administrative spending. The law establishes two separate limits:

1. School Property Tax Cap — The amount of money raised through local school property taxes cannot increase faster than inflation, with an additional adjustment for new construction.

2. SAU Administrative Spending Cap — The law also limits spending on School Administrative Unit (SAU) central office operations to 6% of the total school district budget, excluding qualifying bonded capital costs. This includes expenses such as the superintendent's office, business administration, payroll, human resources, and other central office functions.

How Does the Law Work? Voters were asked to approve these limits in the November 3, 2026 election. Approval required a 60% majority which was exceeded in the Fall Mountain Regional School District (SAU 60). The school tax cap and SAU spending cap were determined separately based on votes across the communities served by each. The limits take effect July 1, 2027, and remain in place for two years. The law also allows voters to override the limits through a supermajority vote.

What Does This Mean for Taxpayers? The law does not automatically reduce property taxes or freeze school spending. Instead, it limits how quickly local school taxes can increase and places a ceiling on central office administrative spending.

For the Fall Mountain Regional School District, the important question is how these limits will affect future budgets, administrative costs, and the amount taxpayers are asked to contribute.

Meetings on the Tax Cap issue will be held: December 7, 2026 - Public Hearing on SAU Budget,— January 13, 2027 — Public Hearing on School Budget,— February 1, 2027 — Deliberative Session School District. All meetings will be held at 5:30 pm at the High School.

-Walpole Select Board

DINGBAT (or GEEGAW)
A letterpress printer's decorative piece of metal or wood type ornament or floret used for borders, dividers and embellishments - often to fill empty space.



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Walpole Worships

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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://walpoleuu.org/

River Valley Church
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For Service Schedules visit the church websites.

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Congregational Community Events

Friday, December 11, 6 pm - Caroling on a horse-drawn wagon followed by refreshments in Fellowship Hall. Seating in the wagon is limited, but you are welcome to walk along with the wagon if it is full. A fun time for all. Email walpolechurch@yahoo.com if you are interested in attending.

Sunday, December 20, 3 pm - The Westmoreland Town Band will be in the Sanctuary to provide wonderful music for us all to enjoy. Light refreshments follow the concert.

All are welcome to both events

Unitarian Church

Holiday Food Sale

Will be held In front of the Post Office December 19, 9 am - 11:30 am**.** In addition to our popular holiday boxed cookies that are great for gift giving, we will have plenty of savory items such as quiches, casseroles, lasagnas, pot pies, dessert pies and breads. Come early to find the best choices

Labyrinth of Lights

We are pleased to offer our beautiful Labyrinth of Lights to the community once again. 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 has been offered for more than 20 years in the second floor ballroom of Hastings Memorial Parish House, 14 Union Street in Walpole. The labyrinth will be open from 5 - 7 pm on the following dates: December 21 & 22; December 27, 28 & 29. In the case of inclement weather, call the church phone at 603-756-3961 after 3:00 pm to hear our recorded message.

-Wendy Harty

Blood Drive

Saturday, December 5, from 9:00 am to 1:30 pm - St. John's and the First Congregational Church are joining together to host a community **blood drive**. The blood drive will be held in Fellowship Hall at the Congregational Church. If you are able to give blood and would like to make an appointment, please call 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCross.org to choose a time that is convenient for you.



Tax Bill Delay

As of press time the State of NH has not yet provided the new tax rate. At this time it is hoped the rate will be received in December, and then tax bills may be mailed out. Taxes for the last half of calendar year 2026 will be due thirty days following the mailing of the tax bills.

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Live Nativity
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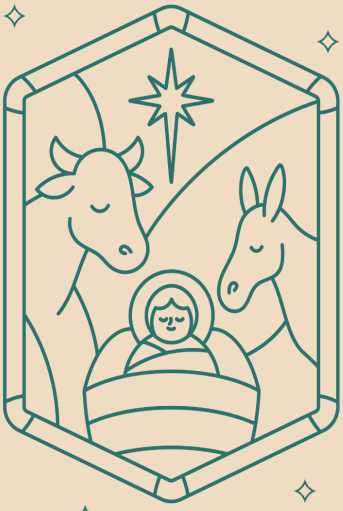
Dec 24 at 6:30pm



Holiday Happenings At The
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Sat Dec 12th: Friends Mingle & Jingle
Sat Dec 19th: Procrastinator's Paradise
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Natural Burial Update

The November public hearing scheduled for the River Valley Natural Burial, proposed on Route 12 property just south of Black Jack Crossing Road, and where the former flea market and gravel pit were located, has been put "on hold."

In early November the Walpole Conservation Commission submitted to the Planning Board a report citing environmental concerns showing the proposed site inappropriate for natural burials, and why it should not be granted any exemption to our town's zoning ordinance. They were careful in stating they were not offering an opinion about natural burials per se.

The chair of the Planning Board, when asked, reported to the CLARION, "The applicant has put the project on hold for various reasons." November 10 minutes state the Public Hearing will continue in December.

-Ray Boas

Town Meeting 2027

The March 2027, Saturday session of Walpole's Town Meeting will be held in the Walpole Elementary Gym. This move was planned now since seating was at capacity for the Special Town Meeting in August for discussion and voting on the bond to build a new Police Station. With the Police Station again being placed on the warrant, the expectation is that there will be a large crowd. The article will be the first thing on the Saturday agenda, before the budget article.

