

Local yokel

West Stockbridge
January
2017

(n.) a country folk living in a quaint neighborhood community

Inside this issue ...

**BFAIR in West
Stockbridge**

Solar Electric Farms

**West Stockbridge
Sparkles . . . Again!**

Happy 2017 to all!!!

*Frosted reed grass in a wetland near
State Line. Photo by John Parker.*

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 2005

BFAIR Provides Home for Women with Disabilities in West Stockbridge

By John Parker

The *Local Yokel* was recently invited to visit a home in West Stockbridge established by Berkshire Family and Individual Resources (BFAIR) to serve the needs of four women with acquired brain injuries. Being unfamiliar with both the organization and the residence, I was delighted to accept the invitation. I found a very attractive, well-maintained single-story home on Iron Mine Road that blended in well with the neighborhood.

BFAIR is a not-for-profit human service agency providing adult family care, residential, clinical, vocational, individual and family support, recreation, and day habilitation services for adults and children with developmental disabilities, acquired brain injury, autism, and home care for elders. With offices in North Adams and Pittsfield and nearly 300 employees, the organization established its first residential home for people with disabilities in 1994. Currently, BFAIR provides living assistance for 70 adults in 11 residences, shared living arrangements, and supported apartments in communities around western Massachusetts including Williamstown, Clarksburg, Pittsfield, North Adams, and Northampton, in addition to the home in West Stockbridge.

Opened in 2014, the facility in West Stockbridge is intended to be a permanent home for the women living there. Each has experienced an acquired brain injury, resulting from a medical condition (e.g., stroke or multiple sclerosis) or traumatic injury such as a car accident or fall. To be eligible, each had to have been in long-term rehabilitation care in a nursing home and was referred to the state Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Funding is provided by DDS with additional contributions from Medicaid, Social Security disability, private insurance, and rent (on an ability-to-pay basis) from the residents themselves.

The residence looks like a real home inside as well as outside: comfortable, spacious, and bright. In addition to a living room, dining room, kitchen, and sunroom, each of the residents has her own bedroom, decorated with care and complete with many personal touches. Yet the home is equipped to serve residents with “high medical needs” including medications, tracheostomy, paralysis, and large wheelchairs.



BFAIR residence for women with acquired brain injury

The house is staffed 24/7/365, with one or two staff at a time, always including an Licensed Practical Nurse to attend to medical needs, explained house manager April Field. Visiting specialists provide direct care, nursing oversight, behavioral management, peer support, and other services as needed. Staff prepare meals (assisted by residents if able and desiring to help) on-site in the well-equipped kitchen.

One of the residents, Shealagh O’Shea, is a Gulf War veteran, a combat medic with degrees in nursing and psychology. Shealagh was seriously injured in a car accident in 2005 and was in a nursing home for 11 years before coming to BFAIR’s home in West Stockbridge. Having lived there for five months now (after waiting a year to get in), she describes the residence as the “most beautiful home” she’s ever been in, and compliments the staff as “caring, giving, and loving.” Shealagh is a published poet and, although wheelchair bound, she enjoys going out to eat, to movies, and to appointments.

BFAIR director of marketing Jennifer Civallo told me that the response of neighbors and the community in general has been welcoming and “super accommodating.” Asked how community members might help, Jennifer urged continued efforts to make the town compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (thus benefiting anyone with disabilities) and support for BFAIR’s annual campaign and special events. More directly, residents would benefit greatly from donations of books, music CDs, and movie gift cards. Jennifer added that the staff and residents also welcome suggestions of ways they can become more involved with community life. For more information about BFAIR and the residence in West Stockbridge, contact Jennifer Civallo at (413) 664-9382.

All Photos by John Parker.



Staff member works in well-equipped kitchen



Each resident has her own bedroom



Cheerful sunroom looks out on wooded backyard

Board of Selectmen Meeting Summaries

By Doane Perry

Note: Copies of official board minutes are available at the West Stockbridge Public Library. Video recordings of town meetings are broadcast on Charter Cable channel 190 and on the Internet at <http://vimeo.com/channels/weststockbridge>. Residents can be notified by e-mail of town events and meeting agendas by subscribing at <http://weststockbridgema.virtualltownhall.net/subscriber>.

Open Meeting: November 21, 2016

Annual Tax Classification Hearing

The Board of Selectmen voted in favor of a single rate of taxation for the 2017 fiscal year. Before the vote, Jeffrey Reynolds, representing Regional Resources Group, the town's principal assessor, made a presentation to the board regarding the setting of the tax rate and the classification options. The options are a *split rate*, which would have a higher rate for commercial properties and a lower rate for residential properties, or a *single rate* that would apply to all properties.

Historically, the town has chosen a single rate because there is a very limited commercial base that would have to be unreasonably taxed to achieve only a slight decrease in the residential rate. According to the Board of Assessors Fiscal Year 2017 Tax Classification Hearing Report, the total valuation of properties in town is \$372,100,903 taxable and \$19,054,800 tax exempt.

The selectmen said they expect more building in the future. However, overall, towns are struggling due to shrinking populations.

Other Business:

- Superintendent Peter Dillon will address the board at their December 5 meeting to discuss the proposed amendments to the district's regional agreement.
- The board discussed lettering for the new Council on Aging van and approved spending for a set of snow tires and wheels.
- The board approved temporary signs announcing an Artists' Guild event in December.

Open Meeting: December 5, 2016

Proposed Amendment to Regional School Agreement

Representing the Berkshire Hills Regional School District, Sharon Harrison (sharon@bhrrsd.org) explained that proposed amendments divide the towns' budget into two parts: operating expenses that will continue to be shared among the member towns (West Stockbridge, Stockbridge, and Great Barrington), based on student enrollment, and capital expenses for future projects that will be shared based roughly on the property assessments of each town.

