

Surrounded by love, 13-year-old Webster athlete determined to score victory over cancer

BY WALTER BIRD

Last year, 13-year-old Adrian Roman's youth football team went undefeated and won the Super Bowl. As a two-way player, a running back on offense and a safety on defense, he enjoyed a pretty successful campaign. A pick-6 interception on defense and a couple of touchdowns on offense were among the highlights. He was certainly looking forward to one last year with the team this year before heading into high school next year.

On a recent early Wednesday night, the sun shining its light down and temperatures comfortably in the low 70s, Adrian sat in a wheelchair, a mask covering his mouth and nose, in a grassy area underneath a large tree not far from the field where his younger brother Alex was practicing football.

Adrian's mother Katlynn and father Hector were with him. His younger sister, 7-year-old Bella, twirled around the tree, at times leaning against her mom.

If life had gone as planned, Adrian, an athlete with a burning passion for many sports, probably would have been at football practice. When football season was done, he'd be gearing up for



Adrian Roman. Photo by Walter Bird

basketball in the winter, followed by baseball and track and field in the spring.

But life hasn't gone as planned. Not one bit.

Earlier this year, around May, he complained to his parents about pain in his right leg. The family assumed it was a sports injury, given he is always playing one sport or the other on a team or with friends. Maybe, Katlynn suggested, it was a pulled muscle.

Then, one day in July, Adrian

came into their house from playing outside with friends. The pain was unbearable.

"I ended up taking him to the hospital because he was crying," Katlynn said.

Initial tests led to news Adrian and his family never expected to hear: Doctors believed he had osteosarcoma, an aggressive form of bone cancer, most common in

ROMAN

continued on page 2



Charlton residents push Select Board to reconsider Flock license plate readers

BY RILEY FRANKIAN

A debate over privacy, public safety and government oversight of automated license plate readers has intensified in Charlton, with more than 160 residents signing a petition calling on town officials to reconsider the community's use and planned expansion of Flock Safety cameras.

The issue came before the Charlton Select Board Sept. 8 and again on Sept. 22 after resident Michelle Chalmers raised concerns about the town's use of Flock automatic license plate reader, (ALPR) tech-

nology.

The Select Board tabled the matter to be further considered at the upcoming Special Town Meeting, which is scheduled for Monday, Oct. 19, at 7 p.m. at the Charlton Middle School Auditorium, 2 Oxford Rd. A citizen's petition regarding ALPRs is included on this meeting's warrant as Article 15.

At the Sept. 8 meeting, Chalmers told the select board that approxi-

CHARLTON

continued on page 3

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ROMAN

continued from page 1

children, teens, and young adults between the ages of 10 and 30.

They were referred to UMass Memorial Children's Medical Center in Worcester. There, Katlynn said, everything was a whirlwind.

"Everything happened so quick," she said. "Biopsies, scans, MRIs. He had them all."

The biopsy, she said, confirmed it: Just one year into his teens, going into his eighth grade at school. Adrian had osteosarcoma.

"It was devastating. It was awful," Katlynn said. "We never would

have thought. He's so athletic. This kid plays all these sports."

Asked what it was like learning he had cancer, Adrian said, "It was shocking. I didn't expect it. I was scared. I didn't know what it was."

His answer to the next question, however, may just be even worse news for his cancer.

"No," he said when asked if he was still scared. No hesitation. No doubt.

"He has an amazing support system," Katlynn said. "We have had a lot of people rally around him. He's got a lot of support from the town, from sports in general."

Said Adrian: "A lot of people have been really supportive. It



Clockwise from top: Members of Adrian's Oxford football team join him and his family during the Cops for Kids with Cancer check presentation on Thursday, Sept. 17, at the Oxford Police Station. Photo by Katlynn Roman; Adrian Roman with his father Hector, his mother Katlynn, and Bella, his younger sister; Adrian's Number 28 on a team flag. Photos by Walter Bird

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makes me keep going."

His family keeps going, too. Right now, Adrian is in his second of six rounds of chemotherapy, each round lasting five weeks.

In October, he will undergo limb-sparing surgery, the complex removal of bone to remove the cancer. There is the possibility of amputation if the initial surgery is unsuccessful. The goal is to prevent the cancer, which Katlynn said doctors believe is localized for now, as opposed to metastasized, from spreading to Adrian's lungs.

Asked what he felt when learning he could lose his leg, Adrian's defiance appeared again: "I'm just going to have to lose my leg. If that's the thing that's going to make me feel better, I'll just live with a prosthetic. I'll play sports with a prosthetic."

His family has put Adrian's care in the hands of Dr. Stefanie Lowas, Interim Division Chief of Pediatric Hematology-Oncology at UMass Memorial Children's Medical Center.

While not providing a prognosis, Lowas said that, for pediatric patients with the type of localized cancer Adrian has, about 75 percent who undergo surgery and chemo do not suffer a recurrence.

Still, Lowas acknowledged, "It's hard. There's no other way to put it. But kids are so resilient. Kids will take things that would put another adult on their back. [Adrian] has been a trooper."

She credited Adrian's family and friends for being so supportive.

For his part, Adrian maintains a positive attitude, even if he does wish he were able to be out on a football field and not just watching his brother. The family is trying to remain positive as well, Katlynn said. Hector is out of work through the Family Medical Leave Act, caring for the couple's two younger children while Katlynn accompanies her oldest son to the hospital multiple times a week (Adrian has an older sister Beatriz).

"It's hard," Katlynn acknowledged of the larger toll the illness has taken on their lives. "We were already struggling and this was kind of, boom, here you go. We still have months of treatments, which are in-patient most of the time, so

there's food, parking fees, the gas going in and out, and our bills."

They're not alone in their fight to save Adrian.

Beatriz started a GoFundMe Page, Adrian's Fight Against Osteosarcoma, for her brother. The effort had raised north of \$27,000 as of Monday, Sept. 28. There is a stated goal of \$50,000.

In addition, the family received a \$5,500 donation through the organization Cops for Kids with Cancer, thanks in part to the efforts of three of Adrian's coaches, who just happen to be police officers: Lt. Travis Gould and Officer D'Vonte Peters with the Douglas Police Department and Webster Police Officer Robert Rockwood. The three of them sponsored Adrian's application, filed by Jenna Scott, Pediatric Clinical Social Worker at UMass Memorial Children's Medical Center. The foundation, along with members of Adrian's football team, presented the check to Adrian and his family during a ceremony at the Oxford Police Department on Thursday, Sept. 17.

Gould has been Adrian's coach since he took over as head coach of Oxford-Webster Pirates Football.

"Just a hard-working kid, an energizer bunny," Gould said of Adrian. "Gives you 100 percent

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ROMAN

continued on page 4

CHARLTON*continued from page 1*

mately 160 signatures had been collected from residents concerned about the cameras.

"The response was overwhelmingly supportive and crossed political lines," Chalmers said. "Residents may have different reasons; privacy, government overreach, data sharing, costs, constitutional concerns or lack of public discussion."

"But they do agree that a technology that is capable of recording and searching our movement should not operate or expand without transparency and democratic oversight."

Chalmers emphasized that her concerns were not directed at the Charlton Police Department itself.

"This is not an attack on the Charlton Police Department," she said. "We can support our police and do, while still requiring oversight of powerful technology."

Flock's Falcon cameras are designed primarily to capture vehicle information as vehicles pass a camera. Flock says its cameras capture between six and 12 images of a vehicle during a session and can identify information such as license plates, vehicle make, model, color and other characteristics.

Chalmers voiced her concerns

about the technology from a privacy perspective.

"These cameras do not begin by recording a person suspected of a crime," she said. "They record data on all of us, every passing vehicle - its plate, location, time - and makes those records searchable afterwards."

Her comments came shortly after a Massachusetts court ruling concerning the state's use of ALPR technology.

On Sept. 2, a Suffolk Superior Court judge ruled that Massachusetts State Police could not withhold records concerning the locations of its ALPR cameras and audit information showing when, why and how frequently officers searched ALPR databases. The ruling followed a yearlong public-records dispute involving the ACLU of Massachusetts.

"The public has a right to basic information about how government surveillance operates," Chalmers said.

Chalmers asked the select board to place the issue on the next available agenda, publicly announce the meeting date, and refrain from expanding the system, adding cameras, renewing the contract or authorizing additional discretionary spending before the public discussion.

The board subsequently placed the matter on its Sept. 22 agenda.

Chalmers returned to the issue Sept. 22, again emphasizing the number of residents who had signed the petition.