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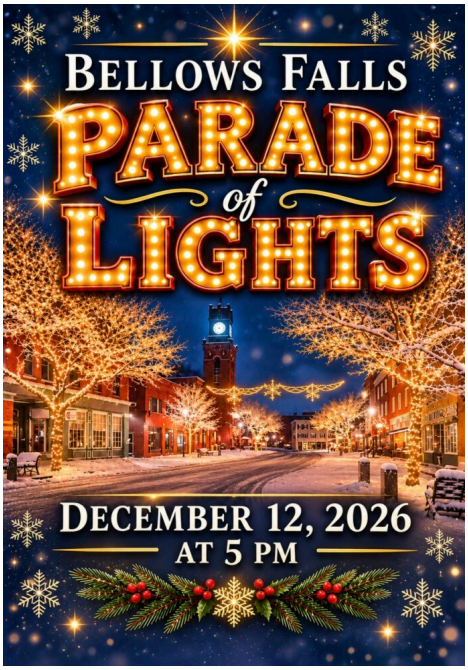

Celebrate the Holidays in Bellows Falls

Head to Bellows Falls, Saturday, December 12 for the 6th Annual Bellows Falls Parade of Lights, when downtown will come alive with beautifully decorated floats, festive music, and the unmistakable glow of the holiday season. Beginning at 5 pm, the Parade of Lights is a perfect way to celebrate the season with family, friends, and neighbors.

Start your evening exploring the shops for unique holiday gifts, seasonal décor, and one-of-a-kind finds. Enjoy dinner at one of the restaurants, grab a coffee or hot chocolate from a local café, or enjoy a drink with friends before making your way to the parade route.

At 5:00 pm, downtown will shine as businesses, organizations, community groups, and families fill the streets watching the parade with dazzling lights and creative holiday displays. After the parade, the community will have the opportunity to vote for their favorites.

AND — The holiday season is coming to Bellows Falls! Starting November 27, the Bellows Falls Downtown Development Alliance (BFDDA) invites the community to celebrate the season, shop local, and enter for a chance to win the Holiday Giveaway Basket with the return of **Holidays in Bellows Falls.**

Running through December 24, this month-long celebration encourages everyone to enjoy the holidays while supporting the local shops and businesses that make Bellows Falls special.This year's celebration features the return of **Holiday Bingo**, a fun way to explore local businesses and get some holiday shopping done. Pick up a bingo card, visit participating businesses, make qualifying purchases, and collect stamps. Complete a bingo and turn in your card for a chance to win the Holiday Giveaway Basket!

Whether you're shopping for gifts, treating yourself, or simply looking for a reason to get out and enjoy the season, make Bellows Falls part of your holiday plans. Holidays in Bellows Falls is organized by the Bellows Falls Downtown Development Alliance, a nonprofit dedicated to supporting local businesses and creating a vibrant downtown community. For full details visit - https://bellowsfallsvt.org/holidaysinbellowsfalls2026/

Macaroni and Cheese

Founding Father Thomas Jefferson may seem like a remote, epic figure, but did you know that he too loved mac and cheese? Filmmaker Ken Burns joined *CIAO ITALIA* host Mary Ann Esposito to talk history and cook up a revolutionary recipe during *MAKING JEFFERSON'S MACCARONI PIE***,** which premiered, November 26, on New Hampshire PBS, and is now available to stream online on the PBS App.

MAKING JEFFERSON'S MACCARONI PIE was the brainchild of Esposito, who wanted a unique way to celebrate the nation's 250th Anniversary. "I started thinking about food. Food led me to macaroni and cheese. Macaroni and cheese led me to Thomas Jefferson," said Esposito.

Esposito first learned about Jefferson's fondness for pasta while reading *The Virginia Housewife*, written by Mary Randolph, a cousin of Thomas Jefferson. The cookbook includes a recipe for Maccaroni Pie—spelled with two c's—that it's believed Jefferson first came across in Italy. "Jefferson spelled it with two C's, just because of the dialectical word for macaroni in Naples at the time he traveled."

For Esposito, Randolph's writing was the start of a culinary treasure hunt. "It really wasn't a finite recipe," she noted. She worked closely with historians at Monticello to recreate a historically accurate dish. With the recipe for the dish in place, Esposito had a special finishing touch in mind for her special. "It was kind of a puzzle. Who knows the most about Thomas Jefferson? Ken Burns." Burns also offered the kitchen of The Restaurant at Burdick's in Walpole, where he is part owner, as a filming location. Esposito found her fellow Granite Stater to be an ideal coworker. "He was curious. He had a lot of questions. He worked well with his hands."

-Carla Russell - NHPBS — Photo Mark Bolton



WALPOLE
town library

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

French Conversation Group. Thursday, December 10, 2:00-3:00 pm, Main Library.

Code Club for Kids in Grades 2-5. Registration for the Spring 2027 Code Club begins Monday, December 14. 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 jrios@walpoletownlibrary.org to sign up.

Light Up the Dark: a Winter Solstice Celebration. All ages. Saturday, December 19, 10:00 am, Main Library. Presented by the Grammar School. Registration is required.

December Holiday Hours:
The library will close at 4 pm on December 24 and 31. We will be closed all day on December 25 and January 1.

