

Paws for a celebration: Millbury's community dog Dusty retires

The Millbury Police Department is celebrating the retirement of Dusty, a community resource dog who spent nearly seven years helping residents, families, students, and police officers through her work with local law enforcement.

Officer Daniele Fortunato announced Dusty's retirement in a department post that reflected on their years together and the impact the comfort dog program has had on the community.

Dusty's journey began in 2019, when then-Harvard Police Chief Ed Denmark supported Fortunato's vision to establish the Harvard Police Department's first comfort dog program. In January 2020, after an extensive process, NEADS, an organization that trains assistance dogs, matched Fortunato and Dusty.

The timing coincided with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, which temporarily limited their ability to get out into the community. Fortunato said the unexpected pause gave the pair time to bond and establish a strong foundation

for their work together.

Once they could begin visiting the community, the program quickly became a staple. Dusty

alongside Dusty as the best part of her career, expressing gratitude to the individuals and families, students, officers, and community members who welcomed the pair and allowed Dusty to make a difference in their lives.

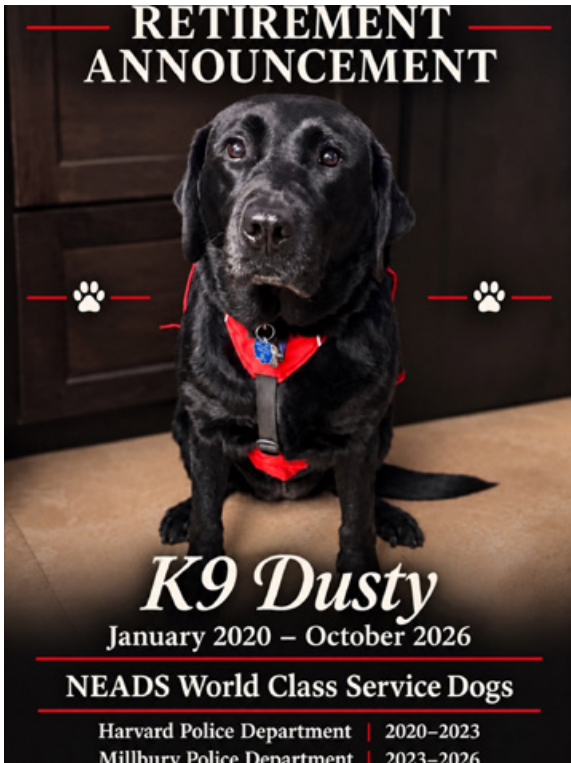
Dusty later continued her work with the Millbury Police Department as a community resource dog after Chief Brian Lewos welcomed her to the department.

In her retirement announcement, Fortunato thanked the department and the community for giving her the opportunity to share Dusty with so many people. She also reflected on the privilege of working with Dusty as her partner.

A big round of apaws for Dusty! After nearly seven years of service, Dusty's retirement marks the end of a meaningful chapter that

let the community connect with and experience a wonderful pup.

Photo shared from Dusty MPD Assistance Dog Facebook Page



Ashley Scionti, MSW, LICSW, Jail Diversion Program Co-Response Supervisor, Northbridge, Douglas, Uxbridge, Blackstone, Millville (and Natick)

Blackstone Valley Programs connect residents in crisis with long-term support

BY BRITTANY AMALFI

The mental health crisis has made a huge impact on the communities around us. However, many people are working to combat the crisis by implementing sustainable programs and providing healthy resources for those in need. The Blackstone Valley Connector (BVC), a program run by Advocates, helps by connecting people with local resources and providing ongoing support as

they work toward greater stability. Working alongside police and crisis response clinicians, the program helps residents navigate challenges that often extend beyond an emergency call.

Advocates is a nonprofit health and human services organization with approximately 2,700 employees supporting more than 50,000 people and families across Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and it launched the state's first pre-arrest co-response program in Framingham in 2003.

In the Blackstone Valley, the Blackstone Valley Connector (BVC) began in 2017, followed by the Grafton co-response program in 2022 and the Northbridge program in 2023. Grafton's program serves Grafton, Millbury and Sutton, while Northbridge's program covers Northbridge, Douglas, Uxbridge, Blackstone and Millville.

During the 2026 fiscal year, Advocates clinicians responded alongside police to 686 crisis situations across the eight towns. Their interventions helped avoid 34 arrests and 119 emergency room

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continued on page 3

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Grafton Field Hockey to host first Sticks, Strides & Community Pride 5K

The Grafton Youth Field Hockey program will host its first annual Sticks, Strides

& Community Pride 5K on Nov. 21, bringing runners and walkers together for a morning of fitness, youth sports, and community giving.

The 5K will begin at 9 a.m. at the Grafton Municipal Center and is open to runners and walkers of all ages and abilities.

Proceeds from the event will benefit the Grafton Field Hockey program and help offset the costs associated with providing local young athletes with opportunities to learn, play and grow through the sport.

While supporting Grafton's field hockey players is a primary goal of the event, organizers also hope the 5K will benefit the broader community. Participants

and community members are encouraged to bring non-perishable food donations on race day to support the Grafton Food Bank.

The event is being organized by the volunteer-run Grafton Youth Field Hockey program, which hopes the inaugural race will become an annual community tradition.

Organizers are encouraging members of the community to participate in the 5K, whether by running, walking, or donating to the food drive.

Registration and additional information about the Sticks, Strides & Community Pride 5K can be found through the Grafton Youth Field Hockey program.



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Come in and see the new renovations!

The Millbury Historical Society Museum will be open on Saturday, November 21, from 9:30 a.m. until 12 p.m.

Some of the museum's holdings include: 100 years of Aftermath yearbooks; photos of churches,

schools, downtown, and sports; scrapbooks; research books & histories of Millbury & Sutton dating back to colonial times; President Taft photos & memorabilia; military uniforms, guns, and flags.