"More than 160 residents signed the petition requesting action on these cameras," she said. "Those residents represent the first perspectives; this is not simply my personal concern. It is a community request for transparency, accountability, and a decision by our elected officials."

Chalmers said town counsel had determined that decisions involving the contracts fell under the authority of the select board.

"The responsibility for deciding whether Charlton continues, expands or discontinues the system therefore rests with you," she said.

She acknowledged that license plate readers can have legitimate law-enforcement uses.

"We recognize that license plate readers may assist police in certain investigations," Chalmers said. "This effort is truly not about opposing our police department or dismissing legitimate public safety needs."

Her concern, she said, was whether those benefits justified the collection of information involving people who were not suspected of crimes.

"It is about whether the benefit of the system justifies automatically collecting and making searchable

the vehicle location information of people who are overwhelmingly suspected of no crime."

According to Chalmers, Charlton currently has four operational Flock cameras and a separate agreement for four additional cameras that, according to the police department, have not yet been received or installed.

"The board has an opportunity to act before the system doubles in size," she said.

Chalmers asked the board to discontinue Charlton's use of Flock, stop installation of the four additional cameras, prevent automatic renewal of the contract, and direct the town administrator and town counsel to investigate legally and financially appropriate options for termination and possible refunds.

"Tonight we are asking the board to respond with a clear and recorded decision," she said.

Other Charlton residents also spoke against continuing or expanding the Flock system. Christopher Willow raised concerns about cybersecurity, arguing that the cameras and their associated data could be vulnerable to digital attacks. Brian Powers began his remarks by emphasizing his support for the police department.

"I want to say clearly that our local police department is fantastic, and I deeply appreciate the work they do to keep our community

safe," Powers said. He then argued, however, that residents should have been more involved in the original decision to deploy the cameras.

"I want to acknowledge that most locals don't even know that we already have six operational Flock cameras hidden across town," he said, identifying locations including the library, Stafford Street, Route 169 near Amazon and the Mass Pike.

Powers described the growth of ALPR technology as a broader concern, arguing that what began as an investigative tool has developed into a larger interconnected system.

"What started as an isolated safety tool has rapidly scaled into a massive centralized corporate surveillance network; and now we are talking about expanding our local footprint even further," he said.

He also raised questions about the town's contractual and financial exposure.

"I'm here to address the immediate operational, financial, and legal liabilities this specific contract brings to town," Powers said.

Powers pointed to nearby communities that he said had discontinued or suspended relationships with Flock, including Southbridge, Auburn, Douglas, Grafton and

CHARLTON*continued on page 5*

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Local cultural councils seek applications

The Local Cultural Councils in Charlton, Dudley and Webster are accepting proposals from individuals, schools, and organizations for community-based arts, humanities, and science programs for 2027. The deadline to apply for a grant is 11:59 p.m.

on October 15.

The Mass Cultural Council (MCC) is a state agency that allocates funds to all 351 municipalities in the Commonwealth through 329 local and regional councils. The MCC determines the annual funding to each Local Cultural Council (LCC) based a formula that uses the community population and equalized property values: "The state property valuation helps balance allocations relative to local wealth and resources."

The FY27 allocation for Charlton is \$10,500, Dudley's is \$12,000, and Webster's is \$17,200. Most awards are in the \$500 to \$750 range, although

there are exceptions. Most LLC grants are reimbursement-based, which means the applicant expends their own money and then submits paperwork for reimbursement. Charlton, however, provides direct grants.

Projects that have been funded include live music, art exhibits, festivals, school field trips, short-term artist residencies, STEM-based projects, performances, craft workshops, and lectures.

All applications must be submitted online through the MCC portal. A description of the program, LCC contact information, FAQs, and what each town funded in FY 2026 can be found at massculturalcouncil.org. *

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ROMAN
continued from page 2

every practice, every game."

Sponsoring Adrian's grant application was an easy decision for Gould, who said the league has rallied around the youngster. One parent designed a flag bearing Adrian's number 28, which is carried out on the field along with the team flag for every game.

The team has gotten off to a

strong start, but Adrian is missed, Gould said, noting he came in his wheelchair to the team's first practice this season.

"Everybody was around him," Gould said.

"When it's personal and somebody you know it hits different," he said. "When you have the [police] uniform on, you can make yourself numb. It's easier to deal with things. But when something happens at home or to someone you know, on a personal level, it's a



Letter to the editor

October celebrates White Cane Day

October is known for being the month of Halloween, pumpkin carving, and bobbing for apples. But would you like to know what is really spooky? Not knowing that White Cane Safety Day is celebrated every October 15, a date that was proclaimed to honor the significance of the white cane by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

A white cane is a mobility tool that provides individuals with low vision, vision impairment, and total blindness with safety and independence. For example, the cane allows the user to preview their walking path, detecting bumps, potholes, or dropoffs before the individual's foot detects these dangers. Additionally, the white cane allows community members to be aware of their fellow neighbor's needs when in

public spaces. A driver will know a pedestrian may need more time at a crosswalk when they are holding a cane, or a fellow shopper will realize someone may need extra room to navigate a crowded aisle of the grocery store.

So, this October, while you are keeping an eye out for ghosts, goblins, and your favorite candy, be sure to keep an eye out for the white cane, too. Recognizing what it represents is a simple step toward creating safer, more accessible communities where people who are blind or visually impaired can move and travel with greater independence.

*Michela Meaney
Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist (COMS)
Oxford*

lot tougher."

In her role as a social worker at UMass, Scott does what she can to help families, including applying for grants. She said it was clear Adrian had a strong support system.

"He has the community behind him," she said. "He's ever clearly loved. We extend our thanks to the police officers who made this happen and we appreciate Adrian's story being highlighted."

As fundraising efforts continue

and Adrian and his family wage their battle against the cancer that has robbed him of precious time as a teenager, Adrian's resolve remains unbroken.

"Watching [my brother] practice and watching my friends practice and play, I sometimes sit and think that could be me," he said. "But I'm trying to stay positive. I'm not giving up. I'm not giving up at all." *

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CHARLTON

continued from page 3

Boylston.

"If our closest neighboring towns have determined that Flock is a liability, Charlton must ask, why are we doubling down by expanding it?" Powers said.

He also urged the select board to have town counsel examine the contract before the town moves forward.

"Because Flock uses uniform, boilerplate agreements nationwide, the contracts that Southbridge and Auburn found to be unacceptable are likely the exact same contracts that Charlton has signed," Powers said.

"We need our town council to review this immediately before we deepen our financial and legal exposure."

Powers also cited claims about potential errors in automated vehicle identification and their consequences for police investigations. He said independent audits had identified instances in which vehicle reads could contain significant errors.

"I strongly support efficient public safety, but tools of this magnitude require deep public debate, clear metrics of success, and strict oversight," Powers said.

He asked the board to pause expansion, consider a moratorium on the existing cameras and direct town counsel to review the contract.

Another Charlton resident, Zach Stiffler focused on civil liberties and the Fourth Amendment.

"I'm here to ask the select board to terminate its contract with Flock and remove all existing cameras," Stiffler said.

Stiffler argued that Charlton's crime rate should be considered when determining whether the town needs a permanent system capable of recording vehicle movements.

"Charlton already has one of the lowest crime rates in the state," he said. "So, before we create a permanent infrastructure for tracking vehicles, recording the movements of innocent residents which can be accessed not only by local agencies but federal agencies, some of which are actively engaged in dismantling civil liberties, we should ask two simple questions: is this level of surveillance truly necessary in a town with an admirably low crime rate? And more importantly, does the potential harm to innocent citizens outweigh its benefits?"

Stiffler also cited cases from outside Massachusetts in which he said people had been affected by ALPR systems.

He cited Lindsay Isaacs of Florida, Eva Pizzarelli of Rhode Island, or Christianna Elser of Colorado.

"These are just the first instances in which individuals have suffered

despite law enforcement acting in good faith; and I believe if mass surveillance becomes the norm, it is reasonable to assume it will not be the last."

"A cursory Google search will provide no shortage of examples including four that have occurred in Massachusetts," he added.

"The erosion of the Fourth Amendment is no longer a hypothetical concern," he said. "It is occurring in real time and affecting innocent citizens."

No members of the public who spoke during the Sept. 22 discussion expressed support for continuing the Flock system, but police officials offered a different perspective on how the technology works and why the department uses it.

"The technology takes six still images per second," Lieutenant Anthony Gribbons said. "It is not a continuous video feed. Sometimes if a vehicle is traveling too fast, it does not catch it."