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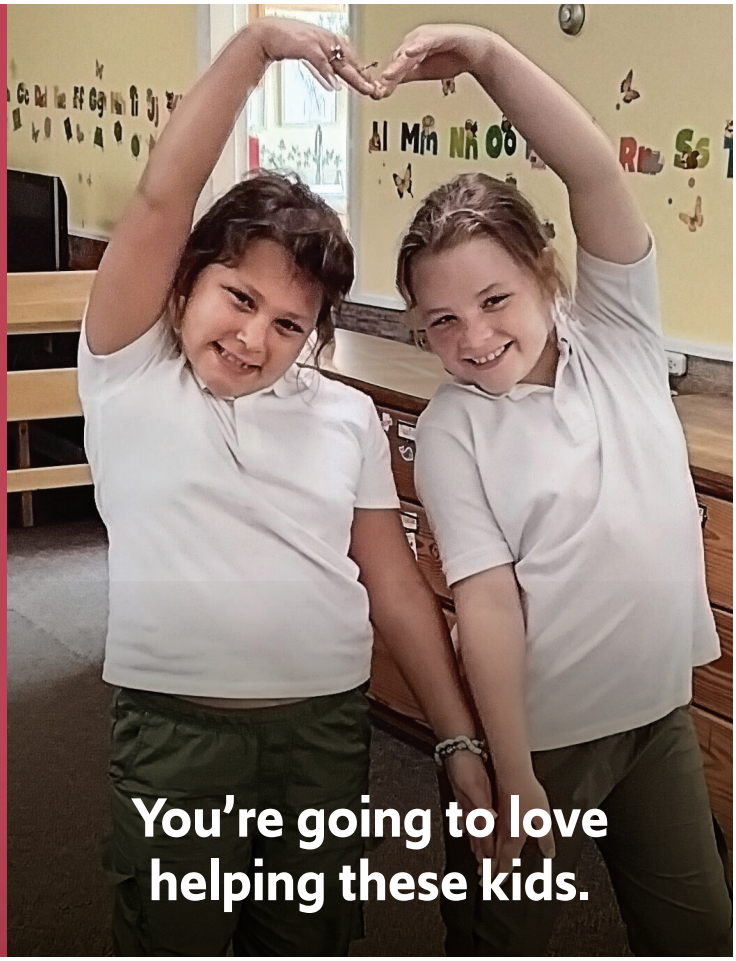

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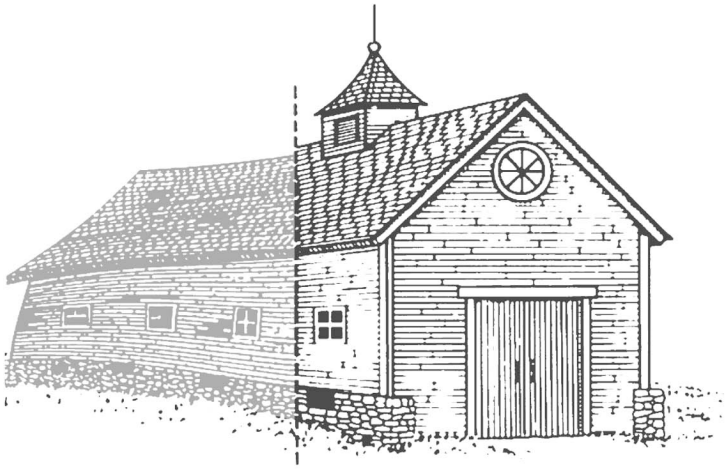

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SBW Launches Local Interest Podcast

The Savings Bank of Walpole (SBW) has launched *Local Interest*, a new podcast presenting practical financial information and conversations about the people, businesses, organizations, and events contributing to life in New Hampshire's Monadnock Region.

Hosted by Danielle Ruffo, Senior Vice President, Community Engagement and Marketing, and Dominic Perkins, Senior Vice President, Retail Administration, *Local Interest* will release two episodes per month. One episode will focus on a banking or financial topic, offering information listeners can put to work in their lives. The second episode will feature Dani and Dominic inviting guests to discuss topics of community interest, and how they affect the local economy.

"SBW is always looking for new ways to reach people where they are across the communities we serve," said Mark Bodin, President of SBW. "We're excited to bring topics worth discussing to life in a podcast format that's the right size for a person's commute or down time."

The first available episodes demonstrate the range of conversations listeners can expect and include: "Construction Loan Financing: Build Your Understanding," "More than a Shelter," "Commonsense Business Banking," "What Fraudsters Are Banking On. Even in the Monadnock Region," "History Is Closer Than You Think." the hosts are joined by Jenna Carroll of the Historical Society of Cheshire County for a conversation about how local history continues to shape the streets, communities and places Monadnock Region residents know today.

Future episodes of *Local Interest* will continue to alternate between banking topics and broader community conversations, giving listeners practical answers to financial questions while introducing them to local voices and issues that help define the region. Listeners can find current episodes wherever they get podcasts, on the SBW YouTube page at www.youtube.com/@savingsbankofwalpole, and at localinterestsbw.buzzsprout.com

I Was Cheated Out of a New England Winter

My wife, Shelly, and I recently moved to Walpole to retire. We were drawn to this community because of the wonderful people, its natural beauty and especially for its winter recreational opportunities.

Many of our retired friends living in Florida often say that winters in New England are depressing. For me however, no winter day will ever be depressing.

In December of 1956, I slammed into a tree while sledding and broke my femur. I was placed in traction, confined to a hospital bed and in late March I was released. When I returned home, winter had ended and for the rest of my childhood, I lived on my town's rope-tow hill skiing every afternoon from the first snow until late spring. Whenever perfect skiing conditions existed, my father cancelled his appointments, pulled me out of school and we'd head up to Vermont. Returning from skiing, my face fell into my dinner plate from both fatigue and satisfaction.

While I was cheated out of the winter of 1956-57, that painful experience enhanced my love for the outdoors and especially the onset of colder temperatures. As we enter this magical time of year, the scent of crisp cold air together with the smell of burning firewood fills my soul with joy.