CORRECTION: A brief item in the September 23 issue about Sutton was mistakenly published with information from Sutton, Nebraska, rather than Sutton, Massachusetts. We apologize for the error.

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SUPPORT

continued from page 1

visits. Using the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health's formula for estimating the costs of arrests and emergency room visits, Advocates calculated approximate-

provides continued support as they work toward greater stability.

Hout was named a 2026 Commonwealth Heroine after being nominated by State Representative Joseph McKenna. Hout is deeply embedded not only in the program but in the community. She and her team work closely with residents

people they serve, helping them navigate complicated systems, work through obstacles, and break overwhelming situations into manageable steps. They also coordinate with counselors, police, treatment providers, and community partners to ensure residents have support beyond the initial crisis.

In 2025, BVC received 217 referrals from police and co-response clinicians and reached 176 people. Of those reached, 156 accepted assistance. Mental health concerns, family stress, housing instability, and substance use were some of the most common needs, and they would overlap, requiring help from multiple services.

The importance of that continued support is reflected in the experience of one local man who connected with Advocates while facing homelessness, financial hardship, and a difficult family court case that left him separated from his child. As the pressures mounted, he began experiencing suicidal thoughts.

A co-response clinician helped him access inpatient mental health treatment. After his discharge, a BVC clinician worked with his outpatient counselor, who focused on trauma and coping skills, and BVC helped him address practical challenges.

Over the following year, the

program assisted him with unemployment, finances, benefits, insurance, job training, housing, and court proceedings. He received a scholarship for vocational training, support during court dates, and help coordinating appointments to reduce transportation costs.

Now, this man has completed probation, reports a reduction in suicidal thoughts of more than 95 percent, and has reestablished positive contact with his child. After an extended period of homelessness, he is also near the top of the waiting list for affordable local

SUPPORT

continued on page 7



Danielle Barry, MSW, LCSW, Jail Diversion Program Co-Response Clinician, Uxbridge, Blackstone, Millville (left) and Officer Jacquelyn Brimmer of Douglas PD and JDP liaison (right).

ly \$504,000 in public savings.

While co-response clinicians help residents through an immediate crisis, BVC works to address the challenges that may have contributed to it. Led by Lori Hout, the post-response program connects residents with resources and

to connect them with housing assistance, substance use treatment, mental health care, family support, and other local resources.

The work usually requires more than providing someone with a phone number or a list of agencies. BVC employees walk alongside the



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Nine ballot questions to appear on November ballots

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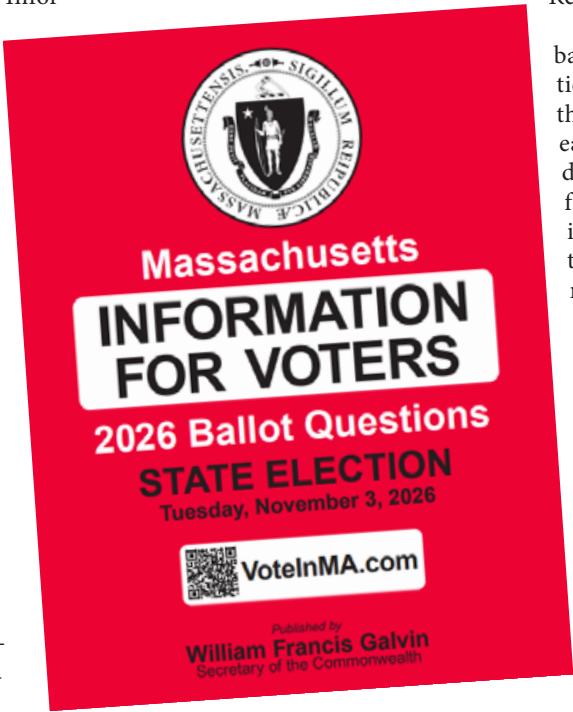
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office, the official 2026 Information for Voters book (also known as the Red Book) was recently mailed to each voter's residential address as well as public locations throughout the state.

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.

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2nd Friday: Blackstone Valley South: Douglas, Northbridge & Uxbridge

4th Friday: The YankeeXpress North: Auburn, Oxford

4th Friday: Blackstone Valley North: Grafton, Millbury & Sutton

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How to make the most of open enrollment this year



Jamie DeCaire

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Every fall, an email lands in Maya's inbox announcing open enrollment. And every year, she quickly clicks "renew" and moves on.

Open enrollment is when you choose your medical and other workplace benefits for the coming year. Most companies hold it in the fall. Once it

closes, you usually can't make changes unless there's a major life event, like marriage, divorce or a new child.

This year's decisions may carry more weight than usual. Many workers are facing higher health care costs, making it especially important to understand what you're paying for and what protection you're receiving in return.

It's tempting to renew last year's choices, but you owe your future self more. Your employer's plans, providers or costs may have changed, and your life might look different from a year ago, perhaps with a new dependent or new medical needs. A fresh look helps ensure your benefits match your life.

Compare health plans. Employers often offer more than one health, dental or vision option. Rather than simply glancing at the monthly premium, look at the total potential cost of each plan, including deduct-

ibles, copays, coinsurance and out-of-pocket maximums.

Check whether your doctors are in network, your prescriptions are covered and what you'd pay out of pocket for visits and medications. If you and your spouse both have coverage, compare the plans. Some employers charge a fee if you enroll a partner who has their own workplace coverage.

Check your life insurance. Many employers provide basic coverage, often one or two times your salary, with the option to buy more. If your family has grown or your responsibilities increased, make sure that amount still fits your needs. If you've maxed out employer coverage, consider supplementing it with an individual policy.

Consider disability coverage. Short-term disability coverage, along with paid sick leave and emergency savings, should help bridge income gaps

for up to six months during recovery from surgery, illness or childbirth. Long-term disability insurance should protect you if you can't work for an extended period, up to age 65. Ideally, it should replace up to 100% of your after-tax income.