If approved by the three towns, the capital expense budget would remain about the same for West Stockbridge, increase for Stockbridge, and decrease for Great Barrington. The capital expense budget change would be for future large building and architectural work and borrowing, and it would be based on an equalized valuation issued by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts every two years.


Sharon said the school district is requesting a special town meeting in February because the Massachusetts Association of Schools recommends it and because the issue is complicated enough that it is better not mixed in with the town budget in a regular town meeting.

Earl Moffatt commented that a special town meeting makes sense. Curt Wilton commented that Stockbridge and Great Barrington are key to approval of the measure because their shares will go equally up and down, respectively. Curt added that the dwindling population raises the issue of managing inherited debt.

Highway Funding Approved

Mark Webber and Curt reported that the town's request for state reimbursement of \$135,000 for the Baker Road repaving project has been approved. The annual allotment of highway state aid to West Stockbridge, based on the town's population, is \$154,000.

...continued on page 5



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- ❖ West Stockbridge Beautification
- ❖ West Stockbridge Community Garden
- ❖ West Stockbridge Farmers Market
- ❖ West Stockbridge Fire and Rescue Services
- ❖ West Stockbridge Historical Society

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Driveway Permit Applications

The board approved Ed Denham's request for a driveway curb cut permit at 66 Samantha Lane. They also approved a plan for addressing driveway water issues at 33 Pixley Hill Road, where White Engineering proposed a subdrain of a few hundred yards with a 25-foot elevation difference.

Tax Rate

The board approved a modest raise in the tax rate from \$12.33 to \$12.48.

Public Records Law

Richard Squailia reminded the board they need to comply with the state conflict of interest law as required annually by January 1, 2017. The board approved a motion to appoint the town clerk to fulfill the requirement.

Rent Control Board

Acting as the Rent Control Board for the Mill Pond Trailer Park, the Board of Selectmen reported that they are assessing water use and charges by taking readings at the trailers and main distribution. The board said they are still waiting for information from the owners and while they wait the rent is not going up. A tenant said the driveway is breaking up and they had to pay \$270 out of pocket for a valve.

Other Business:

- The contract of the new chief of police has been finalized and starts December 19, 2016.
- Peter Skorput reminded the board that they need to solicit new members for the Cable Commission after they clarify responsibilities based on the bylaws.
- In a change of policy, the Transfer Station is no longer collecting clothes.
- Curt reported that the new town truck has been delivered and looks good.
- The board approved use of the Community Room by the Artists' Guild.
- The next Board of Selectmen meeting will be December 19.

Open Meeting: December 19, 2016

Special Town Meeting

The Board of Selectmen scheduled a special town meeting to vote on amendments to the Regional School Agreement for Monday, February 13. Stockbridge and Great Barrington are meeting on the matter in January.

Sewer Project Financing

With the paperwork all in, U.S. Department of Agriculture financing of \$841,000 for the town sewer project can go from temporary to permanent financing for 36 years at 1.875%.

Public Records and Conflict of Interest Requirements

Mark Webber informed the selectmen that going forward the town clerk must post their decisions on the town website. Mark also informed the selectmen that they must review the conflict of interest regulations and take a test on the requirement.

Williams River Stone Wall

The board discussed a section of stone wall that has fallen into the river by the Shaker Dam Coffeehouse. Curt said he would ask Foresight Land Services to assess the situation and estimate the cost of repair. Mark asked as a resident that the repair reuse the old stones and appear the same as it was. Earl Moffatt mentioned that a similar repair was made to the river wall behind Randy Thunfors' building.

Other Business:

- A Rent Control Board hearing was set for January 23 at 7 p.m.
- Codification of town bylaws will be considered at the next town meeting.
- The selectmen discussed the Bridging Opportunity Gap program for temporary youth employment and agreed to look into the program funding for a young man who is seeking part-time work.
- The second hearing about changes at Mass Turnpike Interchange 1 will take place on February 7.
- The selectmen said the tree warden needs to submit a semi-annual report in order to receive his pay of \$1,500 per year.
- The next BOS meeting was set for January 9. □



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Here Comes the Sun: Incentives Spur Development of Solar Electric Farms

By Doane Perry

Why are we seeing so many solar electricity power generation projects in the West Stockbridge area just now? What are the state and federal incentives? Where does the power go, and who gets to use it?

The future of federal incentives is uncertain, but Massachusetts is updating its successful incentive programs. Massachusetts has been among the most active states in promoting solar photovoltaic systems, ranking fourth in the country in 2014 with 308 megawatts (MW) of solar electricity capacity.

Locally, large-scale photovoltaic systems, or so-called solar farms, have been or are being installed in many towns including West Stockbridge, Housatonic, Great Barrington, and Cheshire. Other photovoltaic systems in the area include several arrays on land owned by Hancock Shaker Village in Pittsfield and Hancock. The town of Lanesboro has approved a photovoltaic project, and solar panels will also be installed at the Pittsfield Airport.

West Stockbridge I-90 Turnpike Interchange 1

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is partnering with Framingham-based renewable energy company Ameresco to build about a dozen banks of solar panels including the one in West Stockbridge at Turnpike Interchange 1. The installation uses undeveloped land owned by MassDOT adjacent to the (now removed) tollbooths.