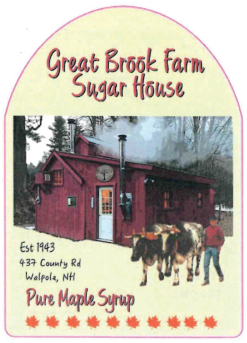
Shelly and I are eagerly looking forward to continuing our snowshoeing outings on the Hooper Golf Course, the Corridor 5 snowmobile artery, Reservoir Woods and especially at Distant Hill Nature Trails this winter.

-William Landon Farrell

William Landon Farrell is a retired Mathematics and Physics teacher. He now writes and works as a commercial aerial and landscape photographer. His wife Shelly is also a retired educator and is currently an accomplished pastel artist. They now enjoy living in Walpole, New Hampshire.

Below:
Walpole Village in Winter
Photograph by
William Landon Farrell





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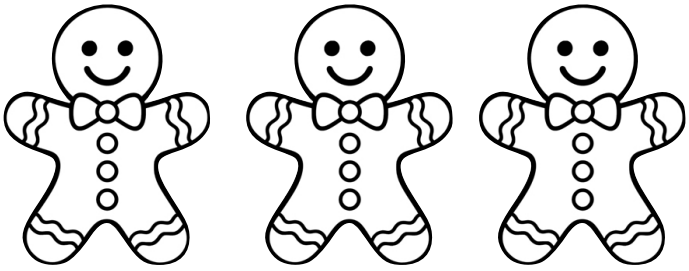
Walpole Police Report

The report for the period: October 1–31, was received by the CLARION on November 9. Documented are 319 entries — 73 traffic stops, and 246 "other activity." The October dispatch log shows substantial motor vehicle enforcement activity, particularly along NH Route 12, Main Street, and Killeen Street. Traffic stops occurred throughout the month, with several concentrated periods of enforcement. The report also documents ambulance calls, citizen assistance, suspicious activity investigations, motor vehicle accidents, alarms, and other police services.

Quoting further from the report, "NH Route 12 accounted for approximately 61% of identified traffic stops. Main Street was the second most frequent location. Together, these two roads accounted for approximately 75% of the stops. Several traffic stops resulted in arrests, while many were recorded as citations or warnings. The log does not consistently distinguish citations from warnings, so those outcomes should not be reported as separate verified totals. Locations with more than one traffic stop included: NH Route 12, including intersections - 43; Main Street, including Prospect Hill Road intersection - 10; Whitcomb Road, including intersections - 5; Killeen Street - 4; and, Church Street - 3.

Key findings for the month summarized: Traffic stops represented approximately 23% of. Key findings for the month summarized: Traffic stops represented approximately 23% of all published dispatch entries. Follow-up calls were the largest category of non-traffic-stop activity.. Medical calls and citizen assistance together accounted for 51 entries.. Suspicious activity investigations and animal complaints were also recurring demands on police services. The log includes a variety of enforcement, administrative, and community-service functions beyond traffic stops.

The 19 page report listing the 319 calls is linked from the CLARION website. -Ray Boas



Did You Know That...?

Explorations into Walpole People, Places & History with Ray Boas



…Walpole's Live Nativity has roots going back over 800 years? St. Francis of Assisi (the Patron Saint of Animals and the Environment) is credited with staging the first nativity scene in 1223. The only historical account we have of Francis' nativity scene comes from *The Life of St. Francis of Assisi* which was written by a Franciscan monk, St. Bonaventure (c1221-1274), around 1260 and published three years later.

At this time people for the most part could not read or write, nor did they understand Latin which was the language of the Church. According to Bonaventure's biography, St. Francis got permission from Pope Honorious III to set up a manger with hay and two live animals—an ox and an ass—in a cave in the Italian village of Grecio. He then invited the villagers to come gaze upon the scene he recreated as a stable setting with animals and humans cast in the Biblical roles to help explain the birth of Jesus to his followers. He preached to those assembled about "the babe of Bethlehem. Francis was supposedly so overcome by emotion that he couldn't say "Jesus.

A nativity scene is also known as a manger scene, crib, or crèche (crèche is a French word derived from the Latin cripia, or cribor). The scene traditionally includes the infant Jesus, Mary, Joseph, shepherds, three wisemen, sheep, angels and an ox and ass. This does not accurately display what is read in the gospels. There is no mention of an ox and ass, but the symbolism of their adoring the child came later with the ox representing patience and the ass humility. The Magi would not have been present at the birth. Thus often they are not included in the scene until the week after Christmas, or may be placed far from the main scene, symbolizing their journey. They then are advanced closer each day until Christmas.

Following World War II, live Nativities became increasingly visible in American cities. Life size fixed displays also appeared, and I fondly remember the one in the Village Center of my hometown in Wilton, Connecticut. Mass produced boxed Nativity sets (crèches) became staples of the Sears Christmas Wish Book, surging in popularity during the 1950s through the 1970s.

Walpole's Live Nativity dates to 1974 and was the vision of Betty Prentiss and Peggy Graves. Learning of similar pageantry in a nearby town these two ladies set to work. That hard work and dedication continued the tradition for decades. Some Walpole babies portraying baby Jesus have grown up to portray adult figures in the recreation of the Biblical event. In recent years others have "taken the helm" to continue what will remain a comforting tradition "as it was … and still is" in Walpole after over half a century.