Look for tax-friendly accounts. Flexible spending accounts (FSAs) and health savings accounts (HSAs) let you use pretax dollars for eligible medical expenses. If you have dependents, ask about a dependent care FSA to pay for care costs. Remember that FSAs are use-it-or-lose-it, so contribute only what you expect to spend. HSAs, available with high-deductible plans, allow unused funds to roll over and can help supplement retirement savings.

Consider your retirement plan. While your retirement plan usually isn't part of open enrollment, this is a good time to revisit it. Make sure that, at a

minimum, you're contributing enough to earn any employer's match.

Back to Maya. This year, she sets aside an hour, pours a cup of coffee and reads her options. She's adding more life insurance and increasing her HSA contribution. Open enrollment may never be thrilling, but time spent now can mean a more confident year for you and the people who count on you.

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Healthier Baking in the Blackstone Valley – October 2026

BY CHRISTINE GALEONE

Have you noticed that autumn seems to have a new name? The season of mesmerizing foliage, bountiful harvests, and pumpkin patches has been referred to by many as pumpkin spice season. Whether in jest or not, it's easy to see why. The demand for the popular spice seems to increase each fall exponentially.

But while many people crave pumpkin spice during this time of the year, not everyone who does likes pumpkin. That explains all of the popular beverages that contain the spice without any pumpkin. Treats, however, are generally made with both.

So, these pumpkin spice streusel muffins should be a welcome change for many people.

The main reason that this treat is a bit healthier is that it will fulfill your craving for pumpkin spice without the enormous amount of sugar and artificial ingredients that follow it into those spiced drinks. Making a pumpkin spice treat at home reduces the unhealthy ingredients significantly. So, it's a treat that you can feel better about consuming.

Another factor that makes these muffins healthier is their ingredients. Cashews, for instance, are rich in many nutrients. They provide fiber, healthy fats, protein and antioxidants such as polyphenols. Addition-

ally, they're a good source of magnesium, zinc, copper, vitamin B6, vitamin K, manganese and phosphorus. They are believed to offer better heart health, immunity and blood sugar regulation. And they may help lower the risk of stroke.

Pumpkin spice – which primarily consists of cinnamon, ginger, cloves and nutmeg—also has nutritional benefits. Cinnamon has antioxidant properties. Ginger has antibacterial properties. Cloves are rich in manganese and contain powerful antioxidant properties. And nutmeg has antibacterial and antioxidant properties.



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- 1 tsp. of Pumpkin Spice
- 2 Eggs
- ½ Cup of Olive Oil or Salted Butter
- ¾ Cup of Milk
- 2 tsp. of Vanilla

Streusel Topping:

- 1 Cup of Unsalted Cashews (not roasted)
- ½ Cup of Brown Sugar
- 2 Tbsp. of Butter or Olive Oil
- 2 Tbsp. of Flour
- 2 tsp. of Pumpkin Spice

Directions:

Combine flour, one teaspoon of pumpkin spice and baking soda in a large bowl. Combine sugar, butter (or olive oil), milk, vanilla and eggs in a separate bowl. Mix together the dry ingredients with the

wet ingredients. Pour half of the batter evenly into 12 muffin cups. Combine the streusel ingredients and distribute half evenly over the muffin batter. Then, distribute the second half of the batter. Finally, distribute the remaining streusel for the topping. Bake at 400 degrees for about 20-25 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool until warm.

There are many delicious pumpkin desserts. But you can enjoy the spice without the pumpkin in some equally delicious ones. Happy (healthier) fall baking!

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continued from page 3

housing.

“The police are often the first ones called when someone’s in crisis, and they see people on their hardest days,” said Opal Stone, Vice President of Community Justice Services at Advocates. “Having our clinicians there with them means that when someone in Blackstone

Valley doesn't need a jail cell or an ER visit, they can get the right care and remain in their community. Then BVC stays with them through whatever comes next. Our police partners have been all in, and that's why it works."

The Blackstone Valley programs are part of Advocates' statewide co-response network, which served 23 communities in the fiscal year of 2025. Across those communities, clinicians responded to 3,937

crisis situations, helping avoid 262 arrests and 771 emergency room visits. The estimated public savings totaled \$3.5 million.

The impact of the BVC program has begun to make a difference in the community as these dedicated individuals work tirelessly to help people in need. With clinicians providing support for long-term stability, the program is built on relationships, and ensuring people know they are not alone in their



Lori Hout, LICSW, CARC, JDP Blackstone Valley Post-Response Supervisor

The Blackstone Valley Emergency Shelter is gearing up for their Festival of Trees!

Blackstone Valley Festival of Trees supports the Blackstone Valley Emergency Shelter and could really use your help.

They are starting to get ready for our 4th Annual Festival of Trees on December 4, 5, and 6, and they could use your help. They will need:

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at the available shifts. They can't thank you enough for considering to help the shelter share hope throughout the Valley!

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fight. The goal is to identify what drives these repeated crises and which supports and resources can help reduce them. There is a lot of work to be done, but the team at the BVC is ready to keep taking on the challenge of building a better community.

*Alexis Meissner, M.A., Jail Diversion Program
Co-Response Clinician Grafton, Millbury
Sutton (left) and Officer Robert Guyan of
Millbury PD (right)*

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Fire trucks and family fun at Millbury Fire Department's open house

The Millbury Fire Department held its annual Open House last night at Fire Headquarters as part of Fire Prevention Week. Community members came out to visit with firefighters and check out the department's apparatus, including its new tanker.

Families had the opportunity to tour the trucks, enjoy pizza, popcorn, and drinks, and spend time getting to know the firefighters who serve the community.

The Millbury Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary was also on hand selling Fire Department/Cancer Awareness T-shirts, along with adorable Dalmatian stuffed ani-

mals available for adoption. The department thanked everyone who attended and showed their support, expressing appreciation for the continued support the community provides to the Millbury Fire Department.