The photovoltaic arrays are developed by Ameresco with no upfront costs to the state. The company recoups its investment through payments from MassDOT, federal tax incentives, and state energy credits. Ameresco pays rent to the state for use of the state-owned land. The goals of the project are to produce electricity locally, to optimize underused state land, and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

On December 22, Patrick Marvin at MassDOT provided this information about the West Stockbridge I-90 Turnpike Interchange 1 photovoltaic arrays:

- * Construction started in West Stockbridge in early October 2016 and is expected to be mechanically complete by the end of December.
- * Connection to the grid and activation should take place in early to mid-January.
- * The system size will be approximately 646 kW (DC) with 2,070 solar panels, and it is expected to produce about 840,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) in its first full year of production.
- * MassDOT will receive an annual lease payment based on the size of the solar field.
- * MassDOT Highway will purchase the power produced by the field at a starting rate of \$0.0855/kWh. In return, net-metering credits will be applied to electrical accounts in that utility territory. These credits have fluctuated around 13.5 cents/kWh.
- * Power generation by the field could assist with peak demand periods, and West Stockbridge can now assess the property and receive tax revenue.



Solar Farm at Turnpike interchange in West Stockbridge, adjacent to toll booths (now removed). Photo by John Parker.

On the web: www.massdot.state.ma.us/energyinitiative/Solar.aspx.

Truck Stop Solar on Route 102

In this case, a private developer is installing a photovoltaic array at the old Berkshire truck stop site on Route 102 west of town. The truck stop was destroyed by a tornado in 1973 and determined to be a brownfield due to leaks of gas and oil. The owners will pay the town of West Stockbridge about \$30,000 per year in lieu of taxes for the next 20 years.

Developer Kirt Mayland explained, "The difference between the truck stop site and the others is that we are taking a formerly contaminated site and turning it into something productive for the environment and the town. We are not clear-cutting or taking up farmland; we are turning a brownfield into a green power site. We have specialized in turning around old properties in the Berkshires—an old fairground, two pits, and a contaminated truck stop—into green energy fields."

Kirt added, "I was the lawyer/developer and now the landowner, but Jeffrey and Jaime now actually own the project itself." Jeffrey Macel and Jaime Smith run Lodestar Energy that owns solar projects at the truck stop in West Stockbridge, at the gravel pit on Van Deusenville Road in Housatonic, at the old fairgrounds in Great Barrington, and at the Bushika gravel pit in Cheshire.

On the web: www.lodestarenergy.com.



*Photovoltaic panels at Truck Stop Solar project on Route 102 west of town. A "ballasted racking system" was used as an alternative to driving posts into contaminated soil at the brownfield site.
Photo by John Parker.*


Incentives Stimulate Solar Power Development

State and federal incentives have created fertile ground for solar developers. Kirt explained, "State incentives in Massachusetts are still excellent. That is why all the activity. We could not exist without the federal tax credit, but really the driver for Massachusetts in particular is the Solar Renewable Energy Certificate (SREC) program and the net metering program."

The Solar Renewable Energy Credit program provides a means for SRECs to be created for every megawatt hour of solar electricity produced. The Renewable Portfolio Standard requires electricity suppliers to secure a portion of their electricity from solar generators. The Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources launched the first SREC program (SREC-1) in January 2010 and is now developing a new solar incentive program.

Virtual net metering, the difference between the power payments and revenue from selling the power to the distribution grid, provides another revenue stream. Massachusetts' net metering policy allows host customers to obtain net metering credits for exporting excess power to the grid. MassDOT and other qualified customers benefit from the difference between the net metering credits they receive from utilities and the power purchase payments they make to the developer. Kirt commented, "Net metering is almost up as far as I know. We are anticipating a program change starting in May 2017. The construction you are seeing is the last gasp of folks trying to get things into net metering and SREC-1, the old program."

Federal corporate tax incentives bring down the overall project capital costs by more than 50% through system costs directly subtracted from the owner's income tax and tax base deductions from accelerated property depreciation.



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January History Quiz Question:

Berkshire County became a major tourist destination in the mid-1800s partially due to the arrival of the railroads. Lee, Lenox, and Great Barrington attracted the wealthy robber barons in the late 1800s who built the great mansions they called cottages. They brought with them activities popular with high society such as the Tub Parade and fine horse shows that later spawned the cultural activities and venues that define our county today. Visitors now spend over \$400 million a year in the county and support \$150 million in payroll. It's an important part of our economy.

West Stockbridge doesn't have a great cottage or a high-profile cultural venue like Tanglewood or the Berkshire Theatre Festival. We just weren't part of that early social circle. Why didn't we participate in the tourist boom, or did we?

(Find the answer somewhere in this issue!)



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Incorporated in 1994

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All six musicians play Dohnányi's Sextet. Photo by Bob Salerno.

Loyal Audience Braves Snowstorm for Chamber Players Winter Benefit Concert

by Liza Bennett

Despite the furious blast of snow and wind that roared through the Berkshires, intrepid music lovers made their way up the steps of the West Stockbridge Congregational Church in the late afternoon of Thursday, December 29. They had braved the elements to attend one of the highlights of the holiday season: the West Stockbridge Chamber Players' annual winter concert to benefit the 1854 Town Hall Restoration campaign. The church was filled by the time clarinetist Catherine Hudgins, the Players' artistic director, and pianist Sayuri Miyamoto made their way down the aisle to perform the opening piece, Max Reger's brief miniature *Albumleaf*.

Horn player Jason Snider gave a delightful introduction to the next selection, Johannes Brahms's Horn Trio in E-flat major, Op. 40. He demonstrated the difference between the sound of the natural valveless horn (which Brahms chose for this composition) and the instrument played that evening. He also bemoaned the fact that horns frequently need to be cleaned (it's not spit, it's condensation!). Violinist Sheila Fiekowsky, who with Sayuri Miyamoto completed the trio of musicians, explained that you rarely see horns being cleaned during concerts because the horn section is seated behind the string section, which politely covers for them.

During the intermission, Bob Salerno, president of the West Stockbridge Historical Society, thanked everyone for coming and gave a brief but timely talk on the history of snowplowing in West Stockbridge. In 1935, the year that Ernő Dohnányi composed his Sextet, Op. 37—the evening's closing piece—West Stockbridge purchased its first snowplow under the aegis of the town's first highway superintendent.