ABOVE - An uncommon c1950s Nativity Set with large Manger and thirteen hand-painted figures. In its original box this set was sold by LYSEK'S, 200 Exchange Street, Chicopee, Massachusetts. Many sets were made featuring the same label on the box, but this set is uncommon due to its size. I can find no other examples of this larger set. The Manger is 20 inches wide, and the tall Magi stand 12 1/5 inches tall. I found this set in 2012, and the pieces were wrapped in 1988 newspapers.
-Ray Boas Collection

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The Nature of Walpole

Eloise Clark

December is the month we embrace evergreens and bring them into our homes as winter décor. They add cheer to our holidays during this bleak time of the year.

Eastern hemlock (Tsuga canadensis) and white pine (Pinus strobus) are the two most prevalent evergreen trees of our region. White pines are sun-loving and quickly colonize areas without trees. If you leave a corner of your yard unmown, white pines will soon take advantage of the full sunshine.

Hemlocks take the opposite approach. They are very shade tolerant and sprout beneath other trees. They patiently bide their time in the forest understory, slowly pushing upward toward the canopy. Hemlocks can reach heights over one hundred feet tall and four feet in diameter. This slow growing tree can live half a millenia.

Hemlocks are cloaked in short evergreen needles, making them easy to identify. The half inch long needles are flat and waxy. The waxy coating helps the needle retain moisture and resist drying from desiccating winds. Turn them over and you'll find two "white racing stripes" on the underside. These are rows of tiny stomata or pores . They absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The tree splits off the carbon atoms to use in the process of photosynthesis. It then stores or sequesters the carbon as wood, releasing oxygen atoms back into the atmosphere.

Hemlocks will grow in dark ravines and damp areas, as their shallow roots don't mind wet conditions. Hemlocks growing along stream edges shade waterways, keeping waters cooled from the summer sun. This favors cold water fish such as brook trout.

The dense foliage of hemlocks offers shelter for birds and other animals from wind and inclement weather, as well as cover from predators. Small hemlock cones are distinctive, picked apart by red squirrels and crossbills for the tiny seeds beneath each cone scale. Ruffed grouse feed on the buds.

A grove of hemlocks prevents other trees from growing beneath them because of their dense shade. They are the preferred wintering areas for white-tailed deer. Because of the density of the needles and branches, hemlocks intercept snow and keep it from reaching the ground. This makes it easier for deer to move around the "deer yards" and feed on the nutritious evergreen foliage.

The foliage and inner bark are favorite foods of porcupines in winter. Native Americans used the inner bark as well. They dried and pounded it into flour. The dark, flaky bark contains tannin. Hemlock trees were stripped of bark as tanneries consumed vast quantities for the purpose of tanning leather and making brown dye.



Above - The Illustrated London News, in 1848, showed Prince Albert and Queen Victoria around an evergreen tree popularizing the English custom for families to gather around the tree.

Below - Cones found on the Eastern Hemlock.



Hemlocks are not recommended for use as a Christmas tree. Each needle is attached to the twig on a very short stalk. When the stalks dry out, needles drop, carpeting the floor.

Despite their integral role in forest ecosystems and unusual longevity, we are losing Eastern hemlocks to the hemlock woolly adelgid, an aphid. This tiny invasive insect sucks sap from the needles. Eventually the leaves die and the tree becomes a ghostly skeleton of dead branches.

The loss of hemlocks will diminish the diversity of our forests, causing a cascade of effects on wildlife, from trout streams to tree tops. Whether animal, plant or pathogen, invasive species are relentlessly impacting our lands and waterways.

Hooper Institute

Our deepest gratitude to our lovely Walpole community, who helped us celebrate our centennial year! We finished out this year with an incredible evening at our Hooper 100 Year gala, celebrating with many of the community members who have supported our work over the years. Thank you to all who were able to attend, support, or donate to make this a wonderful evening.

We look forward to continuing to serve the Walpole community for many more years to come. We have an exciting year ahead of us on the heels of this milestone and cannot wait to share more about our programs and offerings in 2027. For now, we hope you will consider joining us as we vision and plan ahead. Our work is not possible without the support of our community and there are many meaningful ways to get involved, from joining our board, to becoming a member of the Friends of the Hooper Institute, or providing an end of year donation through our Giving Tuesday campaign. Your support helps our programs continue to thrive for another century.

-Greta (Drager) Vansickle



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Members of the Walpole Community Garden gather to celebrate and enjoy the evening together at the Hooper Gala.

Pinnacle View 4-H

On November 1st members of Pinnacleview 4-H attended the annual Cheshire County 4-H award ceremony in which many members were recognized for the past year of service and leadership in 4H. These members included Alanna Lee, Alyssa Frederic, Connor Frederic, Cindy Westover and The Roina Family. The following weekend Pinnacleview met and elected officers for the 2026-27 year. The elected officers are Alyssa Frederic President, Sophia Formica Vice President, Khloe Gauthier Secretary, Reagan Westover Treasurer, Connor Frederic Reporter and Harper Gauthier Scrapbook Keeper.

-Connor Frederic

Award Recipients include: Back Row (L to R) Allana Lee, Virginia Foote, Mike Roina, and Cindy Westover. Front Row (L to R) Connor Frederic, Sawyer Roina, and Al Frederic.



Holiday Tours to Enjoy

In the past dozen or so years I have ignited my holiday spirit by experiencing holiday tours in both Vermont and New Hampshire. Here are three I have enjoyed, and recommend. Links to their websites, and my travel writings documenting my trips may be found on the CLARION website homepage.

The Shires' Holiday Inn Tours 2026 - Saturday, December 5 and/or Saturday, December 12. More than three decades strong this tour is centered around Manchester, Vermont, Tour the inns with festive decorations at each establishment, savor local treats and cheerful beverages.