Photos from Millbury Fire's Facebook Page



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Whitin Community Center announces exclusive Black Friday Scratch-Off Event with unbeatable membership deals

Get ready to kick off your Black Friday shopping with an exciting and unique twist at the Whitin Community Center (WCC)! On Friday, November 27th, exclusively in person from

8 a.m. to 10 a.m., we're offering a limited-time opportunity for both new and existing members to snag huge discounts on memberships through our Black Friday Scratch-Off Event.

Attendees will receive a scratch card that reveals their discount on membership fees, ranging from 30%, 40%, 50%, to an incredible 75% OFF! Plus, to make this event even more thrilling, one lucky winner will walk away with a FREE membership. Everyone is guaranteed at least 30% OFF!

"This event is unlike the other membership promotions we offer throughout the year," says Heather Elster, Executive Director at Whitin Community Center. "Not only does everyone walk away a winner with substantial savings, but the excitement of revealing your scratch-card discount adds a fun and interactive element to our Black Friday event."

The in-person-only event is open to all new and current members of the WCC. Supplies are limited; we have just 300 scratch tickets available, so attendees are encouraged to arrive early to secure their scratch cards and take advantage of the unbeatable

discounts.

Mark your calendars and don't miss this chance to unlock incredible savings at the Whitin Community Center's Black Friday event. Whether you're a fitness enthusiast or just looking for a great deal, you won't want to miss this opportunity!

For more information, visit www.WhitinCommunityCenter.com or contact a Member Services Representative at 508.234.8184.

The Whitin Community Center is committed to enhancing the health and well-being of individuals and families and building a strong community in the Blackstone Valley. We offer social, recreational, educational, and outreach programs that bring community members of all ages and backgrounds together. The Whitin Community Center is the Blackstone Valley's most complete family and recreation center with two swimming pools, a gym, fitness center, early learning programs, summer camps and a seven and a half acre park. For more information call 508.234.8184 or visit www.WhitinCommunityCenter.com.

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SPORTS

Mini but mighty: Sutton Field Hockey

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

The Sutton field hockey team went an impressive 12-3-3 to earn themselves a four seed in the Division 4 State Tournament last fall. Once there, the Suzies dispatched South Hadley 5-0 and Westport 5-1 to advance into the Round of Eight, where they unfortunately were upset by

ranking of seven. Against Auburn, the team was disconnected and, according to the coach, didn't really show up and play as a unit. It was an eye-opener, and she realized they needed to change some things if they wanted to succeed for the rest of the season. After the Auburn loss, the team made adjustments and bounced back with two big wins over Northbridge and #4 Quabbin, 5-1 each.

the leadership to these four girls. According to the coach, they are not only great role models but have embraced the challenge and have shown the younger kids the culture of the Sutton field hockey program.

Peyton Winchel, who has been in the program since the seventh grade, is the team's one and only goalie on the roster and will be someone that Bellavance will be monitoring closely.

'young but mighty!'

On the offensive side of the field, the younger athletes have all stepped up their games in the midfield - Nora Renaud, Adriana L'Heureux, and Ava Carey, all eighth graders. Seventh grader Harper Legendre has been splitting time with Quill on the forward line.

Megan Hastings, a junior defensive right back, has also been playing well for the Suzies through the early games.

The goal coming into the season was for Sutton to finish as a top team in the CMAC and then move on to the playoffs, where they would take it one game at a time.

"I firmly believe that if we keep the momentum going, I think that we can go out there and continue to beat teams," Bellavance said. "We just need to stay disciplined,

and if we do, a Final 4 spot is not off the table."

The coaching staff is still navigating the ages of the players as they make conscious choices while embracing one another. Bellavance is proud of what they have been able to do while being held accountable. Thus far, the girls have been able to roll with the punches; there have already been four different formations trying to find what fits the team best.

The biggest thing on the table is that the entire team has a common goal, which has helped them immensely get through the early stages of the season. No one has backed down or gotten frustrated with the changes; they just go with it and respond quickly in hopes they can accomplish their goals.

Photo supplied by Coach Sarah Bellavance



Frontier Regional 2-1. Coming into this season, coach Sarah Bellavance had lost not only seven seniors to graduation but also a junior who transferred out of the school. Needless to say, this fall's team is going to be a rather young one.

"Now that we're a few games in, the girls are starting to find their groove and are becoming more familiar with the formations and dynamics of the team," the Sutton Coach said. "I am used to girls who have been together for a long time, so this is different to me as well, but the older girls are stepping up and taking the younger ones under their wings."

At the time of this writing, Sutton was 5-3-2 with a power

With those two strong victories, the coach knew the girls' skill set would give them the confidence they needed to fulfill their potential.

"They knew that it was going to be a challenge with some rough patches coming in waves," Bellavance said. "But I feel that they've turned the corner, and although they still need some developing, they are improving and have yet to reach their peak."

Leading the team on the field are the four captains: forward Sophia Quill, the team's only senior, and junior defenders Caitlyn Williams, Hailey Black, and Ava Slivka. Having lost so many talented seniors, Bellavance has entrusted

"It will definitely be another element that we are going to have to manage," she said. "Peyton has gone through a tough stretch taking part in league (CMAC A) games, but the team has come together to support her, and she has played really well. She still has to work on her game, but she has the grit and determination."

With Winchel being the only goalie and Sutton not having a junior varsity team for the first time since Bellavance's arrival 13 years ago, things could get very interesting if Winchel happens to go down. This year's squad consists of only one senior, nine juniors, three eighth graders and two seventh graders. The coach says the team is



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Grafton Police Department welcomes new K9, Xena!

The Grafton Police Department is bringing back its K9 Unit thanks to the generosity of local businesses, organizations, and community members.

The department recently announced the arrival of Xena, named after the fictional warrior princess, who will join K9 Sergeant Joe Coggans as she prepares to serve the community.