Flock's own description of its LPR technology states that cameras generally capture six to 12 images of a vehicle during a session, rather than continuously recording video.

Gribbons spoke in defense of the ALPRs. "It's set up on an algorithm, it works on the algorithm," Gribbons said. "It's not a recording; it doesn't record voice."

Chief of Police Daniel Dowd also spoke in support of the system. "It gives us a better chance of finding a missing person, finding an elderly person with dementia," Dowd said.

During the discussion, as an example of the technology's public safety value, members of the board referenced an incident involving a report of a possible shooter traveling toward Bay Path High School. Board members said Flock cameras helped law enforcement identify and locate the suspect's vehicle, allowing officers to detain the individual before a shooting occurred.

Some of the discussions surrounding Flock involved distinctions between the different types of cameras offered by the company.

Charlton officials said the town's contract involves Flock Falcon license plate reader cameras, which should not be confused with the Condor model.

Falcon cameras are designed to capture vehicle information as vehicles pass. Flock says its LPR cameras can identify license plates as well as characteristics such as a vehicle's make, model and color. Its Condor model is a video-camera system that is capable of live and recorded video, remote pan-tilt-zoom controls and digital zoom.

That distinction is significant because some of the more expansive capabilities discussed by critics, including continuously recorded video and remotely controlled camera views, relate to Flock's video products rather than the Fal-

con LPR system that the Charlton contract includes.

At the center of the disagreement is how Charlton should balance the investigative benefits of ALPR technology against concerns about privacy, data retention, information sharing and government oversight.

The cameras are designed to collect information about vehicles passing their locations, rather than specifically targeting people suspected of crimes. But because vehicles can be identified by license plate and other characteristics, critics argue that the resulting database can reveal patterns of where vehicles have traveled.

Supporters of the technology, meanwhile, point to its investigative value. Rather than relying solely on eyewitness accounts or manually searching hours of conventional surveillance footage, police can search ALPR data for vehicles matching information

connected to an investigation.

The Massachusetts court ruling cited by Chalmers adds another layer to the debate. The Sept. 2 decision concerned records maintained by Massachusetts State Police, not specifically Charlton's Flock system, but it addressed public access to information about government use of ALPR technology. The court ruled that camera-location information and audit records showing when, why and

how often officers searched the database were not exempt from disclosure under the public-records law provisions at issue.

For Charlton, the immediate question is not whether ALPR technology exists, but whether and under what conditions the town should continue using it.

After hearing from residents,

CHARLTON

continued on page 7



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BY LEE-ANN BARKHOUSE

As we settle into the fall season, calendars start filling up with family dinners, community events, and holiday plans. Just a reminder that we've all heard the advice to avoid politics, religion, and money in polite conversation. Of course, those subjects still come up, especially with people we know well. Most of us have been asked a question we'd rather not answer or drawn into a debate we didn't intend to have. Here are a few ways to handle those moments gracefully.

Q. Are politics, religion, and money still considered off limits?

A Not always. A thoughtful conversation with a friend is different from putting someone on the spot at a dinner

party. Pay attention to the setting and the people involved. If someone seems reluctant to join in, move on.

Q. A family member often asks what I paid for things or how much money I make. They start with, “If you don’t mind me asking,” but later make comments about my spending or income. How can I respond tactfully?

A It's okay to say that you do mind. Try, "I'd rather not get into the price, and I'm happy with my purchase." If they ask about your income, you can say, "I prefer to keep that private." Say it pleasantly, then move the conversation along. If they keep asking, you don't need a new explanation. "I'd rather not discuss it" is enough.

Q How do I disagree with someone without sounding disrespectful?

A Let them finish before you respond and make sure you understand what they mean. You might say, “I can see why you feel strongly about that. I see it differently.” Then share your view without assuming you know their reasons or trying to win them over. A question such as “What led you to that opinion?” can keep the conversation going. “How could you believe that?” usually shuts it down. And if neither of you changes your mind, it’s perfectly fine to agree to disagree.

Q What if someone won't drop a subject I don't want to discuss?

A Be a little more direct: “I know this matters to you, but I prefer to not discuss.” Then change the subject. If they bring it up again, it’s fine to excuse yourself.

ETIQUETTE TIP OF THE MONTH

“If you don’t mind me asking” can be a warning that a personal question is coming. If you’re on the receiving end, take a moment before answering. It’s perfectly fine to say, “Actually, I’d rather keep that private,” and move on. You don’t owe anyone a reason.

If you're the one asking, be prepared to hear no. Accept the answer with a warm "Of course," and change the subject. Respecting someone's privacy helps them feel at ease with you, even when the conversation takes an unexpected turn.

Until next month, be kind, be

thoughtful, and remember that the smallest acts of consideration often leave the greatest impression.

Warm regards,
Lee-Ann

Have a situation you'd like help with? Write in or email (info@investinuma.com) and your question may be featured in a future column. Let's build a kinder, more respectful world, one interaction at a time.

Lee-Ann Barkhouse is the founder of Invest in U, where she helps individuals and organizations build confidence, professionalism, and meaningful connections. She is a certified etiquette trainer, board-certified health & wellness coach, and workshop facilitator who inspires people to communicate with confidence, strengthen relationships, and show up as their best selves. Learn more at www.investinumacom.com. ★

Spotted Lanternfly lands in Dudley

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) has notified the Dudley Agricultural Advisory Commission that their survey team followed up on reports and confirmed that an infestation of the invasive insect species Spotted Lanternfly has been located in Dudley.

Residents and municipal staff may see surveyors from MDAR and/or the USDA checking trees in town to determine the extent of the infestation.

The Spotted Lanternfly damages plants and trees by piercing the bark and sucking the sap.

This pest has been found on nearly 100 different types of plants and trees. They include birch, black walnut, poplar, tree of heaven, Asiatic bittersweet, highbush blueberry, lilac, mulberry, rose, staghorn sumac, sycamore, willow, Virginia creeper, apple trees, peach trees, and maple trees.

The Spotted Lanternfly may also interfere with outdoor recreation if

the infestations reach high levels. Adult Spotted Lanternflies may swarm in late summer and fall. The insects do not bite or sting but are known to be a nuisance when they gather in large numbers and emit a sticky, sugary waste product called honeydew.

To report a Spotted Lanternfly sighting, go to: massnrc.org/pests/slfreport.aspx

More information on ways to manage an infestation: mass-nrc.org/pests/linkeddocuments/



Adult lanternflies on a tree trunk. Photo courtesy of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

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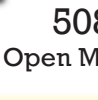


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Nine ballot questions to appear on November ballots

Published by the Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin's Election Division office, the official 2026 Information for Voters book (also known as the Red Book) was recently mailed to each voter's residential address as well as public locations throughout the state.



The Red Book contains information on each of the nine statewide questions that will appear on the November 3, 2026, State Election ballot. These nine binding questions are the most that voters have ever been asked to consider. Included in the publication is a summary of each proposal, the full text of the proposed/existing law, statements describing the effect

of a yes or a no vote, and brief arguments for and against each question.

Limited additional copies of the Red Book may be available at city and town halls, at some libraries, or by calling Galvin's Elections Division at 800.462.8683 or Citizen Information Service at 800.392.6090.

Question 1: Expanding the Public Records Law

Question 2: Collective Bargaining for CPCS Employees

Question 3: State Primary Elections

Question 4: Election Day Registration

Question 5: State Revenue Limit & Rebate

Question 6: Natural Resource Conservation Fund

Question 7: Single Family Homes

Question 8: Prohibit Retail Sale of Adult Recreational Use Marijuana

Question 9: Firearms Regulation

With so many questions, ballots in most communities are expected to be two to three pages long. The length of each community's ballot will depend on the number of offices and candidates running in that community, whether the ballot must be printed in more than one language, and any local questions that may be added to the ballot by

the city or town. Because of the complexity of the questions, Galvin encourages voters to take notes

in the Red Book and bring it with them when they go to the polls. Be informed. Take time to read

each question and understand its impact. And then go vote on Tuesday, November 3. *

CHARLTON

continued from page 1

police and board members, the select board did not vote to put a pause to the Flock contract.

Instead, the board tabled the issue for consideration at the upcoming Special Town Meeting.

Chief Dowd said that he would not proceed with installation of the four additional Flock cameras before that meeting.

The decision leaves Charlton's existing cameras in operation while the town considers whether the current system should continue, be modified, be expanded or be discontinued.

For residents who have raised concerns, the October 19 Special Town Meeting represents another opportunity to press for greater

transparency and oversight.

For the police department, the upcoming meeting presents an opportunity to provide accurate and informative data that could shed some light on the potential benefits of using ALPRs.