Okemo Valley Annual INNdulgence Tour of 2026 - Thirteen Inns, in a drivable range circling from Ludlow to Chester, Vermont, open their doors for a two-day open house. Visit each inn to enjoy their holiday décor and INNdulgent treats, Inns donate their food and hospitality so that all ticket proceeds are donated to a local non-profit. I have often split this into a door day excursion.

The 21st Annual Currier and Ives Cookie Tour - Saturday, December 12, from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm. Fourteen stops in the Monadnock region (including Jaffrey, Troy and Swanzey) may introduce to areas you have not before seen, and you enjoy treats and decorations along the way.

-Ray Boas



You are invited to participate in

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
Wednesday, Dec. 9; Thursday, Dec. 10; Friday, Dec. 11
Wednesday, Dec.16; Thursday, Dec. 17; Friday, Dec. 18
11 am - 2 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



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Circa 1984 with a Reuge Music Box that plays Silent Night and drives the turntable rotating the tree and figures. Overall about 11 1/2 inches tall and 8 inches in diameter. Eight carved figures around the base, carved candles and ornaments on the tree, and little carved toys under the tree itself. Two pieces are loose. Value $375 and up. Price to Walpole neighbors - $250 - Contact CLARION Publisher.

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WES Hosts Annual Career Day

By Emma Rennick and
Oliver Caron (6th grade)

On Friday October 23rd, 2026, Walpole Elementary School hosted their annual Career Day, organized by Mrs. Treat. Career Day is a day where a bunch of people come and talk about their jobs. Some of them don't but most vendors hand out goodies from their business.

Vendors and career presenters were set up both inside the gymnasium and outside. Some inside vendors that came included Saving Banks of Walpole, Dog Daze, State Farm, Watkins Tavern, Salon 488, and many more. Some of the setups outside included EE Houghton, NH State Trooper, Walpole Fire Department, TXN Land Management and ServPro. Most people especially enjoyed Matt Beam's station for Matt Beam Plumbing and Heating. You could make a water pipe, win prizes and so much more. The students at Walpole Elementary School are thankful for all the people that came.

Some of those interviewed for this article included Craig Vickers from State Farm Insurance, Walpole Creamery, and Nicole Glover from Dog Daze. Mr. Vickers was handing out bags from State Farm. Mr. Vickers said that the fun rate of Career Day was a 7/10 because he got to meet new people. Mrs. Glover from Dog Daze said that it was an 8/10 because she gets to meet new and interesting people. Ed from Walpole Creamery said that it was a 10/10.

Career Day was a great showcase of various career choices, especially locally, that some students hope to pursue in their future.

Walpole 8th Graders Attend Annual Field Trip to Gaines Farm

By William Beer (8th grade)

In 8th grade, we will have many field trips but there was one field trip that we were all super excited about: the Gaines Farm field trip. We left the school at 5:30 and we rode in a bus to Gaines Farm in Guilford, VT. We walked through the haunted corn maze in small groups. This is a corn maze that actors, terrifying costumes, hide in and they jump out to scare you. After the maze we also participated in a haunted tractor ride.

During the maze we walked through a path with people jumping out of the corn and jumpscaring us. There was this one person that started doing pushups in the middle of the path. There were people with fake knives, swords, belt grinders, chain saws and some other thing that they were chasing us with. There is one part where we walked through an outdoor haunted house and there were many people running through and chasing us with things.

The scariest part for Kelsey Beam was the clown with the chainsaw. "He was targeting me! His eyes were creepy," said Kelsey. "Everything about him was weird. I screamed."

The tractor ride was my favorite part of the trip. We went on a wagon that was pulled by a tractor. There were some parts with things like strobe lights and other things. There were also parts that were almost like a super small creepy village. They had people standing on little buildings, some people had things like a flame thrower, chain saws, grinders and sticks on fire. Also people came up on the wagon and were sprinting at us with chainsaws. Personally this one person kept coming for me and was putting the saw super close to my knee. One clown at the beginning of the ride had a clown horn and was honking it in peoples faces when they were scared. Overall it was a great time through the people chasing us with saws, and trying to get mentally prepared for people going to jumpscare us. This has been one of my favorite trips over the years.



Walpole Girls Soccer Wraps Season

By Ellie Griffin (7th grade) and Fin Aube (8th grade)

Walpole Girls soccer is coming to an end this November. The girls' last practice was on October 20. The team also had two more games and a tournament.

Their second to last game was on October 21 against Chesterfield. They won three to one, with Avery Hubbard with two goals and Maya Westover with one goal.

The last game was against Springfield on the 22 of October. Walpole won 2-1, scoring both goals in the last five minutes to secure the win. It was a very close game, because Springfield scored very early in the game. Julia Kobeski had a goal from the eighteen to make the tie. Then Maya Westover had the winning goal.

The Westmoreland Tournament was on the 24th and 25th of October. The girls played Vilas, Chesterfield, and Charlestown. They won 5-0 with Vilas, 2-1 with Chesterfield, and 1-0 with Charlestown. Avery Hubbard scored 3 and Maya Westover scored 2 goals when playing Vilas. Maya and Avery also both scored 1 goal against Chesterfield. When playing against Charlestown, Ellie Griffin scored the winning goal. The team got into the semi-finals, held on Sunday the 25th. They had to play Keene (A). Walpole lost 3-0, but made a good effort throughout the game. Overall, throughout the whole season (excluding the tournament), Walpole was undefeated. Walpole will miss all eighth graders, and can't wait for the 2027 soccer season.