The department thanked several businesses and organizations for helping make the return of the K9 Unit possible, including Massachusetts Vest-A-Dog, Homefield Credit Union, Sunshine Sign Company Inc., All Steel Fabrication, Leone's Corp.,

Perreault Nurseries, Green Block Properties, Fitzzy's Car and Pet Wash, Collette Motors, Gaudette Insurance Agency Inc., Metalogic Industries of Southbridge and the Committee to Elect David Muradian Jr.

The department also recognized Bonnie and John Lloyd, Kendal Leofanti, owner of Kenny's Canine, and Grafton residents who contributed to the effort.

Xena is currently preparing for a 3,600-mile journey from Germany, where she has lived her entire life, to Grafton. Once she arrives, she will begin working with Coggans through the rigor-

ous K9 certification program.

The department plans to share updates on Xena's journey and explain how residents can follow her progress as she prepares to join the community.

The Grafton Police Department thanked everyone who helped bring the unit back, noting that the community's support made the effort possible.

Photo from Grafton Police Department's Facebook Page

State Representative Soter announces 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant for Blackstone-Millville Regional School District

BOSTON – State Representative Michael Soter (R-Belling-

ham) is pleased to announce that the Blackstone-Millville Regional

School District has been selected to receive funding through the

FY27 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) Exemplary Programs Grant.

The competitive grant, administered by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), is designed to deepen student learning while strengthening a statewide network of high-quality 21st Century Community Learning Center programs.

The Blackstone-Millville Regional School District's Frederick W. Hartnett Middle School has been awarded \$148,326 through the program. Funding will support the district's continued efforts to provide high-quality learning opportunities while identifying and developing exemplary practices that can serve as models, resources, and mentorship opportunities for other programs across the Commonwealth.

Rep. Soter said in a statement, "This funding is a great invest-

ment in the students of Blackstone and Millville. I am proud to see the Hartnett Middle School recognized for its work to provide students with meaningful learning opportunities. I look forward to seeing how this funding will help the district continue building upon that success and serve as a resource for schools across the Commonwealth."

The Exemplary Programs Grant is available to eligible 21st CCLC programs that have completed established competitive funding cycles and met state grant and program requirements. The program recognizes experienced learning centers that have demonstrated the ability to implement successful practices and share those approaches with other communities.

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October 2026 Interpretive Programs at Blackstone River Greenway Visitor Center at Worcester

All programs are free and open to the public. Registration is not required. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Dress for the weather and wear appropriate footwear. Meet at the Visitor Center unless otherwise stated. Programming is subject to change or cancellation. For the most up to date programming information, call (508) 373-7056

Reasonable accommodations available upon advance notice.

To make a request, please contact Moneesha Dasgupta at (617) 645-0358 or moneesha.dasgupta2@mass.gov.

The Blackstone River Greenway Visitor Center at Worcester is located at 3 Paul Clancy Way, Worcester MA 01607.

VISITOR CENTER EXHIBIT TOUR

Saturdays, 11 – 11:30 a.m.

Join us on a tour of the Heritage Center's exhibit hall! Learn

how the Blackstone Canal helped transform Worcester from a sleepy county seat to a thriving industrial city and hub for immigration and innovation. Appropriate for ages 6 and up.

WOODLANDS AND WATERWAYS

Saturday, October 31, 2 – 3 p.m.

Walk along the banks of the Blackstone River and learn about the life that it supports. We'll look for signs of wildlife as we discuss

the ways we can keep our watershed clean! Appropriate for ages 12 and up. The walk is ~1 mile over a paved surface with slight inclines. Meet 205 North Main Street, Millbury, MA. Bathrooms and water are not available at this site.

MILL TO MEADOW

Saturday, October 24, 2 – 3 p.m.

The land on which the Visitor Center stands was once the large-

est factory complex in Worcester — and now not a single building remains! In 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. About ¼ mile over paved surfaces.

BVT Admissions to Hold Open House: Tours Available November 12

UPTON – Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) will hold an Admissions Open House for prospective students and their families on Thursday, November 12, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. No registration is needed.

The evening is an opportunity to tour the state-of-the-art facility located at 65 Pleasant Street in Upton and see for yourself how BVT is transforming education and the lives of its students. Meet staff members who will be on hand as a resource to answer questions about academics, student support services, student

activities, and the admissions process.

The schedule of events will include mini-sessions featuring the Special Education program and the support available to students at BVT and during the application process. Also, learn more about the Spanish Immersion program and how to enroll.

If you are interested in learning more, visit www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/admissionsopen-house.

About Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT):

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School serves the towns of Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Grafton, Hopedale, Mendon, Milford, Millbury, Millville, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, and Uxbridge. Located in the heart of the Blackstone Valley, BVT creates a positive learning community that prepares students for personal and professional success in an internationally competitive society through a fusion of rigorous vocational, technical, and academic skills.

Second Annual Heritage Day featuring The Aldrich School and Whitin Park

Presented by Whitinsville Downtown Crossroads Historic District Commission

Join the Downtown Crossroads Historic District Commission and the Whitin Community Center to celebrate the Aldrich School and Whitin Park! The Second Annual Heritage Day event will feature tours, a Scarecrow Contest, music, food trucks, and activities for all ages.

Guided tours of the historic Whitin Park grounds will also be held throughout the afternoon to give visitors a deeper understanding of how the Park has evolved over the decades. The future of the Aldrich School on Hill Street will also be front and center, with tours highlighting renovation work car-

ried out over the past year.

Community Center staff will collect stories from community members who attended or worked at Aldrich School as the Center builds a history of Whitinsville's oldest school ahead of next year's Grand Re-Opening. Heritage Day is a free event, rain or shine, being held from 12- 4 p.m. on Saturday, October 24. For more information on Heritage Day, stop by the Community Center and follow both the WCC and the Whitinsville Downtown Crossroads Historic District Commission on Facebook for updates throughout the month. See you on the 24th!





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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 campus. 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.