Catherine Hudgins then introduced the sextet itself, pointing out that 1935 Germany was filled with dark and disturbing events, a mood that she believes is reflected in the early movements of the piece. In fact, because of their role in the plot to assassinate Hitler, Dohnányi's son and his brother-in-law Dietrich Bonhoeffer would eventually be sent to a concentration camp and hanged. Performed by clarinetist Catherine Hudgins, horn player Jason Snider, violinist Sheila Fiekowsky, violist Mary Ferrillo, cellist Jennifer Lucht, and pianist Sayuri Miyamoto, this rarely heard composition, beautifully performed by this outstanding group of musicians, reverberated through the hushed church.

The reception that followed at Connie Eagan's festively decorated home next to the church allowed the appreciative audience to mingle with the musicians who so obviously had enjoyed performing together.

Community News & Events

Stockbridge Grange Dinner

On Sunday, January 8, the Stockbridge Grange will hold a baked bean and ham dinner in the Grange Hall on Church Street from 1 to 2 p.m. Cost for adults is \$12; \$6 for children under 12. Takeout is available; call (413) 298-3185. In case of stormy weather, please call first to see if it has been canceled.

Council on Aging Luncheon

The Council on Aging will resume its potluck luncheons at noon on January 10 at the Town Hall Community Room.

Send your notices for Community News & Events to the Local Yokel, P.O. Box 238, West Stockbridge, MA 01266, or by e-mail to info@thelocalyokel.org.

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Notice issued, November 17, 2016, Town of
West Stockbridge, Massachusetts



Road to Recovery Program Offers Free Rides for Cancer Patients and Flexible, Rewarding Volunteer Opportunity for Drivers

The American Cancer Society in Massachusetts is asking residents all over the state to consider lending their time to the Road to Recovery program that provides free rides to anyone going to cancer treatment appointments. The flexibility of the commitment and easy online scheduling of rides accommodates drivers from all backgrounds, but the satisfaction of connecting cancer patients with lifesaving treatments is the real benefit, many say.

Volunteer drivers with Road to Recovery donate their time and use of their vehicles and sometimes provide encouragement and support. Passengers may not own a car, can't afford the extra gasoline, or may be unable or too ill to drive. They might not have access to public transportation or have no family members or friends who are able to postpone work or other activities to drive them.

In Massachusetts last year, the Road to Recovery program provided 6,209 rides to 384 patients, but hundreds more ride requests went unmet because of a lack of volunteer drivers. Approximately 37,000 Bay State residents will be newly diagnosed with cancer this year, and getting to their scheduled treatment will be their greatest concern.

To volunteer, you must have a valid driver's license, a safe and reliable vehicle, and proof of automobile insurance. Drivers must be 18 years of age or older and have a good driving history. They arrange their own schedules and can commit as many or as few hours as their schedule allows. The American Cancer Society provides free training to drivers and conducts criminal background and driving record checks.

To learn more about becoming a Road to Recovery volunteer, contact 1-800-227-2345 or visit www.Cancer.org/volunteer.



Photo courtesy of American Cancer Society

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www.rwsag.org and Facebook



Photos by Myron Schiffer

Looking for a chance to start a new painting or finish one that's been waiting for you to complete? Looking to take or review photos with others? Looking to

- work on pieces with other artists?
- chat about art?
- watch others work and join in?
- experiment with a new media like the iPad painting above?

This is your chance to encourage your creativity. These sessions are free and open to the public. Bring your own art supplies including drop cloths. Bring photos or still lifes to inspire!

Mark your calendars! Please RSVP to save your place. Each session will be open to the first 20 people, free of charge. Stay for an hour or all three. The sessions are inspired by an idea that Alexandra Benton proposed last year and Karen Farkas heard about in another area with lots of artists. If they are successful, we would like to continue to have them on the second or third Wednesday evenings from 6 to 9 p.m. Painting is limited to the area with the linoleum flooring with drop cloths.

Come join the fun. RSVP to save a spot: kcarmean@gmail.com. We plan more Artist-to-Artist Open Studio Nights on third Wednesdays, except in February and April when they will be held the second Wednesday.

Meet the Artist

Janet Pumphrey

Janet Pumphrey
Photographer

"I find beauty in forgotten places and objects, in vintage venues, . . . in both beautiful people and in the neglected and downtrodden people of the streets."



Join Janet Pumphrey on Tuesday, January 24, 2017, at Six Depot West Stockbridge from 12:15 to 1:30 p.m. for an informal discussion over lunch. You will be able to ask her questions. RSVP: kcarmean@gmail.com.

Tuesday, Jan. 24

12:15–1:30 p.m.

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Artists' Guild
www.rwsag.org and Facebook

"I began my lifelong love of photography in college when I took my first photography course. I set up a darkroom in the walk-in closet of my first apartment in New Orleans, and my goal was to be a professional photographer. My first jobs included working in a photography store, then an art gallery, then as manager of the art gallery. While I have continued to take pictures all these years, I returned to photography with a passion when I got my first digital camera and my first version of Photoshop more than a decade ago.

"My favorite subjects are people and street photography. I love to capture an isolated moment in the life of a person, and I strive to make my photographs of people tell a story about their life or give some insight into the person. I try to give the viewer a unique and fresh perspective of each subject I photograph. I also enjoy travel photography, and I have been fortunate to be able to travel with my husband all over the world. In my travel photography, I strive to capture a depth of feeling about a location through its cityscapes, landscapes, and people. I find beauty in forgotten places and objects, in vintage venues, in modern architecture and architectural features, in both beautiful people and in the neglected and downtrodden people of the streets. I especially appreciate the ability to enhance and manipulate a photograph through the artistic imagery available in postprocessing."