The debate is ultimately centered on a question that communities across Massachusetts and the country are increasingly confronting: how much information about ordinary people's movements should be collected by public agencies, what safeguards should govern that information, and how much public oversight should be required before such technology is deployed or expanded.

Charlton residents will have an opportunity to weigh in when the issue comes before the town at the Oct. 19 Special Town Meeting. *

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TALES FROM BEYOND

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Southern Vermont College's ghostly tenants

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

Southern Vermont College's main architectural attraction, the Everett Mansion, has some very interesting and historical ghosts roaming its vast halls; namely Edward Everett himself. Edward Everett was born on May 18, 1851. He began his career as a bottle salesman for his stepfather, but soon became shareholder, then owner of the American Bottle Company. His company would later merge with another perennial glass manufacturer called Corning. This later became the Owens-Corning

Fiberglass Company.

In 1910, Everett purchased 500 acres along the slopes of Mount Anthony and began construction on his summer villa. From 1911 to 1914, work crews meticulously toiled under the architectural direction of George Totten, one of the Gilded Age's most skilled architects.

The 27-room mansion was furnished in lavish Victorian décor with parquet floors of various beautiful designs in different wood. No expense was spared in creating this beautiful manor where the Everett family could spend their summers overlooking

the Green Mountains. The house cost \$2 million to construct.

Not a lot of money when you figure Mr. Everett's wealth was somewhere between \$40 and \$50 million.

He called his home "Orchard House," as it was surrounded by one of the largest apple orchards in the country. About 75,000 apple trees, along with 3,000 plum trees and 2,000 quince trees were planted by Mr. Everett's workers. Edward, his wife Amy and their three daughters moved into the house in 1915. In 1917, his wife tragically died after a prolonged illness.

He later met Grace Burnap who was 30 years younger than him. They married in 1920 and had two daughters together. Edward died in April, 1929 at the age of 77. Grace lived in the mansion until 1952 before selling it to the Order of the Holy Cross. The order subsequently exchanged properties with Southern Vermont College, which was at the time named St. Joseph's College.

The mansion now houses the administrative offices, library, bookstore, café, art gallery, mail room, dark room, and a classroom. It also houses a few lingering ghosts who do not mind making their presence known. Everett's second wife Grace is seen gliding through the halls and rooms of the estate. Some claim that the spirit of Everett's first wife also resides within the stone edifice. She is known as the "Lady in White" because she is seen wearing a white robe while floating through the manor. Edward's ghost has also been frequently reported in the house.

Other strange occurrences at the Everett estate comprise of wisps of smoke appearing out of nowhere, doorknobs turning, lights turning on and off by themselves, and doors that were previously locked mysteriously flying open. Shadows are seen crossing the halls and footsteps echo in the otherwise empty building.

The shade of a monk in a black robe has been witnessed floating around the perimeter of the cam-

pus. The property was a seminary once, so the presence of such a spirit would not be out of the ordinary. Many legends abound of the hooded figure as he roams the grounds, only to vanish before anyone can get close to him.

The old carriage house became a computer lab. This is where a man in period clothing is seen wandering. Doors also lock by themselves and computers turn off suddenly. The carriage house used to accommodate the Everett's Rolls Royce automobiles and served as living quarters for the coachmen.

Arlene and I visited the college on a beautiful May afternoon. The manor looked much like it did in its heyday: the ornate woodwork, grand oak staircase, patios and stunning views of the surrounding area. The semester had ended and the empty halls and rooms afforded us an opportunity to take some photographs and record some audio. Although we did not capture any paranormal activity on camera or recorder, we did get an opportunity to chat with a few living people who were still on campus. They were gracious in sharing the stories of the college and its array of haunts. With the diverse array of ghostly activities, it must be a very exciting school both the living and otherwise.



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SPORTS

Lizzy Gunsalus, cyclocross

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Growing up in Dudley, Lizzy Gunsalus found herself riding BMX because of her older brother and father. Now, years later, Gunsalus is a professional rider taking part in Cyclocross (CX), an off-road bicycle racing discipline that combines elements of road cycling, mountain biking, and steeplechase. Races take place on short, closed loops roughly 2.5 to 3.5 kilometers (1.5 to 2.2 miles) long and feature a mix of pavement, grass, wooded trails, steep hills, mud, sand pits, and artificial barriers.

The senior senior-category races last between 30 minutes and one hour, with total laps determined by course conditions and speed. Throughout the race riders have to frequently encounter obstacles that require them to dismount, carry their bikes on their shoulders, run past the obstruction, and remount to resume riding.

"Cyclocross is a specific discipline of cycling and primarily takes part in the fall and winter seasons," said Gunsalus, who now lives in Indianapolis with her sister. "It is the cross country of cycling, where you find yourself riding through grass and dirt with the occasional running while carrying your bike. You definitely need good core strength."

Gunsalus' father introduced her and her older brother Greg to cyclocross. Greg began riding the sport first and Lizzy started when she was eight years old.

"Although I enjoyed it, I was still relatively young and really didn't want to commit to one sport," she said. "So I tried numerous other things over the years but by the time that I got to high school I began to fully focus and ultimately committed to cyclocross only."

One of the big reasons Gunsalus committed to cyclocross was during a trip to Nashville with her brother and father. There, Lizzy raced and took home the top honor, which sparked a realization that she was riding at a higher level than she anticipated.

Back in the day, there were no girls riding teams, so when she began riding with her brother's team, AP Junior Developmental, in 2015 she became the first girl to do so. The program was based out of Corner Cycle bike shop in Falmouth. Gunsalus rode with AP Junior Developmental for two years before she was picked up as a developmental rider for Cannon-

dale. In 2022 she joined her first professional team – Steve Tilford Foundation Racing.

can Championship in 2022 and the Pan American Elite Championship in 2025 as well as a collegiate

championship in that same year.

Although some women ride into their 40s Gunsalus pictures herself

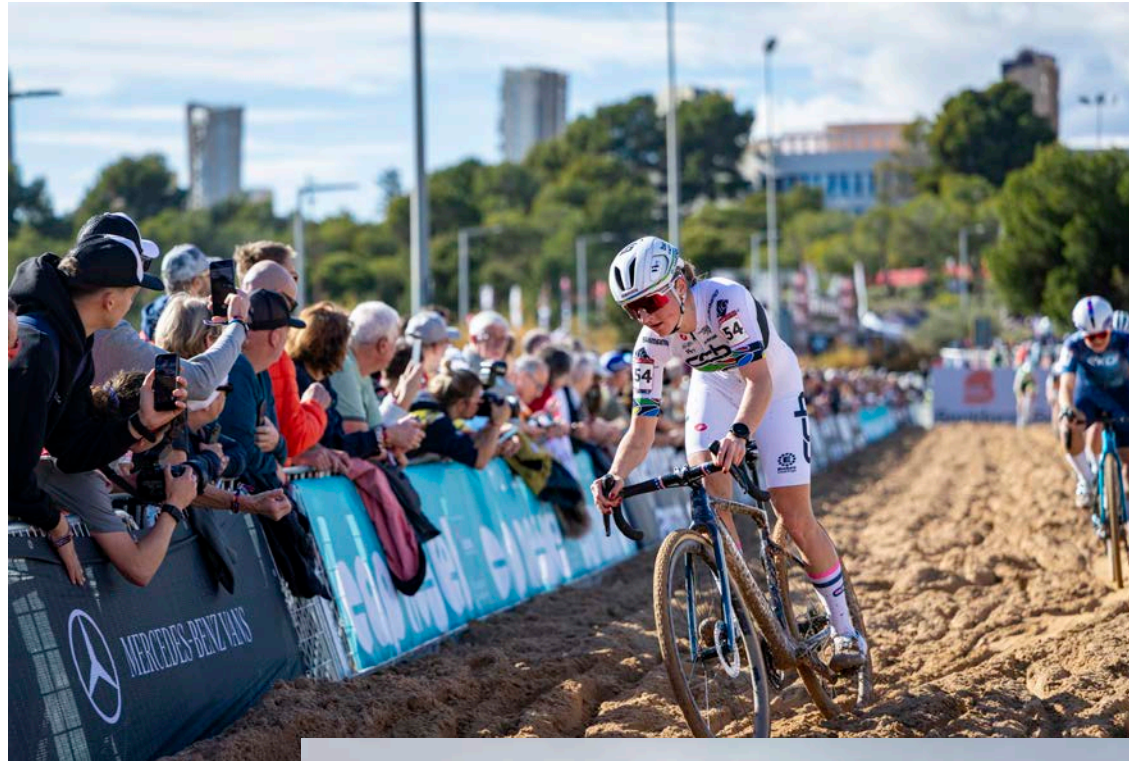
riding for another three to seven years. This past May she graduated with two bachelor's degrees in mechanical engineering and chemistry from Marian University in Indianapolis and Perdue University.