UniBank announces launch of nonprofit resource center

UniBank, the largest mutually-owned Community Bank headquartered in Central Massachusetts, is proud to highlight the launch of its Nonprofit Resource Center, a dedicated initiative designed to help nonprofit organizations strengthen their operations, expand their reach, and maximize their impact throughout Central Massachusetts and beyond.

As community needs continue to evolve, nonprofit organizations face increasing challenges related to funding, leadership development, strategic planning, and operational efficiency. UniBank's Nonprofit Resource Center serves as a trusted hub where nonprofit leaders can access educational resources, networking opportunities, industry expertise, and professional development programs tailored to their unique needs.

The Nonprofit Resource Center reflects UniBank's longstanding commitment to community investment and nonprofit partnership. Through workshops, training sessions, collaborative events, and access to subject matter experts, the Center equips nonprofit professionals with practical tools to help their organizations grow sustainably and serve their communities more effectively.

"Nonprofits are at the heart of our communities," said Ed Augustus, CEO of UniBank. "They address some of our region's most pressing challenges, from housing and education to health care, food security, and economic opportunity. Through UniBank's Nonprofit Resource Center, we are committed to providing organizations with the knowledge, connections, and resources they need to grow their capacity and deepen their impact. When nonprofits succeed, our entire community benefits."

The Nonprofit Resource Center offers programming that supports organizations at every stage of

development, from emerging nonprofits seeking foundational guidance to established organizations focused on long-term growth and sustainability. Topics will include board governance, fundraising strategies, financial management, leadership development, marketing, volunteer engagement, and organizational planning.

In addition to educational programming, the Nonprofit Resource Center creates opportunities for nonprofit leaders to connect with peers, share best practices, and build collaborative relationships. These connections often lead to innovative solutions and partnerships that help organizations address community needs more effectively.

UniBank's commitment to the nonprofit sector is deeply rooted in its mission as a community-focused financial institution. The bank has a long history of supporting local organizations through charitable giving, sponsorships, volunteerism, and community engagement initiatives.

By combining financial expertise with a genuine understanding of community challenges, UniBank continues to be more than a banking partner. The Nonprofit Resource Center exemplifies the institution's belief that strong nonprofits are essential to creating vibrant, resilient communities.

"As we look to the future, UniBank remains committed to strengthening the nonprofit ecosystem throughout our region," Augustus added. "Our goal is to help organizations become stronger, more sustainable, and better equipped to fulfill their missions for years to come."

Nonprofit leaders interested in learning more about the Nonprofit Resource Center and upcoming programs are encouraged to visit UniBank's website at www.unibank.com/banking-for-nonprofits

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Grafton Pumpkin Roll November 7 at Fairview Cemetery

Pumpkin must be properly prepared for composting before recycling. Please see event page for more info!

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NOVEMBER 7, 2026

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Residents can recycle their Halloween pumpkins at Grafton's annual Pumpkin Roll on Saturday, Nov. 7, from 10 a.m. to noon at Fairview Cemetery, 380 Providence Road.

The event offers a fun way to recycle old pumpkins while competing for prizes. Participants will roll their pumpkins, and prizes will be awarded to the fastest roll!

Check-in is required by 10:30 a.m. Pumpkins must be properly prepared for composting before they can be recycled. Residents are encouraged to visit the event page for additional information about preparation requirements.

Those who cannot attend the Pumpkin Roll can still drop off their pumpkins between 11 a.m. and noon for a chance to win a roll of Grafton trash bags.

The event gives residents a chance to keep pumpkins out of the trash while enjoying a seasonal activity with the community.

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Our Lady of Hope Parish to host Annual Harvest Fair Nov. 7

Our Lady of Hope Parish will host its annual Harvest Fair fundraiser on Saturday, Nov. 7, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. James Church Hall, 89 Main St. in South Grafton.

The fair will feature a variety of activities, shopping opportunities, raffles, and food for visitors of all ages.

The craft area will offer home-made crafts and plants, while the silent auction will feature new and vintage items, along with a variety of gift certificates. Visitors can also browse themed gift baskets available for purchase, as well as additional baskets available through bidding.

The money raffle will feature a top prize of \$1,000, along with prizes of \$500, \$250 and \$100. A separate 50/50 raffle will run from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

The large raffle area will feature a 58-inch Westinghouse Smart TV with 4K UHD and Roku, including a three-year warranty; a Weber grill and pizza oven combination; and a mini freezer and refrigerator stocked with goodies.

The expanded Kids Zone, located on the lower level, will offer free temporary tattoos, games with prizes and Secret Santa gift-making activities for a reasonable fee. The

expanded White Elephant area will provide bargain-hunting opportunities and include a jewelry boutique.

Visitors can also stop by the bake table for homemade treats or enjoy breakfast and lunch in the kitchen area, beginning at 9 a.m. and continuing while supplies last.

Organizers invite community members to browse the fair, shop for gifts, enjoy a meal and spend time with friends while supporting Our Lady of Hope Parish.

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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. LUKE continued on page 15

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BEST OF CENTRAL MASS 2024

ETIQUETTE EXPRESS: Making everyday interactions better

Can we talk about that?

Etiquette & Leadership Coach, helping people show up with confidence, kindness, and credibility.

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 graciously.

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.investinuma.com

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LUKE

continued from page 14

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 land-

scape 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!" *

Write to Amy
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Visit Luke on IG @livingwith-lukevalentino

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Q. I have been following a story out of California that, in a few years, the state will require special low rolling resistance tires to improve fuel economy. Although I am always looking to get more miles per gallon on my truck, I don't like the idea of being told I can only buy a certain type of tire. Will these rules be implemented on the East Coast?