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- Building & Maintaining Gardens
- Firewood

January Art Calendar

Model Sessions: Tues., Jan. 3, and Tues., Jan. 18, 4–7 p.m. Sessions for beginners to experts with a live model. \$15 RSVP: wgpolk@aol.com. Narrative Figure Painting: Thursdays, Jan. 12 and 19. Time to be determined. RSVP: ach022050@gmail.com

Art Demonstration and Business Meeting: Wed., Jan. 4, 4:00–4:30 p.m.: How to use Facebook. 4:30–5:30: Demo: Printing on a variety of papers with Bruce Panock. 5:30–6:30: Business meeting. West Stockbridge Town Hall, 21 Stateline Rd., Rte. 102. RSVP

Tours of Local Art at Shaker Mill Inn: Jan. 4, 5, and 10. 1:35–2:30 pm. Shaker Mill Inn, 2 Oak Street (off Main St. next to Shaker Mill Tavern), West Stockbridge. RSVP

Meet the Artist: Michael Fabrizio, Painter: Fri., Jan. 6, 12:15–1:30 p.m., Six Depot, West Stockbridge. RSVP

Member Potluck: Sun. Jan. 8, 4–7 p.m. in Lenox. RSVP

Tea with the Masters: Mon., Jan. 9, 12–2 p.m. in Pittsfield and Wed., Jan. 18, 12–2 p.m. in West Stockbridge. RSVP

Positive Critique: Thurs. Jan. 12, 4–6 p.m. Bring 2–3 pieces of your art. W.S. Town Hall. RSVP for required reading

Write an Inspiring Artist's Statement: Wed., Jan. 18, 3:30–5 p.m. Ilene Spiewak in W.S. RSVP

Artist-to-Artist Open Studio: Wed., Jan. 18, 6–9 p.m. W.S. Town Hall. Work, chat, experiment. Host: Aly Benton. Limited to first 20. RSVP

Meet the Artist: Janet Pumphrey, Photographer: Tues., Jan. 24, 12:15–1:30 p.m. Six Depot, West Stockbridge. RSVP

Art Book Gathering: Fri., Jan 20 or 27, 3–5 p.m. proposed. Share a favorite book, artist, process. West Stockbridge. RSVP

RSVP to kcarmean@gmail.com
unless otherwise indicated.

Richmond-West Stockbridge Artists' Guild
www.rwsag.org and Facebook

Recent Works



John Mancina



Bonnie Reed



Priscilla Alvarez



Janet Pumphrey



Peggy Reeves



WEST STOCKBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY

21 State Line Rd | West Stockbridge, MA 01266 | In the new Town Hall
 weststockbridgelibrary.org | 413-232-0300 ext. 308

TUESDAY 10am-5pm | WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY 2-6pm | SATURDAY 10am-2pm

Happy 2017 to our library community!

Please take advantage of the soft opening of our new parking lot access entrance vestibule. Many thanks to the friends and family of our wonderful patron Isabelle Soule for their donation of the beautiful mahogany bench in her memory. We hope you will stop for a moment to admire this thoughtful addition to our library and think of Isabelle.

FYI: We're not done yet with improvements in comfort and convenience for our library patrons. Spring beautification projects for this area include signage, a handy book drop, and landscaping.



Bench donated in memory of Isabelle Soule, wife of Gordon Soule and longtime West Stockbridge resident, artist, avid gardener, and library patron, by her many friends and family. Photos by Lee Appelbaum.



The Massachusetts Book Awards recognize significant works of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and children's/young adult literature published by Commonwealth residents or about Massachusetts subjects. Check out one of these award winners at the library. Learn more at info@massbook.org and <http://facebook.com/masscenterforthebook>.

- **Nonfiction Award:** *Rosemary: The Hidden Kennedy Daughter* by Kate Clifford Larson. **Honors Nonfiction:** *Massacre on the Merrimack: Hannah Duston's Captivity and Revenge in Colonial America* by Jay Atkinson
- **Massachusetts Must Read Books for 2016** include *The Last Bookaneer* by Matthew Pearl, *Master Thieves* by Stephen Kurkjian, and *America's Bank* by Roger Lowenstein

MORE FICTION

Carr, *Surrender, New York*
 Chabon, *Moonglow*
 Correa, *The German Girl*

DVDs: *Poldark Season 1*, *Café Society*, *Jason Bourne*, *Snowden*, *The Magnificent Seven*, *Bridget Jones' Baby*

JUST FOR KIDS
 Westerfeld, *Horizon*

NONFICTION

Baird, *Victoria*
 Balaban, *The Handy Technology Answer Book*
 Smith, *DIY Solar Projects*
 Wohlleben, *Hidden Life of Trees*
 Wright, *The Terror Years*

Ongoing

- * Set up a CW/MARS online account by going to weststockbridgelibrary.org and clicking on the card catalog picture. Your personal account allows you to keep track of checkouts, requests, overdues and fees, pickup locations, renewals, and more. Can't find it in our C/WMARS network? Click on the Commonwealth Catalog to borrow any item statewide.
- * If you use an e-reader, explore the new statewide Commonwealth e-book Collections (CEC) at eBooks.masslibsystem.org.
- * Library Trustees Board meetings take place on the third Tuesdays of the month. All are open to the public. Next meeting is January 17 at 4:30 in the Community Room.
- * A reminder that day passes to our year-round attractions are available at the library. Thanks to the Friends of the Library and the West Stockbridge Cultural Council for their support.

As always, we welcome suggestions on just about anything to improve our library.

Lee Appelbaum and Jodi Magner



The Friends of the West Stockbridge Library thank the following artists and speakers for their participation in our 2016 events.