"Using the engineering degree to work part time allows me the opportunity to focus on something else other than just training for cyclocross," she said. "I am looking to begin a start-up company, something unconventional, not your typical 9-5 job. There are a lot of different avenues that I can take."

While she continued to ride, Greg took a step back from riding when Covid hit. Now he is involved in cyclocross as her mechanic.

"It's amazing having people in my corner that know me as Lizzy, not the Pan American Champion," she said. "People who know me through good and bad days, it takes a lot of pressure off me. Having Greg with me is a blessing. I am proud and grateful to be able to travel and do all this with him."

As the fall months being to roll around, Gunsalus, with her brother alongside her, is getting ready to begin the American Cyclocross season (the European season will kick off in later October). Come January she plans to participate in the National Championship, followed by the World Championships in February. ★



Photos by Chris Norvold.

As a youngster, Gunsalus would imagine that she could one day ride professionally. She knew that if she worked hard, she could become successful.

"Now as a professional – it's the best thing in the whole world," Gunsalus said. "There are times, as I've gotten older, that it seems like more time and energy but to be able to continue to perform at this higher level is a privilege."

Through her career she has won National Championships in 2015, 2017, 2023 and 2025; Pan Ameri-



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LIVING WITH LUKE

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Home renovation, according to Luke

BY AMY PALUMBO-LECLAIRE

The kitchen renovation began with a sense of optimism. A new floor, new cabinets, and granite countertops promised our home the refresh it desperately needed. Boxes appeared. Furniture shifted. The familiar became unfamiliar.

Luke was not impressed.

He sniffed the dusty boxes, surveyed the commotion, and then looked at me as if to say, Are you going to box me up, too?

My dog readers know this about me: I don't like to leave my dog home alone. If there's a way to take Luke along, I'll gladly do it—even if it means bending a rule or two.

But this was Indian summer, the kind of warm September day when leaving a dog in a car, even with the windows cracked, is simply not an option. I looked at the boxes,

then down at Luke, and could practically hear the question in his head.

You're leaving?

I knew I had to soften the blow.

"Hold on, Luke. Mummy has a surprise for you. You've been such a good boy."

I grabbed his shin bone and raced back into the kitchen, with Luke trotting close behind. Among the handful of things that had escaped the packing boxes was a jar of peanut butter.

Suddenly, my departure was ancient history.

Luke's eyes locked onto the glorious picture of my hand frosting his shin bone with a generous smear of peanut butter. His focus was laser sharp. He tracked every move, trotting beside me as I hurried to place the gooey treasure on a towel.

His excitement over something as simple as peanut butter felt contagious. I happily shut the door behind me and left for work. Mission accomplished. I was about to (later) learn that food isn't the only motivator to keep my dog happy.

I'm soooooo happy you came



to see me!!!! Wonderful people, minted with fresh new smells — and who rang the doorbell all day long — poured into our home.

Ding Dong, Ding Dong. Luke never tired of a sound that meant one thing. Guests were coming over! He grabbed a sneaker, wiggled, did a tap dance, and greeted each contractor with a dog in need of training. Made ya' look. He put down the sneaker to steal the oily rag that spilled from the plumber's back pocket. *I'm Luke! You can read about me in the paper, too!* He made his presence obvious.

"What's her name?" the plumber asked.

"It's Luke," I stated. But the background sound of my neighbor's tree cutter muffled the sound of my voice.

"Hi Lou!" The plumber rubbed the ears of what he thought was a female dog and accepted a forgiving paw. Neither of us had the heart to correct a man who was about to clean up our mess.

Want to see my upside-down kitchen? Lou led the plumber to a room that had become a tale of two kitchens, old and new.

Weeks passed, and Luke came to realize there are worse things than a torn-apart kitchen. For one thing, given all the helping hands coming through our door, he was rarely alone.

Not only had my dog learned to make lemonade from lemons, but he had also discovered that renovations came with their own special perks.

Mom, have you seen that new



piece of plywood? It smells just like a tree!

He was learning, too, to accept the differences in the world around him. The familiar sounds of our home had been replaced by drills, hammers, saws, and industrial fans. The kitchen he knew had disappeared, only to be replaced by a strange new landscape filled with ladders, lumber, tools — and an endless parade of people to greet.

For Luke, it turned out, home renovation wasn't about losing his

familiar world.

It was about discovering a new one.

And if you ask Luke, every good renovation should come with peanut butter, a few new friends, and plenty of opportunities to say:

"Ding Dong! Another guest to greet!" *

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REAL ESTATE

Why so many sellers are cutting their price right now

Price cuts are turning up everywhere right now, and they read very differently depending on which side of the deal you're on. Sellers tend to worry a cut means walking away with less than they hoped. Sometimes that's true, but more often it just means the



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

market moved faster than the listing did. Buyers, for their part, often assume a cut means something's wrong with the house. Most of the time, that's not the case. This is what's actually driving all those price cuts, and why it matters regardless of which side of the deal you're on.

Forty-two percent of homes for sale are now carrying a price cut. The share of sellers cutting their asking price has climbed every month for seven straight months. Today, more than four in 10 active listings have had at least one price cut, and the typical seller is cutting about \$17,560 off their original number.

It's happening because with rates still elevated and with more homes to choose from, buyers can afford to wait for the right home in their budget. So, sellers who price at the higher end of market value end up adjusting down quite quickly.

What does that mean for you? If you're selling, this isn't a red flag. But it is a sign that pricing it right from day one is your best bet. Just know that the market's been shifting fast enough this year that sometimes even a well-priced house can fall behind within a matter of weeks. If that happens to you, dropping your price to catch up to where pricing actually stands today tends to bring in more buyers and helps you sell closer to true market value.

If you're buying, it's easy to assume a price cut means something's wrong with the house. But with cuts happening on more than four in 10 homes right now, the reality is, sellers are just catching up to where the market already is. And with affordability still tight, that's exactly the kind of opening you need to get a better deal.

But why are sellers adjusting faster than before? Data shows that list prices are trending down nationally. That's often a sign that sellers are pricing more realistically from the start instead of listing

high and getting stuck cutting later. List prices have fallen about \$26,000 from last year's peak. Some of that decline is seasonal since list prices typically soften each winter before rebounding in the spring. So, expect asking prices to keep drifting a little lower before turning back around.

That is good news for buyers, who are seeing lower asking prices and more room to negotiate. With rates still elevated, buyers can only stretch so far. Sellers who meet them where they are instead of holding out for unrealistic prices are the ones getting to closing and doing that up front is always better than chasing the market later.

Buyers, you've got room to negotiate again. At the same time, data shows sellers now outnumber buyers by about 58 percent, the widest gap on record. That changes the power of who controls the market – and impacts how homeowners should price their house. Nationally, about seven in 10 markets now favor buyers or are trending that way. For sellers, that means standing out matters as much as pricing. With more homes to choose from, buyers are comparing you directly against the competition. So, a little flexibility, like covering closing costs or being open on timing, can be what gets your house picked

over another.

For buyers, it means more room to ask for a lower price, help with closing costs, repairs after inspection, or some combination of all three. That's especially true for homes that have already sat for weeks, where sellers are often the most willing to talk.

Price cuts are a normal part of today's housing market, and both

buyers and sellers can use them to their advantage. Connect with a member of The Marzeotti Group or a trusted real estate professional to look at what's actually happening with prices in your neighborhood, so you know exactly where you stand before you list or make an offer.

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Haunted mills of New England

BY NICOLE GAUDETTE

Some souls linger beyond their lifetime. This Halloween season, join authors and paranormal investigators Thomas D'Agostino and Arlene Nicholson at the Samuel Slater Experience as they take you on a journey to New England's most haunted factories and mills. This special presentation is complete with voices of the spirits who remain, featuring recordings and photographic evidence of what lies beyond our senses.

New England is the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution. Samuel Slater started the era in the 1790s and it was not long before factories sprang up everywhere in the region. The conditions were very dangerous and many tragedies took place. Some of those tragedies still reverberate within the walls of the ancient buildings. Although many of the early factories and mills have crumbled over time



Arlene Nicholson and Thomas D'Agostino

for one reason or another, the spirits that met with an unfortunate demise or were deeply tied to their place of employment still linger among the remains.