A. Studies show that when the rules are fully implemented, California motorists could save up to \$1 billion annually in fuel and energy costs and avoid approximately 2 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions each year. Will this initially cost consumers more? Studies estimate an increase of about \$6 to \$30 per set of tires. Another unknown, from what I have read, concerns tread life. These tires also need to meet a minimum wet-grip requirement while still maintaining low rolling resistance. My biggest concern is that, as a vehicle ages, its use often changes. The truck or car you drive as your primary transportation today may become a second or third vehicle in the household and may not justify the expense of a premium low-rolling-resistance tire. In theory, regulations like this could limit consumer choice and make it harder to match the tire to the vehicle's actual use. To answer your original question, as of now, I know of no states that are looking to adopt this legislation.

Q. I have an old 2000 Chevy Silverado. Recently when I go to fill it up no matter which way I turn the nozzle I have to go super slow or the handle will shut off. Any ideas why this is hap-

pening?

A. This is usually a result of a clogged vent which is part of the evaporative emissions system. A plugged or clogged EVAP vent valve is quite common especially in 20-year or older vehicles. If the vent can't open, the tank cannot breathe while filling. I would start with a visual inspection. A kinked vent hose is also a possibility. In addition, an emissions code that points to an EVAP issue will also be a clue to the problem.

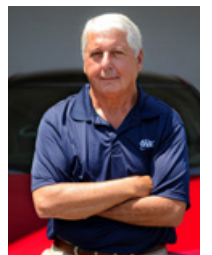
Q. My 2014 Chrysler 300 has had an intermittent no-start problem since new. The dash lights flash, but the engine won't start. A roadside technician recently suggested turning the steering wheel while pressing the brake and start button, which worked. No diagnostic codes have ever been found. What could be causing this?

A. Once you've checked the basics, including battery condition, electrical connections, and the key fob battery, it's time to look at the symptoms. I suspect the steering wheel is placing enough pressure on the steering lock mechanism to occasionally bind, preventing the lock from releasing and the vehicle from starting. Without diagnostic trouble codes and with a problem that occurs only occasionally, pinpointing the exact cause can be challenging. Unfortunately, intermittent issues like this can be difficult and expensive to diagnose because the vehicle often operates normally when inspected.

Q. I am an AAA member and looking for a reliable and reasonable repair shop for my Acura and Honda near me.

A. AAA has Approved Auto Repair Facilities nationwide. These facilities pro-

vide a 2-year 24,000-mile warranty and up to a \$75 total discount in labor charges for AAA members. If there is ever an issue with the repair or the repair process, someone from one of the approved auto repair specialists can get involved and help you solve any issues. Go to aaa.com/repair to find an AAA approved shop in your area.



BY JOHN PAUL

Q. I had some scratches on the hood of my Buick and tried to remove them with Turtle Wax Rubbing Compound. Instead, it seems to have removed some of the clear coat. The instructions didn't warn about this possibility, and Turtle Wax never responded to my complaint. The dealer quoted \$4,200 to repaint the hood. Do I have any other options?

A. Much like sandpaper, paint-care products vary in aggressiveness. Waxes and polishes add shine, polishing compounds remove minor surface defects, and rubbing compounds are designed to cut into the top layer of the finish to remove heavier scratches and oxidation. Before considering a costly repaint, I would visit a reputable automotive detail shop. A skilled detailer may be able to improve the appearance with paint correction and polishing. Another lower-cost option is a wipe-on clear coat restoration product. While not a permanent repair, these products can often restore gloss and improve appearance at a fraction of the cost of repainting.

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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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The Northbridge Historical Society

The Northbridge Historical Society will meet Monday November 2 at 7 p.m. at the Singh Theater, located at Open Sky/Alternatives, 50 Douglas Road Whitinsville. Richard Vanden Berg is our speaker on the Declaration of Independence. Vanden Berg taught history at Whitinsville Christian School for decades and has a weekly YouTube presentation on historical events posted every Wednesday morning. The Declaration of Independence is our birth certificate, justifying severing ties with Great Britain, and inspiring global initiatives for self-determination and human rights. It was written by a committee, and it has no enforceable legal standing. In the Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln echoed the Declaration's assertion that "all men are created equal" and "are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights," including "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Vanden Berg will share the rest of the story and explain why it matters. The program, the second of our fifty-sixth season, will follow a short business meeting led by President

John Walker, Jr., who has updates on the Christmas party plans. The Northbridge Historical Society collects, organizes, preserves and shares Northbridge history. Our headquarters is the James Fletcher

homestead at One Elm Place. Our membership is open to everyone who is interested in our programs and purposes.

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NOTE: Community bulletin board-type items are welcome for inclusion in the Happenings! section of the Xpress newspapers. Please allow enough lead time for publication. Email your calendar or event notice to news@theyankeexpress.com

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THROUGH SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31

• Pumpkin Patch Fundraiser: Holy Spirit Episcopal Church will host its annual Pumpkin Patch Fundraiser from Oct. 17 through Oct. 31 at the church, 3 Pleasant Street, Sutton. The pumpkin patch will be open from 10:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, and from noon to 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Proceeds from the fundraiser will support Holy Spirit ministries and outreach programs in the community. Visitors can stop by to choose a pumpkin while supporting the church's work throughout the community. For more information, contact Holy Spirit Episcopal Church at 508-865-3103 or visit the church during the fundraiser.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24

• The Blackstone Valley Crop Hunger Walk will be held on Saturday, October 24, 2026. The walk will start at 9 am at the Village Congregational Church in Whitinsville with registration at 8:30 am. For more information, contact Barbara Fortin at 508-234-2137.

• Home Baked Ham & Bean Supper, October 24th, 2026 at 5:00 pm in the Community House, 8 Court St, Uxbridge located behind the Uxbridge Town Common. Sponsored by the Uxbridge Congregational Church. Menu includes baked ham, home baked beans, potato salad, coleslaw, brown bread, beverages & dessert. Donation of \$15.00 per adult, children under 6 free. Raffles will also be available. For reservations call 818-430-3732. Limited tickets will be sold at door. Come enjoy great food and fellowship.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25

• Pawtoberfest: 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Uxbridge Dog Park, 375 Sutton St, Uxbridge

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7

• Our popular, annual Harvest Fair fundraiser to benefit Our Lady of Hope Parish will be held at St. James Church Hall, 89 Main Street, S. Grafton on Saturday, November 7th, 2026, from 9AM - 3PM. There will be something for everyone. We've increased our top Money Raffle prize to \$1,000 and the White Elephant area, plus our expanded 'Kids Zone' this year as well! Come browse, buy, have breakfast or lunch, meet friends, and have fun!