Profile of Mr. Gagnon

By Maya Westover and Paisley Gardner (6th grade)

Mr. Gagnon has been teaching in Walpole for the last twelve years. While he has not always wanted to be a teacher like some staff members we've interviewed, he realized that he wanted to teach in his early twenties. He enjoys sharing things he is passionate about with kids and helping them become not only better writers but better people.

He had a couple of teachers that really inspired him when he was a student. In Manchester, Kyle McDonough was a huge inspiration for him (fun fact: he was friends with Adam Sandler in high school and the legend was that he was the inspiration for Happy Gilmore). At his college, several of his professors made a huge impact on him and made him realize how interesting and fun teaching could really be, especially when you teach something you were passionate about: Liz Ahl, Joe Monninger, Joe Mealey, Paul Rogalus. Finally, Jay Moskowitz, who passed away a few years ago, was an art history/first year seminar teacher he had for several classes in college that he absolutely loved and he inspired him to make the jump into teaching.

Teaching has taught him the importance of patience and grace. One of his favorite parts is joking around with kids. He also loves being able to teach students over the span of three and even four years.

He started working when he was in high school and has done a few different jobs. He worked at a car place that specialized in oil changes which wasn't his favorite job, but he worked with one of his best friends so it was fun. He worked many years in Maintenance at Dartmouth Hitchcock in Manchester, all throughout college. It was while working that job that he met his wife, who worked in the Medical Records department at the time.

The year before he started student teaching, he worked as a paraprofessional at Southside Middle School with EBD students (students with emotional/behavioral disorders). He was also a sports journalist for many years prior to teaching. He covered and reported on high school sports all over New Hampshire.He started Newspaper Club his first year in Walpole because he wanted to share his love of journalism with the students of Walpole. Jan Kobeski and Ray Boas both discussed with him early on the opportunity for students to write articles that would then be published in the town paper, The Walpole Clarion.

"It's such a wonderful opportunity for students to have an audience for their writing and to share with the community all the wonderful things we do in Walpole Elementary School," said Gagnon.

Walpole Chicks Stop School Store

By Emma Rennick and
Paisley Gardner (6th grade)

This fall, the LEAP program began the Walpole Chicks Stop School Store. The purpose of this store, aside from providing delicious food, beverages, and supplies, is for students to learn real world skills. "The idea for the school store was for people that need to learn real world skills and such as skills that need to handle money," said LEAP teacher Heather Brown. "It is for students to learn how to serve others. The purpose of this was to learn how to do hard work and not give up even when things are hard."

So far, it's going really well. The school store is starting the process of making the snacks for the staff along with putting orders together. The hope is to expand the store so that everybody in the building can come and visit the store to buy things that they want.





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The Walpole Players

The Walpole Players' 2026 Fall Production of *I Don't Have a Clue* by Craig Sodaro was one hecky-poo of a party! Featuring a 23-member cast of fresh faces and longtime Players, this fast-paced mystery-comedy offered something for everyone. Local musician Mark Stevens provided live music, while Walpole Cub Scout Pack #299 ran intermission concessions.

The highlight of the weekend was Sunday's sit-down dinner show, hosted by the Walpole Junior Players with table centerpieces crafted by the FM High School Floriculture class. Guests enjoyed a buffet prepared by local favorite Chef Luca Paris and his team at the Walpole Grocery—complete with Speakeasy Salad, Braised Bootlegger Chicken Cacciatore, and Bonnie & Clyde Potatoes—while taking in flashy 1920s costumes and nonstop physical comedy.

Thanks to a 50/50 Mystery Card Raffle held at each performance, the production raised $650 to split between the Fall Mountain Food Shelf and Our Place Drop-In Center. We also extend a huge thank you to Mascoma Bank for their generous grant supporting local arts and bringing live theater to the Helen Miller Theater stage.

Bringing this show to life was a true community collaboration across many local groups. In a world dominated by digital media, working side by side keeps us grounded and connected to the neighbors right here in our town.

-Jenny Plante



Local Author's New Book

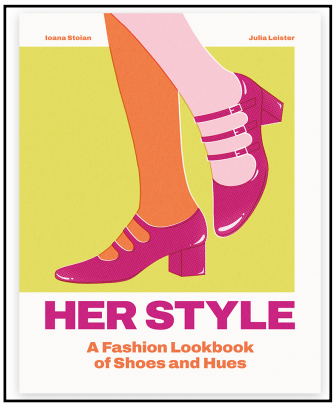
Did you know printing and publishing were once a big business in Walpole? In 1793 a printing office and bookstore opened at the corner of Main and High Streets. Its weekly newspaper, the *Farmer's Weekly Museum*, was read from Maine to Georgia. The business was also known for printing many books in early America. The *Museum*'s publisher, David Carlisle, owned the Buffum House, at the corner of Main and Middle Streets.

More than two centuries later, we're proud to carry on the tradition of book publishing doors down the street from where Carlisle lived. Curious Bird Books, run by Ioana Stoian and Eric Gjerde, is a small independent press focusing on beautiful children's books. Many of you know our two children, George and Lydia, who not only inspire the books but actively participate in their production.

Looking for a local gift this holiday season? We have you covered. *Her Style: A Fashion Lookbook of Shoes and Hues* pairs women's shoes with an unexpected world of color, brought to life through retro-style illustrations reminiscent of vintage fashion posters.