Hear their stories and their voices at the Samuel Slater Experience on Friday, October 23 at 5 p.m. Admission is \$5 each. Purchase your ticket online, at the box office by calling 508-641-2955 or emailing admin@samuel Slater Experience.org. Refreshments will be available for a donation.

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THE CAR DOCTOR

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A new small SUV, fuel-system cleaners, battery maintainer use, a hot soak issue, and a sticky dashboard

Q. I have a 2014 Honda Accord with only 75,000 miles, but I think it may be time for a new car. At age 65, I'm finding the Accord a little low to get in and out of. I looked at the Honda HR-V and liked the higher seating position. I also enjoy gardening and frequently haul

mulch and compost. I like the Ford Maverick, and my husband and I have also looked at the Kia Seltos. Which would you recommend?

A. All three are good choices, but each has a different strength. The Ford Maverick is the most versatile. If you're regularly hauling mulch, compost,

or garden supplies, the pickup bed is hard to beat. My only concern is that reliability has been somewhat less consistent than Honda's. The Honda HR-V is a solid choice for long-term ownership. It is easy to get in and out of, has a good reputation for reliability, and generally holds its value well. The Kia Seltos

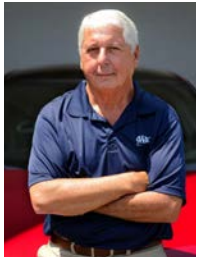
feels roomier than the HR-V, offers good fuel economy, and provides a lot of features for the money. Kia has come a long way and now builds very competitive vehicles. Based on your needs, I would lean toward a small SUV. The higher seating position makes entry and exit easier and provides a better view of the road. My advice: drive all three. Usually, after a long test drive, the right vehicle becomes pretty obvious.

Q. How effective are fuel injector cleaners that you add to your gas? I have seen you mention Techron. Not that I doubt you, but are they a sponsor?

A. No, Techron is not a sponsor. In fact, I don't have any sponsors or financial relationships with automotive chemical companies. A couple of times a year I add Techron fuel system cleaner to my family's vehicles, and when possible, I use Top Tier gasoline, which contains additional

detergent additives to help keep fuel injectors clean. I recommend Techron because I have found it to be one of the more effective fuel system cleaners on the market. If I am spending my own money on a fuel-system cleaner, Techron is usually what I buy.

Q. I recently purchased a 2025 Hyundai Sonata Hybrid. I head to Florida for five or six months every winter and was planning to connect a battery maintainer to keep the 12-volt battery charged while I am away. The problem is that I keep finding conflicting information about where the 12-volt battery is located. Some



BY JOHN PAUL

CAR DOCTOR

continued on page 13

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TIPS ON FINANCIAL PLANNING

dennis.antonopoulos@edwardjones.com

Stay one step ahead of cybercriminals

Your financial security is only as strong as your digital security. A single stolen password, convincing scam or fraudulent investment offer can lead to lost savings, damaged credit or hours spent recovering compromised accounts. As our financial lives move increasingly online, protecting your personal information is part



DENNIS
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of protecting your financial future. Cybercriminals are getting smarter, and technology like AI is making their job easier. But fortunately, some consistent habits can help protect you from many of today's common threats.

Watch out for phishing. Phishing is a common way criminals break into accounts and steal money. These attacks often arrive as emails, texts or phone calls that appear to come from your bank, employer or another trusted organization. Fake websites can trick you into typing in your password or financial details.

To protect yourself, verify unexpected requests through a separate channel, such as calling a company directly using a number from its official website rather than one provided in a suspicious message. Avoid clicking unexpected links and consider using a password manager which auto-fills your login information only on legitimate websites.

Strengthen your accounts. Stolen passwords give criminals easy access to your email, banking and social media accounts. Try using a

unique password for every account and enable multifactor authentication whenever it's offered. When possible, choose phishing-resistant options like passkeys or security keys; they're harder for scammers to bypass than basic text message codes.

Be skeptical of urgency. Scammers increasingly use deepfakes, which leverage AI-generated voices, videos and images to convincingly impersonate trusted people, including company executives, advisors and even family members. These messages often create pressure to send money or share sensitive information immediately.

If you receive an urgent request that feels off, slow down. Hang up and try calling back to the person or organization using a known phone number. Many successful scams rely on emotional pressure rather than technical tricks, so a

moment of skepticism can go a long way.

Protect your money and identity. Fraudulent investment platforms and cryptocurrency schemes continue to cost Americans billions of dollars each year. Be cautious of investment opportunities promoted through unsolicited messages or social media contacts and always verify a platform independently before sending money. If you're unsure whether an opportunity is legitimate, a financial advisor can help evaluate it before you invest.

Data breaches can also put your information at risk, even when you've done everything right. It's smart to check your bank and credit card statements regularly for unfamiliar charges, and to freeze your credit if you suspect your information has been compromised. You may also choose to freeze your credit preemptively.

Keep your devices updated. Software updates often fix security weaknesses that criminals could otherwise exploit. Backing up important files, whether to the cloud or an external drive, also protects you if ransomware ever locks you out of your own data.

Small habits matter. Unique passwords, multifactor authentication and skepticism help stop many scams before they start. Take steps to help safeguard your money, identity and long-term financial goals.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Please contact Dennis Antonopoulos, your local Edward Jones Advisor at 5 Albert Street, Auburn, MA 01501 Tel: 508-832-5385 or dennis.antonopoulos@edwardjones.com. Edward Jones, Member SIPC

CAR DOCTOR

continued from page 12

sources say it is in the trunk, others say it is under the rear seat, and some claim there is no separate 12-volt battery at all. What is the correct answer?

A. Hyundai has taken a different approach with the Sonata Hybrid. Rather than a conventional 12-volt battery, it uses an integrated lithium-ion battery that is part of the hybrid battery system. As a result, there is no traditional battery in the trunk or under the hood that can be connected to a battery maintainer. The good news is that Hyundai designed the system to tolerate extended storage. Before leaving, I would make sure the hybrid battery is roughly 50 percent to 75 percent charged. If the vehicle does not power up after several months, Hyundai provides a 12-volt battery reset feature that uses energy from the hybrid battery to restore the 12-volt system. There are also jump-start terminals under the hood if needed. If the vehicle is stored in a secure garage, I would leave it unlocked. If the 12-volt system becomes completely discharged, you may need to use the mechanical key hidden inside the key fob to gain access.

Q. I have a 2012 Toyota Corolla with 226,500 miles on it and overall it is in great shape. The problem I'm having is that if it sits for about two hours after being driven, it takes longer to start than normal. It starts right up when cold and even after sitting

overnight. My mechanic checked things over and didn't find any obvious issues, and there are no trouble codes. This only happens after about a two-hour soak. Any ideas?

A. The fact that the problem occurs only after a specific hot-soak period is an important clue. One possibility is an EVAP system issue. On these Corollas, a leaking purge valve can allow fuel vapors into the intake manifold, creating an overly rich mixture and causing a hard start. A simple test is to disconnect and plug the hose between the purge valve and intake manifold, then

let the car sit for its usual two-hour period. If the engine starts normally, you've likely found the problem. I would also look at live coolant-temperature data. A sensor that is drifting out of calibration can provide inaccurate temperature information during a hot soak and affect fuel delivery. If neither test reveals anything, the next step is checking fuel pressure after shutdown.

Q. I have a problem with the dashboard of my 15-year-old car. It has become sticky to the touch. I have tried different cleaners, but nothing seems to help. Any suggestions?