• St. Peter's Parish will hold its Annual Holiday Fair on Saturday, November 7th, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the parish hall at 39 Church Avenue, Northbridge. The community is invited to come out

with family and friends for a fun-filled day featuring tables, raffles, food, and holiday shopping. Visitors can browse the popular White Elephant, Baked Goods, Holiday, and Craft Tables, with the Craft Table featuring beautiful handmade items and quilts. The fair will also offer numerous opportunities to try your luck, including raffle tables, a scratch ticket raffle, a quilt raffle, and a gift basket raffle. With a wide selection of raffle items, attendees never know what they might discover. Food will also be available throughout the day. St. Peter's Parish welcomes everyone from the Northbridge community and surrounding area to come enjoy the Annual Holiday Fair and help support the parish. For more information, contact the St. Peter's Parish Office at 508-234-2156 or email parishoffice@stpeterrockdale.org.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13

• Ladies Night Out. The Millbury Women's Club will hold its annual fundraiser, "Ladies Night Out," on Friday, Nov. 13, at 6 p.m. This year's event will feature the Delvena Theater Company and actress Lynne Moulton in the one-woman play "Thirteen Things About Ed Carpolotti." The play follows Virginia Carpolotti, a devoted wife whose husband has died, leaving her with extensive debts that must be repaid immediately. Tickets are \$45 per person, and space is limited. For reservations, contact Mary Lou Mulhane at 508-865-9831.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14

• Pasta and Meatball Dinner & Music Concert: Join us at Saint Peter's Parish in Northbridge for a wonderful evening of delicious food and music. A Pasta & Meatball Dinner & Music Concert on Saturday, November 14th, starting at 5:30 pm in the parish hall. Tickets are \$20 per person for the dinner & concert. All orders must be purchased in advance by Tuesday, November 10th. Come enjoy a great evening while supporting the care and maintenance of our parish organ! Please call 508-234-2156 or email the

parish office: parishoffice@stpeterrockdale.org for tickets.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21

• The Armenian Church of Whitinsville, Soorp Asdvadzadzin Armenian Apostolic Church, will celebrate the season with its annual Fall Festival on Saturday, November 21, bringing together friends, families and members of the community for a day of Armenian food, shopping, fellowship and fun. The festival will be held at the Christian Reformed Church Hall on Cross Street in Whitinsville. Doors open at 10:30 a.m., with food service beginning at 11 a.m. Visitors will find something for everyone, including: Ladies Guild Food Table featuring homemade Armenian specialties; Dessert Table with an assortment of sweet treats; Armenian Vendor offering Armenian-inspired gifts and merchandise; Craft Table featuring handmade items; Silent Auction with a variety of items to bid on; White Elephant Table with gently used treasures and surprises; Post Office: purchase a shipping box filled with surprise items. The Fall Festival offers an opportunity to experience Armenian culture and hospitality while supporting the Armenian Church of Whitinsville's activities and programs. The public is warmly invited to attend. Come hungry, browse the tables, discover something special, and enjoy a day of community and Armenian hospitality.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6

• Holiday Fun at Unitarian Universalist Church 3 Grafton Common - December 6, 12-3 p.m. Warm apple crisp, cocoa, and coffee; specialty items for sale; s'mores kits and fire pit in the churchyard; free kids' crafts. 1 p.m. Festive Handbell Choir and Community Sing-a-long with dramatic reading of "Twas the Night Before Christmas". All are welcome.

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11/14	PETTY LARCENY: A TRIBUTE TO THE MUSIC OF TOM PETTY
11/18	HOLIDAY CUSTOM SWAG WORKSHOP FROM BEMIS FARMS NURSERY
11/21	LITTLE LIES: A TRIBUTE TO FLEETWOOD MAC
11/27	AFFINITY: A TRIBUTE TO THE MUSIC OF JOURNEY
12/5	THE FOOLS
12/11	COMEDY NIGHT WITH KELLY MACFARLAND, KENDRA CUNNINGHAM & GARRETT FINN
1/8	VIVA LAS ELVIS: ELVIS PRESLEY'S 92 ND BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION WITH AWARD-WINNING TRIBUTE ARTIST DAN FONTAINE

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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 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.



Arlene Nicholson and Thomas D'Agostino

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.

Practical Nursing open house at BVT

Tours Available October 26

The adult education program in Practical Nursing at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) prepares students for personal and professional success as practical nurses. Those 18 and older who are interested in pursuing a career in health care are invited to attend an Open House from 6 to 8 p.m. Monday, Oct. 26.

The evening will provide an opportunity to tour the practical nursing classrooms at 65 Pleasant St. in Upton, speak with faculty, staff and students, observe state-of-the-art equipment and participate in a question-and-answer session. Attendees will learn more about the part-time, 60-week evening program, including admission requirements, the application process and enrollment.

All 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 testing

locations.

"It is a great time to enter the nursing field because there's such a need for skilled nurses," said Practical Nursing Coordinator Joann L. Monks, MBA, MSc, RN-BC, RMA.

The affordable program offers small class sizes and accepts in-district, out-of-district and out-of-state applicants. For more information about the program and to register for the Open House, visit www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/pno-penhouse.

About Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High

School (BVT):

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School serves the towns of Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Grafton, Hopedale, Mendon, Milford, Millbury, Millville, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, and Uxbridge. Located in the heart of the Blackstone Valley, BVT creates a positive learning community that prepares students for personal and professional success in an internationally competitive society through a fusion of rigorous vocational, technical, and academic skills.

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