ARTISTS

The Richmond-West Stockbridge Artists' Guild
Susan Pettee, Botanical Drawings and Paintings
William Merelle, Sculpture In Marble and Stone
Sandra Flannery. Photography: "Wonders of India"
Freya Segal, Faces & Portraits in Watercolor and Mixed Media
Tri-State Artist's Group: Theresa Terry

SPEAKERS

Molly Comstock, Colfax Farm
Lisa Landry, No. Six Depot Roastery and Café

All Friends programs are free and open to the public.
Look for upcoming events in the 2017 *Local Yokel*.

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West Stockbridge History Quiz Answer:

From the mid-1800s through 1900, West Stockbridge was an agricultural and mining community. The population ranged from 1,400 to a peak of 1,800 people, with many Irish immigrants and a few locally wealthy citizens. We weren't in the attractive social circles. Nor did we have local celebrities such as the Sedgwicks in Stockbridge or Melville in Pittsfield. To complicate matters, travel to West Stockbridge from the other towns was a challenge. Lenox Road was just a dirt farm track. The roads to Stockbridge and Great Barrington were slightly better although near impassable during the spring's wet weather. The railroad was more an industrial branch line than a route to accommodate your private coach.



Photo courtesy of Bob Salerno

Although the town had, and continues to have, local beauty and views of the surrounding hills, the landscape was stripped bare of all trees for charcoal to feed the limekilns and Richmond Iron Works. The town center sported three kilns, spewing smoke and ash 24/7 to support the lime industry. Couple that with not being on the main railroad line from New York or Boston, we weren't a very attractive place to build a thirty-room cottage.

Around 1900, the situation changed. It appears West Stockbridge attracted less affluent but eager summer tourists. We had two hotels: State Line Hotel and the West Stockbridge House (Card Lake Inn) in the town center. In addition, the mining industry started to decline, and many residents who boarded mine workers now took in summer guests. The town was slowly changing from a gritty industrial center to an attractive vacation spot as the

downtown limekilns closed down. (By the 1920s, mining had completely ended.) Postcards from the area raved about the attractive Main Street with elm trees lining both sides.

One of the more interesting "tourist homes" was Hurley's Tourist Home on Baldwin Farm. This postcard advertisement from the early 1930s is an example of the local establishments catering to weekend tourists, or "vacationists." They were connected by telephone (West Stockbridge 88) before New England Telephone unified the exchange dialing. A local farmer, Kenneth Hurley, who promoted an early form of what is now sold as agritourism, rented the farm.

When friends, neighbors, or relatives move, downsize, or just clean house, *please* ask them to think of the West Stockbridge Historical Society before they discard any old books, pictures, postcards, letters, or memorabilia of the Town of West Stockbridge. E-mail info@weststockbridgehistory.org or call 232-4270.

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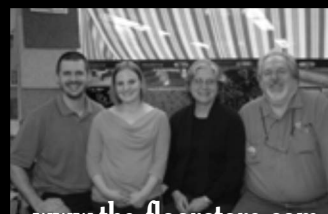
Monday through Saturday 9:30am to 9:00pm
Open Sundays Noon to 5:00pm

Happy Birthday



Martin Luther King, Jr.

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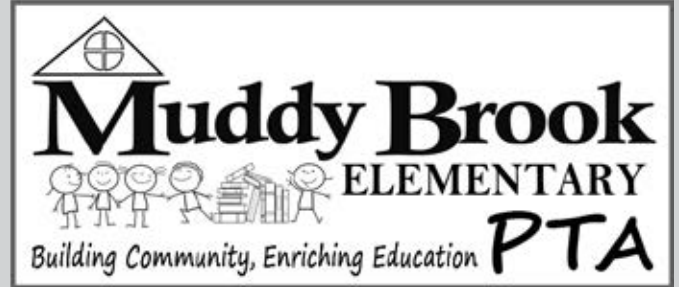


West Stockbridge Farmers Market 2017: *A Work in Progress!*

The holidays are over. Nightfall comes early. Winter has settled in to stay a while. So of course it's time to gear up for the 2017 season of the West Stockbridge Farmers Market!

The sixth season from May 18 through October 5 will hopefully have even more innovations and improvements to better serve the needs of the community.

If you have any suggestions or would like to donate a bit of time, do call (917) 209-0926. The market needs you!



THANK YOU!

On behalf of the entire Muddy Brook Elementary School community, we would like to thank everyone who donated and participated in our 2016 Online Auction. Thanks to you, we were able to raise over \$11,000 for our school. This money is key in funding a wide variety of valuable enrichment programming, field trips, in-school residency programs, nature and theater programs, classroom materials, and so much more. You have truly made a difference for the children in our community. We hope that your participation in the Muddy Brook PTA Online Auction was a positive experience and that we can continue to count on your support in the future.

Rewards for Muddy Brook

Clip and save Box Tops Coupons from more than 330 participating products including Avery, Cheerios, Cascadian Farms, Betty Crocker, Juicy Juice, Hefty, Kleenex, Ziploc, and more. Each coupon is worth 10 cents when redeemed. Mail Box Tops to Muddy Brook Regional Elementary School PTA, 318 Monument Valley Road, Great Barrington, MA 01230.

Show Your School Spirit!

January's theme is **BUTTONS**. Wear as many buttons as possible to school every Friday in January.

Visit our website, www.muddybrook.com, for more information on upcoming events, and remember to like us on Facebook!

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MARCH	7th & 21st	4th & 18th
APRIL	4th & 18th	1st & 15th

SESSION 1: 4:30-5:15 PM SESSION 1: 9:45-10:30 AM
SESSION 2: 5:30-6:15 PM SESSION 2: 10:45-11:30 AM

Learn more at
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Donor Roll Call ~ January

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Stuart & Judith Nevins
Tom Sagendorf
Sid & Vivian Schwartz
Gordon Soule
Nancy & Louis Trionfo
Magda Tsipis & Murray Lefkowitz
Paula Viola
Karen & Jerry Waxberg
Anonymous: 4

Thanks to everyone who has donated to WSLY. We couldn't do it without your support! Keep the *Local Yokel* coming. Please send your gift today! (See response form on page 21.)