Featuring nearly 30 pairs of shoes, including slingbacks, sneakers, moccasins, and mules, the collection explores footwear in shades such as chartreuse, taupe, burgundy, and ecru. A final spread shares fun facts about each of the colors featured in the book. Printed and bound in the USA, this hardcover costs $11.99. Find it, and our other illustrated books for children at; www.curiousbirdbooks.com

-Ioana Stoian



Thomas Nast first drew Santa Claus in 1863, but his most famous drawing, "Merry Old Santa Claus", published in an 1881 edition of *Harper's Weekly* immortalized Santa Claus' current look as a rotund, cheerful Santa with a full white beard, pipe, and wearing a red suit



Scouting for Food Thank You

Walpole Cub Scout Pack 299 and Walpole Boy Scout Troop 299 would like to thank everyone for their generosity during our Scouting for Food events. We collected roughly 1300 pieces of food and $4504 in monetary donations. These donations go directly to the Fall Mountain Food Shelf. Thank you all.

-Debra Pawelczyk

Women of Walpole

Women of Walpole met Wednesday evening November 18 at Aylene Wozmak's home and were treated to a terrific presentation by Krista Rule, the program administrator for Fall Mountain Friendly Meals. We meet next month for our holiday potluck lunch on Wednesday 16 December at noon at Loribeth Robare's home. As always details will appear in your member emails.

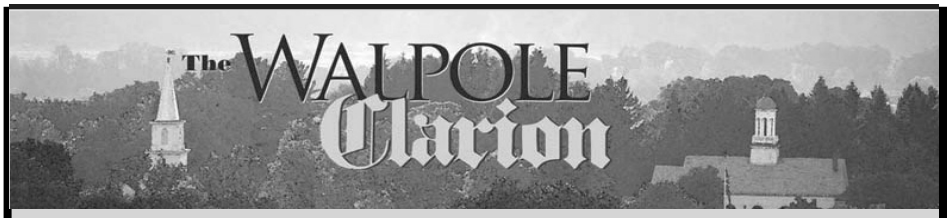
Women of Walpole (a collegial and educational nonprofit organization) welcomes any woman living or working in Walpole to join us. Guests are always welcome to attend a meeting to meet members and find out what we have planned for the year. If you would like to learn more or be put on our email distribution please contact Mary Feeney (508-397-2583) email at WOWalpole2025@gmail.com

-Mary Feeney

PICTURE YOUR MESSAGE HERE



Contact the Community Support the Community



FROM THE CLARION

A sampling of way we've reported in more than 15 years of publication:

One Year Ago (December 2025) - Did you know that the modern Christmas tree tradition, with its ornamentation, originated in Germany in the 16th century?

Three Years Ago (December 2023) - - The Monadnock Conservancy finalized the purchase of a conservation easement covering 7.3 acres of farm land in Walpole. This land is actively farmed by the owners of Pete's Stand that has been in business in Walpole for three generations. The purchase of this conservation easement forever restricts the use of this land to farming and undeveloped open space.

Five Years Ago (December 2021) - The 2021 Century Farm Award was presented to Twin Spruce Farm and the McGill family at the NH State Grange banquet on Friday, October 22, 2021. Twin Spruce Farm is a multi-purpose operation, raising replacement heifers and producing hay crops, cordwood and maple syrup.

Seven Years Ago (December 2019) - The Walpole Fire-EMS was presented the EMS Unit of the Year award for 2019 at The Capitol Center for the Arts in Concord

Nine Years Ago (December 2017) - he Monadnock Conservancy was given a 95.4-acre parcel of land from Walpole resident, Jane Skofield, that abuts Hooper Forest. The property offers incredible plant and tree diversity, and also provides key habitat for wildlife.

Eleven Years Ago (December 2015) - Walpole students scored higher proficiency levels in mathematics and English Language Arts reading than that of the other Fall Mountain District schools and overall state averages.

Thirteen Years Ago (November 2013) - The Congregational Church faced structural issues. Temporary steel support posts were inserted at the weakened timber joints, and difficult permanent repairs planned with an estimated cost of $106,162..

The Walpole Clarion ON-LINE

Would you like to read or share your Clarion on-line? Would you like to receive Clarion reminders of closing dates or events? Then, head to https://thewalpoleclarion.com and scroll down on the right to "Follow this Blog" and sign up..

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And, as it approaches, best wishes for . . .



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A monthly for the Walpole Community

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January 2027 Deadline - December 21

Ray Boas: Layout & Design

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PUBLISHERS CORNER

Sunday evening the 22nd, and I have completed the December layout with only these words left to go. I enjoy balancing out these pages for you hoping the pages present a pleasing balance of news, images, and advertisements. Time and thought goes into it. I am fortunate to have many projects "in the works" so if I get hung up on a page, I may head into my bookshop, work on something else, but all the while thinking of the CLARION pages I wish to pleasingly finish. I love it.

Hard, no impossible, to believe 2026 is about over. I trimmed down my travels this year, but only as to distance from home. I have not had the time to write about all my adventures on "Shunpiking with Ray," but notes and drafts are in process to eventually share on-line. My goal for "nights on the road" was met, and soon 2027 journeys and adventures will be planned. I have as much fun with the planning as the execution. And, love to learn from everything I do.

As you also enter a new year may I recommend you reward yourself as well with enjoyable "time offs," whether at home or on the road — remember "back roads" preferred, and it is the journey and not necessarily the destination. If intrigued with something along the way - STOP.

MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR.

-Ray Boas, Publisher

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This year's **Good List** is a long one.

Neighbors who help without being asked. Volunteers who give their time and imagination. Businesses that give back.

There's a lot of good happening in the Monadnock Region. And so many people to thank for it.

All of us at Savings Bank of Walpole are grateful for the local people who give so much of themselves to improve life for everyone. Thank you for being here for each other.

Happy Holidays from Savings Bank of Walpole!



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Again sharing my favorite Christmas Forest.
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