A. This is a common issue on older vehicles. Heat and sunlight can cause the dashboard's soft-touch coating to break down, leaving a sticky surface. I would start by cleaning the dash with isopropyl alcohol and a lint-free cloth. If several cleanings don't improve the condition, the coating has likely deteriorated beyond repair. At that point, the most practical and affordable solution is a custom-fit

dash cover. They install easily, hide the sticky surface, and can also reduce windshield glare. Replacing the dashboard is usually too expensive to make sense on a 15-year-old vehicle, so a quality dash cover is often the best fix. *

Do you have a car question? Email the Car Doctor for a personal reply at jpaul@aaanortheast.com

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CHARLTON
Charlton Public Library, 40 Main St., Charlton. Phone: 508-248-0452

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13
7 pm: The Prom Closet at Central Mass is having a volunteer open house. Whether you can give a few hours a month or a few hours a week, there's a place for you on our team. Hear from current and past volunteers about their experiences. Meet board members and ask questions. Learn how you can make a difference for local students this coming season. Return or donate a prom dress. Charlton City United Methodist Church. Please drive around the church, the entrance is located on the lower level in the Fellowship Hall. thepromcloset-centralmass.org

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15
6-8 pm: Trivia Night fundraiser hosted by the Friends of Charlton Public Library at the Charlton Beagle Club, 103 Bond Rd., Charlton. Test your knowledge and challenge their friends as you attempt to answer questions provided by Wise Guys Trivia. Attendees can also enter a raffle to win prizes such as gift cards to various local businesses. Other prizes include seasonal gift baskets. A cash prize will be awarded to the overall Trivia winner. Tickets are \$10 p/p and can be purchased at the Charlton Public Library circulation desk or at the door the night of the event. All proceeds

enable the Friends to support the mission of the Charlton Public Library. For more info, email charltonfriends@gmail.com or call 774-230-1410.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 19
7 pm: Charlton Special Town Meeting at the Charlton Middle School, 2 Oxford Rd. where voters will consider 15 Articles on the Warrant. To read the warrant, find it on the town's website: townofcharlton.net

OCTOBER 23-OCTOBER 25
The 2026 Northeast Wildlife Trackers Conference will be held at the Prindle Pond Conference Center in Charlton from 10/23 through 10/25. The conference is a gathering for everyone passionate or curious about wildlife tracking. Tickets include meals and lodging; there are single- and double=occupancy dormitory-style rooms and tenting options. Student discounts and commuter passes are also available. Go here for more info: northeastwildlifetrackers.org/conference/

MONDAY, OCTOBER 26
7 pm: American Legion Post 391 is calling all veterans to join them. Do you miss the camaraderie? Do you want to be a part of supporting events here in Charlton with other like-minded veterans? Join today and help us promote the American Legion Post 391 Charlton. We need you! Our meetings are the 4th Monday of every month, at the Grange, 10 Main St., Charlton.

DUDLEY
The Dudley Senior Center is located on the first floor of the Dudley Municipal Complex, 71 West Main St. The center hours: Mon-Thurs, 10:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Phone: 508-949-8015
Pearle L. Crawford Library, 40 Schofield Ave., Dudley, MA 01571. Phone: 508-949-

8021. www.crawfordlibrary.org.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10
11 am-12 pm: Songs played on the kora, at the Pearle L. Crawford Library. The kora is a 21-stringed West African harp, traditionally played by oral historians known as Griots. Many songs featured on the kora preserve an 800-year history dating back to the founding of the Mande empire. Sean Gaskell studied under the instruction of Moriba Kuyateh and the late Malamini Jobarteh in Gambia, and both Youssoupha Cissokho and Mamadou Cissokho in Senegal. Gaskell has presented adult, youth and family programs at over 400 libraries and a multitude of k-12 schools, colleges, universities and assisted living facilities throughout the U.S. and Canada.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15
4:30-6 pm: Make a clay dragon's eye for ages 12-17 only at the Pearle L. Crawford Library. Create and paint your own clay dragon's eye with a realistic glass eyeball. Make it magical! Registration required.

5:30-6:30 pm: Community Poetry Slam for all ages at the Dudley FunZone Playground, 71 West Main St. at the wooded stage area sponsored by the Pearle L. Crawford Library and the Dudley Recreation Commission. Bring a poem, spoken word piece or creative writing and perform it solo, with a parent or with a friend. This is a safe and welcoming space where everyone can express themselves and be heard. Prize for best creative piece. Light refreshments will be provided. No pre-registration needed. Those wishing to perform can simply sign up when they arrive. Creative pieces should be three minutes or less and must be family friendly. Performances should be free of profanity and adult subject matter.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16
11-11:45 am: Mindful movement with Buffy for children ages 3+ and their caregiver at the Pearle L. Crawford Library. Get moving together with certified health instructor Buffy in this fun, 45-minute family movement class. Through playful movement, stretching, and mindfulness activities, caregivers and children ages 3+ will enjoy time together while building healthy movement habits. Registration is required as space is limited.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21
12 pm: Memory Café lunch at the Dudley Senior Center will be served at noon. Entertainment begins at 1 p.m. with songs and music by Jumpin Juba thanks to the Dudley Cultural Council for sponsoring this event. Lunch will be chicken, rice pilaf, veggie, and dessert. The cost is \$5. Call the center to RSVP or sign up at the front desk.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22ND
6-7:30 pm: The Radikals at the Pearle L. Crawford Library. Investigators and archivists of the unknown, the Radikals are a paranormal investigative duo consisting of Danny and Lauren Perez. Described as "one part open-minded skeptic, one part true believer," they specialize in residential paranormal cases, haunted objects, and psychometry (reading the history or energy of an object through touch). Free and all are welcome.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29
4-6:30 pm: Annual Spooktacular returns hosted by the Dudley Recreation Commission and Pearle L. Crawford Library. Families are invited to gather in costume at the library at 4 p.m. for some family-friendly fun before the parade begins. At 5 p.m., a gaggle of ghosts, goblins and other costumed characters will receive a police escort as they parade up Brandon Road to Town Hall, 71 West Main Street. Once there, families will be greeted with plenty of frightfully free fun, including games, live music, a balloon artist and the always-popular Cauldron of S'mores. And no Halloween celebration would be complete without a costume contest! Prizes will be awarded for the scariest, funniest and most unique costumes.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30
10 am-12 pm: Dudley Select Board office hours at the Pearle L Crawford Library. Have a question, concern, or idea to share? Stop by at this informal opportunity to meet with members of the Board, ask questions, discuss town issues, and learn more about what is happening in the community. No

appointment is necessary - residents are welcome to drop in during the scheduled office hours. There might even be refreshments!

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7
10 am-3 pm: Craft and Vendor Fair at the Boys & Girls Club of Webster-Dudley, 55 Oxford Ave., Dudley. Enjoy unique handmade items, gifts, seasonal goodies, and plenty of great finds while supporting local makers and the Boys & Girls Club of Webster - Dudley. Admission is free, so bring your friends and family and spend the day shopping and enjoying the festive atmosphere. Enjoy a bounce house from Busy Bee Jumpers and Food from Feel Good Foods Food Truck.

4:30 and 6 pm: Two seatings for a Turkey Dinner at the First Congregational Church, 135 Center Rd., Dudley. Adults: \$18, Children 6-12: \$10, ages 5 and under: Free. Call 508-943-7320 to reserve by November 6. Takeout must be pre-ordered.

WEBSTER
Webster Senior Center, 5 Church St., Webster. 508.949.3845. email: seniorcenter@webster-ma.gov. Hours: M-F, 9 am-4 pm. Gladys E. Kelly Library, 2 Lake St., Webster. 508-949-3880.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 12
10 am-2 pm: Craft Fair at the Webster Senior Center, 5 Church St. Start buying for the upcoming holiday gift-giving - or treat yourself to a unique gift. Free admission. Thursday, October 15

2 pm: Deeds, Homestead Act, Trusts and Estates discussion at the Webster Senior Center with Worcester Register of Deeds Kathryn Toomey and Register of Probate Courts Stephanie Fattman. Learn how the Registry of Deeds and the Probate Court work together. Join in the dialogue about land ownership and how probate issues can legally affect what happens to your property. Learn how to protect your home from Deed Fraud with the Consumer Notification Service. Free and open to the public but RSVP to 508-949-3845.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16
6 pm doors open; game starts at 7 pm. Bingo Night at St. Louis Church Hall, 14 Lake St. Join them for a fun night of Bingo, food, fellowship & cash prizes! Bring your family and friends. Game packs \$20. Food and drinks available.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 19
6:30 pm: Webster Little League will vote

HAPPENINGS!
continued on page 15

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UPCOMING EVENTS AT SAMUEL SLATER'S HALL

10/16	COMEDY NIGHT WITH PAUL D'ANGELO, MAYA MANION, AND DAN MILLER	11/14	PETTY LARCENY: A TRIBUTE TO THE MUSIC OF TOM PETTY
10/23	BLOOD, SWEAT & KEYS HALLOWEEN DUELING PIANOS	11/18	HOLIDAY CUSTOM SWAG WORKSHOP FROM BEMIS FARMS NURSERY
10/24	A WONDERFUL WIZARD OF OZ MURDER MYSTERY DINNER	11/21	LITTLE LIES: A TRIBUTE TO FLEETWOOD MAC
10/31	HALLOWEEN PARTY WITH XS DANCE BAN \$500 GRAND PRIZE FOR BEST COSTUME PLUS PRIZES FOR "FUNNIEST," "SCARIEST," AND MOST "CREATIVE/UNIQUE" COSTUMES!	11/27	AFFINITY: A TRIBUTE TO THE MUSIC OF JOURNEY
11/7	BEST OF TIMES: THE MUSIC OF STYX, FOREIGNER & REO SPEEDWAGON	12/5	THE FOOLS
11/13	COMEDY NIGHT WITH COREY RODRIGUES, STEVE BJORK, AND BRIAN WAYNE	12/11	COMEDY NIGHT WITH KELLY MACFARLAND, KENDRA CUNNINGHAM, AND GARRETT FINN
		1/8	VIVA LAS ELVIS: ELVIS PRESLEY'S 92ND BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION WITH AWARD-WINNING TRIBUTE ARTIST DAN FONTAINE