Birthdays & Anniversaries

1/1 Ada Masiero
1/2 Doris Skorput -
happy 99th birthday!
1/12 Anne Roy
1/13 Jim Hallock
1/13 Abby Hallock
1/17 Peggy Bartlett
1/18 Jan O'Brien
1/19 Emma Seward
1/24 John Parker
1/29 Elizabeth Pietrafesa

Did we miss your birthday or anniversary? To be sure your listing gets in the *Local Yokel*, please send it in by the 15th of the month before the desired issue each year.

The *Local Yokel*, P.O. Box 238,
West Stockbridge MA 01266
or by e-mail to info@thelocalyokel.org



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Please send your Birthdays & Anniversaries to the Local Yokel.

We are happy to include them in the next issue.

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The *Local Yokel* Needs You!

Would you enjoy being part of the team that produces this free monthly newsletter serving our community, now in its 10th year of publication?

Do you enjoy writing or photography? We need regular and occasional contributors on subjects of local interest.

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Call John Parker at (413) 298-1052 or e-mail info@thelocalyokel.org for more information.

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Local Yokel Directory of Advertisers:

A huge thank you to everyone who has advertised in the *Local Yokel* during 2016!
We could not publish every month without your participation.
To all of our readers: please support our local businesses.

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Rick Houldsworth 232-4307
Tom Walker 877 500-4030

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CONSTRUCTION

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ELECTRICIAN

Girdler Electric 232-7719
K. G. Cooper Electrical 232-0244

FITNESS & HEALTH

Bella Grazia Pilates 232-7979
Boundless 822-7394
Community Health Programs/The Children's
Attic Consignment Sale 528-0457
Therapeutic Massage 518 794-8556

FOOD/BEVERAGE SALES

Queensboro Wine & Spirits 232-8522

FURNITURE RESTORATION

Scott Wilton 232-4349

GALLERIES

Diana Felber Gallery 854-7002
Equator 232-4100
Hoffman Pottery 232-4646
Hotchkiss Mobiles Gallery 232-0200

GARDEN SERVICES & DESIGN

Dennis Pollock - Hemlocks &
Norway Spruce 441-9338
Meadow Farm: – Mulch, Topsoil,
Compost 243-4111
Second Nature Garden Design 441-7836
The Berkshire Botanist 232-7595

LEGAL

McCormick, Murtagh & Marcus 528-0630

LODGING

Shaker Mill Inn 232-4600

OUTDOOR SERVICES

Kevin Holden Tree Services 698-2696
Meadow Farm Market: – Outdoor Equipment
Sales/Repair Service 243-0777
JT Landscaping & Tree Services 329-8200

PLUMBER

William Korte Plumbing 232-7051

PRINTING

In Touch Printing 442-1202

REAL ESTATE

Berkshire Property Agents 528-6800
Stone House Properties 232-4253

RELIGION

Congregation Ahavath Sholom 528-4197

RESTAURANTS

Rouge 232-4111
Shaker Mill Tavern Family Smokehouse 232-8565
Stanmeyer Gallery &
Shaker Dam Coffeehouse 232-7707
Truc's Orient Express 232-4204

RETAIL

Baldwin Hardware 232-7757
Charles H. Baldwin & Sons 232-7785
The Floor Store 232-7175
Flourish Market 232-8501
Twisted Orchard T-Shirts 854-4037

(Unless otherwise noted, all area codes are 413.)

Every issue costs us about \$1,000 to print and distribute!
 Please help us keep the Local Yokel coming!

With increased printing and postage costs, we need your help more than ever. To get the latest town news, please contribute to the *Local Yokel*. For your donation of at least \$25.00 per year we will mail each issue to you (unless you prefer otherwise). The *Local Yokel* will continue to be available free at selected locations as long as possible, but we hope you will contribute anything you can. The West Stockbridge Local Yokel, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization, and all contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Please check with your employer, or former employer if retired, for matching gift programs.

Yes! I want to support the *Local Yokel*.
 Enclosed is my donation of \$ _____
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 City State Zip



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Town Government Boards and Commissions, Phone Directory, and Office Hours				
Town Hall Main Number 413-232-0300 • Fax 232-7195				
Animal Control	<i>John W. Springstube</i>	232-0300	ext. 335	As Needed
Assessors Office	<i>Mary Stodden</i>	232-0300	ext. 303	Tues. 1–5 p.m.; Thurs. 9 a.m.–1 p.m.
Board of Health	<i>John Olander</i>	232-0300	ext. 314	Fri. 9 a.m.–4 p.m., or by appt.
Board of Selectmen	<i>Earl B. Moffatt, Peter Skorput, Curt G. Wilton</i>			
Administrative Assistant	<i>Mark Webber</i>	232-0300	ext. 319	Mon., Wed., Thurs., Fri. 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
Building Inspector	<i>Brian Duval</i>	232-0300	ext. 313	Sat. 10 a.m.–1 p.m.
Conservation Commission	<i>Jennifer Kujawski, Lori Rose</i>	232-0300	ext. 338	Leave Message for Inquiries
Council on Aging	<i>John Zick</i>	232-0300	ext. 340	Leave Message for Inquiries
Emergency Management	<i>Louis Oggiani</i>	528-2175		
Fire Department	<i>Peter Skorput</i>	232-4200 (non-emergency)		Mon. 6:30–9 p.m.
Highway Department	<i>Curt G. Wilton</i>	232-0305		Leave Message for Inquiries
Library	<i>Lee Appelbaum</i>	232-0300	ext. 308	Tues. 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Wed., Thurs., and Fri. 2–6 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m.–2 p.m.; closed Sun. & Mon.
Police Department		232-8500 (non-emergency)	24 hours, 7 days/week	
Post Office	<i>Colleen A. Wich</i>	232-8544		Lobby: 7 a.m.–7 p.m.; 7 days/week; Window: Mon.–Fri. 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; Sat. 9 a.m.–12 noon
Seasonal Lifeguard		232-0315		
Sewer & Water Commission	<i>Michael Buffoni</i>	232-0309		
Town Accountant	<i>Elaine Markham</i>	232-0300	ext. 317	Leave Message for Inquiries
Town Clerk	<i>Ronni Barrett</i>	232-0300	ext. 300	Tues. & Thurs. 1:30–4 p.m.
Town Collector	<i>June A. Biggs</i>	232-0300	ext. 302	Wed. 3–6 p.m.; Thurs. and Fri. 10 a.m.–2 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m.–1 p.m.
Town Historian	<i>Robert Salerno</i>	232-4465		
Town Treasurer	<i>Karen Williams</i>	232-0300	ext. 316	Thurs. 9 a.m.–4 p.m.
Transfer Station	<i>Edward McGrath</i>	232-0307		Tues. & Thurs. 10 a.m.–6 p.m. and Sat. 8 a.m.–6 p.m.
Tree Warden	<i>James Hallock</i>	232-4322		
Veterans Agency	<i>Laurie Hills</i>	528-1580		
Zoning Board of Appeals	<i>C. Randolph Thunfors</i>	232-0300	ext. 300	

Official Town Government Website: weststockbridge-ma.gov • Community and Business Website: weststockbridgetown.com

West Stockbridge Sparkles ... Again!

By Ginna Dudney

"It takes a village," and on December 2, West Stockbridge came together in a warm and wonderful spirit of camaraderie that resulted in the village sparkling once again.

It sparkled with lights! Thanks to the ongoing efforts of Bob Thibeault, the official village lamplighter; Peter Thorne; and the amazing Fudge family, West Stockbridge glowed under the winter sky.

It sparkled with cooperation! Virtually all the merchants opened their doors to welcome holiday strollers with liquid libations and nibbles: a wonderful opportunity to introduce strollers to the bounties of West Stockbridge.

It sparkled with synergy! Local committees and groups pulled together to make it happen:

- ❖ The Parks & Rec Committee spearheaded the event and invited other groups to join in.
- ❖ The Police Department co-sponsored the night, donated the contents of Santa's goodie bags, were on hand to help wherever they could, and provided good cheer.
- ❖ Fire Pit, the musical group livened up Main Street.
- ❖ The Congregational Church accomplished the herculean task of producing over 100 tasty gingerbread cookies for kids to decorate with icing and candies. Members were on hand to guide a hand when necessary.
- ❖ The Fire Department brought Santa to his sleigh in style.
- ❖ The *Local Yokel* promoted it and spread the word.
- ❖ The Cultural Council stood by ready to pitch in if needed.
- ❖ The Historical Society donated a decorated Old Town Hall as a venue for kids to enjoy seasonal crafts and tummy-warming offerings.
- ❖ The Merchants Association encouraged their members to participate in great style.

It sparkled with the energy of neighbors joining neighbors to create magic:

- ❖ Helen Nolan was, once again, the best head elf ever.
- ❖ Assistant elves Joanne Wodecki and Krysta Kaehn made progress to Santa's sleigh as smooth as possible.
- ❖ Cheryl Fudge conceived, orchestrated, and oversaw the hugely successful seasonal crafts at the Old Town Hall.
- ❖ Chris Breeland, Lois Ferguson, and Paula Farrell ensured that all ran smoothly.
- ❖ Choir mistress Terri Jo Dixon produced the songbooks and led the caroling with a welcome assist from the talented Elisabeth Petty.
- ❖ Jill Pixley did a wonderful job of decorating the Old Town Hall.
- ❖ Anthony Voudren and James Fudge delivered and removed Santa's sleigh.
- ❖ Baldwin's Extracts and the Public Market donated decorations for the cookies.
- ❖ Elf Peter Cohen diligently took pictures and created a Facebook album for all to enjoy.

It sparkled with generosity! Once again, the Merritt Family graciously permitted the use of their green for Santa's sleigh and the long lines of children anticipating their moment with *The Man*. It was a night of magic with memories made and friendships forged. 'Twas the season . . .



Some of the Holiday Lights team.



Magic moment with Santa.



Artists at Work.

*The Gingerbread Man -
Catch me if you can...
Photo by Mary Thibeault.*



Caroling at the tree lighting.

Holiday Lights photos by Peter Cohen unless otherwise noted.

West Stockbridge
Local Yokel
 P.O. Box 238
 West Stockbridge, MA
 01266

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4



January 2017 Calendar of Events

1/1	New Year's Day		
1/4	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
1/5	Board of Health	6:30 p.m.	Town Offices
1/8	Grange Dinner	1-2 p.m.	Grange Hall, Church St., Stockbridge
1/9	Board of Selectmen meeting	7 p.m.	Town Offices
1/10	COA Potluck Luncheon	12 noon	Town Offices Community Room
1/10	Parks & Recreation Committee meeting	5:30 p.m.	Town Offices Board Work Room
1/10	American Legion	7 p.m.	Town Offices
1/11	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
1/15	*** Deadline for the next Local Yokel ***		send to info@thelocalyokel.org
1/16	Martin L. King, Jr. Day		
1/16	Planning Board meeting	7 p.m.	Town Offices
1/17	Library Trustees meeting	4:30 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
1/18	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
1/23	Board of Selectmen meeting	7 p.m.	Town Offices
1/25	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
1/28	Chinese New Year		
1/30	Planning Board meeting	7 p.m.	Town Offices