FOR RESERVATIONS, EVENT TICKETS, AND MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.SAMUELSLATERS.COM

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HAPPENINGS!

continued from page 14

on board of director positions. If you would like to nominate someone or yourself for a position, please attend this meeting in person. To be held at the Webster Little League clubhouse, 3 Little League Ln. 7 pm: Annual Fall Town Meeting at Bartlett High School Auditorium, 52 Lake Parkway. Called by the Select Board. For the official warrant and further updates, check the Webster Official Calendar.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 26

12 pm: Halloween at the Webster Senior Center. Spooky music, goofy games, drinks, prizes, pizza party. \$5 p/p. Must register and pay by 10/20.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29

7-9 pm: Pumpkin decorating night sponsored by the Class of 2029 at the Bartlett

High School, 52 Lake Parkway, Webster. The public is invited to buy a pumpkin at the school that night for \$3, \$5, or \$10 (depending on size) and decorate it for free. Or bring your own pumpkin and decorate it for a flat fee of \$5. At the BHS cafeteria.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30

4-6 pm: Annual Downtown Trunk or Treat.

REGION

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10

1-5 pm: Indigenous Peoples Day celebrated at the Oxford Bandstand Common. Native art making and native drum and music. Learn about their tribal climate resilience hub project. Visit nimpuck.org for more information.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18

12-4 pm: 5th Annual RC Airshow hosted by the Uxbridge Youth Soccer League at the Sutton Street Fields, 285 Sutton St., Ux-

bridge. This popular, family-friendly event brings together some of the region's top award-winning RC pilots for an afternoon of spectacular stunts. Food trucks, local vendors, kids' activities, raffles, and special guests. Admission is \$3 per person or \$10 per family.

12:30 pm sign up: Crop Hunger Walk: The easy 3.5 mile walk through Oxford starts at 1 p.m. at the First Congregational Church, 355 Main St., Oxford. Join volunteers and supporters of the Oxford Ecumenical Food Shelf who hope to raise \$4,000 to stock the town's free, nonprofit food pantry that is available to any town resident who needs groceries for themselves or their family. Any sized monetary donation is welcome. To register: events.crophungerwalk.org/chw/event/oxfordma. Or just show up on the 18th and volunteers at the church will help you get started. For more info, go

to the Food Shelf's Facebook page or call 508-987-1062.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24

8:30 am: The Blackstone Valley Crop Hunger Walk will start at 9 am with an 8:30 registration at the Village Congregational Church in Whitinsville. For more information, call Barbara Fortin at 508-234-2137.

2-3 pm: Mill to Meadow: The land on which the Blackstone River Greenway Visitor Center at Worcester stands was once the largest factory complex in Worcester — and now not a single building remains. On this short walk, find out about "brownfield" reclamation on site and how it fits into the Blackstone Valley's environmental renaissance. Appropriate for ages 12 and up. Free, no registration required. About ¼ mile over paved surfaces. 3 Paul Clancy Way, Worcester.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 26

6-8 pm: Practical Nursing adult education program open house for those 18+ interested in a career in health care at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational High School. Tour the classrooms at 65 Pleasant St., Upton, speak with faculty and students, and participate in a Q&A session to learn about the 60-week evening program, including admission requirements, application process and enrollment. Interested applicants must take the Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS), which is required for admission to the Practical Nursing program. The program administers the TEAS entrance exam to applicants and accepts TEAS results from other locations. The program offers small class sizes and accepts in-district, out-of-district and out-of-state applicants. For more info and to register for the Open House, visit valleytech.k12.ma.us/pnopenhouse.

October events at Booklovers' Gourmet

The art show "Colors of Life" by Judy Murphy will be on display from October 6-31 in the cafe gallery. A public meet and greet with the artist will take place on Saturday, October 24 from 2-4 p.m.

As a child, Murphy won coloring and poster contests but never pursued art until she retired. Color is her main inspiration. She can stop and find the beauty in any person, place or thing. Her style is said to be unique, quirky, fun, illustrative and easily recognizable. While most of her paintings are watercolors, she continues to expand her skills through courses at the Worcester Art Museum and as an active member of the Blackstone Valley Art Association.

*Do you struggle to find the right things to say to your kids? Do you feel like your child "tunes you out" when you talk? Does it feel like you and your child fight more than talk? A free workshop with Jessica Butler will be held Saturday, October

17 from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Based on the celebrated book *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk* by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish, this interactive session will provide attendees with an introduction to practical, effective methods of communication that will make their relationship with children of all ages less stressful and more rewarding.

Butler will lead discussions that will help you: Learn specific skills that help children recognize and cope with their negative feelings, such as disappointment, envy, frustration, or anger. Learn ways to accept children's feelings, limit unacceptable behavior, and still maintain goodwill. Learn how to invite cooperation that will leave everyone feeling good about themselves and each other. Understand alternatives to punishment that enable parents to express their strong disapproval as well as encourage children to assume responsibility



The Indian Princess.

for their behavior. Call Booklovers' to RSVP.

*Ray Arnold of Metro West Paranormal Investigators will offer a free presentation on Saturday, October 24, from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Arnold will talk about his experiences and the tools his team uses during their paranormal investigations. There will be time for discussion and sharing of information.

Arnold has been president of Metro West Paranormal Investigators since 2018. Since the late 1980s he has investigated numerous locations throughout New England and

participated in podcasts including "Mostly Ghostly" from the Boston area and "Paranormal Access and Radio" from the U.K. Call Booklovers' to RSVP.

*Mary Anna Abuzahra and Kimberly Carmichael will join us on Halloween Day, Saturday October 31, from 10 a.m.-12:00 p.m. to talk about Moon Phases. You will make a unique charm of your own natal phase using various beads and crafts supplies.

Discover how the Moon Cycle symbolizes the nurturing cycle of life - a continuous repeating pattern of birth, growth and renewal. Identify and reflect on your natal moon phase and its astrological sign, and the interrelationships between the phases and signs. Connect this pattern to ways of relating to others, to grow patience, tolerance and understanding within personal communities.

Mary Anna Abuzahra has over 30 years of astrological experience working with clients and facilitat-

ing classes, moon journaling circles and presentations. She is an Internationally Certified Professional Astrologer. You can reach her at: www.maryannaabuzahra.com.

Kimberly Carmichael has over 40 years of experience as a multimedia artist and Level 3 Reiki Practitioner. She shares her jewelry at events, parties, markets, and charity auctions. She also shares her artwork through an International Art Group at major Hollywood events. Reach her at [instagram.com/the_artful_porpoise](https://www.instagram.com/the_artful_porpoise)

Cost of this workshop is \$40 and space is limited to 6 participants. Make more charms for an added fee. Call Booklovers' to RSVP.

Booklovers' Gourmet is located at 72 East Main Street in Webster and has been a community gathering space since 1995. For more information, call 508-949-6232 or email Deb at deb@bookloversgourmet.com. *



The Webster-Dudley 911 observance.

The towns of Webster and Dudley, Massachusetts held a joint remembrance ceremony at 9:00 AM on Friday, September 11, 2026, marking the 25th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

The unified event took place at the Webster Fire Headquarters.

[1] State and town officials, local police and fire departments, veterans, and community members gathered together to honor the fallen. The ceremony recognized those who died on September 11,



2001, the military personnel who perished in the subsequent wars, and the first responders who succumbed to illnesses related to the response efforts. The local leadership shared a unified message through the Town of Dudley Facebook Page and official town alerts

detailing their shared purpose.

Are you a member of a community group - Lions, scouts, Rotary, public school, garden club - and have a photograph that you think would be of interest to readers? YankeeXpress welcomes your submission to Photo Finish. Please

email your photograph to martha@localtownpages.com and include your name, address, and phone number (for verification). We hope Photo Finish will reflect the community but we can't do it without your participation and help. Thank you.



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