

Local yokel

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

West
Stockbridge
April
2020



Coronavirus Information & Assistance Inside

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 2005

*Social distancing
at Stevens Glen
Photo by Emily Weiland*

Coronavirus Information and Assistance

Health Information

- **Berkshire Health Systems** has established a toll-free hotline for questions regarding the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). It is open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. seven days a week. Call 855-bmc-link (855-262-5465). More information is available on the Berkshire Health Systems website: <https://www.berkshirehealthsystems.org/body.cfm?id=4261&fr=true>
- **Massachusetts Department of Public Health** provides daily updates on Massachusetts-specific information and resources: www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** has helpful information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>

Food Assistance

Berkshire Hills Regional School District at the following locations:

- Monument Valley Regional Middle School (main loop)
- GB Fire Station
- Housie Dome (front entrance)
- Stockbridge Town Offices (back entrance)
- West Stockbridge Town Offices (front entrance). E-mail meals@bhrsd.org to let them know how many meals you want
- Starting Tuesday, March 17, 11:30-12:30
- Pickup/drive-through only; stay in your car

Richmond Consolidated School (1831 State Road, Richmond):

- Grab and Go between 8:30 and 9:30 a.m.
- If you think you will want lunch, please e-mail Tammy at tjervas@richmondconsolidated.org or call her at (413) 698-2207, ext. 124, the *night before*. Be sure to tell her how many lunches you will need.

Bartlett's Orchard (575 Swamp Road, Richmond):

- Food pantry with nonperishables.
- Open daily from 8 to 4. You can stop by to pick up what you need.

Project Bread: Food Source Hotline. Call (800) 645-8333 if you need assistance

Financial and Utility Support

- **Department of Public Utilities:** Suspending all shutoffs of gas and electric utilities including municipal light and gas plant for residential customers during the #COVID19 State of Emergency.
- **Spectrum:** Offering free Internet access for students.
- **National Grid:** Temporarily suspending collections.

Mental Health Support

- **Pause A While:** Free conference call for AA meeting if you are homebound and need a meeting; 2 p.m. every day. Dial-in number (425) 436-6360; access code 422932#
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text line if you are anxious about COVID-19. Text "Connect" to 741741. www.crisistextline.com/textline

West Stockbridge Town Offices Closed to Public Due to Current Health Emergency

According to Town Administrator Marie Ryan, the West Stockbridge Town Offices will continue to be closed to the public until at least April 7, at which time the situation will be reevaluated. Staff will be working in the building, so if you have an emergency, please feel free to contact them and make an appointment during this time. A directory of town government boards, commissions, and officers is provided in this issue on page 24. The Town Offices' main phone number is 232-0300.

Select Board Meeting Minutes

[Editor's note: At the town administrator's request, the Select Board minutes here are reprinted verbatim with no editing of text. Official board minutes are available at the West Stockbridge Public Library and on the town website, <https://www.weststockbridge-ma.gov/>. Select Board meetings may be viewed on Spectrum cable local access channel 190. Residents can receive e-mail notification of town events and meeting agendas by subscribing at <http://weststockbridgema.virtualltownhall.net/subscriber>].

Select Board Meeting Minutes February 19, 2020

6:00 PM: Open Meeting
Quorum present: Select Board Members: Bernie Fallon, Chair; Doane Perry, Eric Shimelonis and Town Administrator Marie Ryan.
Review and act on previous meeting minutes.
Review and sign warrants (payroll and vendor)
Sign letter to Planning Board requesting Public Hearing for Adopting Codification of Zoning Bylaws.

Agenda Items/Action/Discussion Items: Meeting Opened at 6:00 PM

Cultural Council – appointment of three new members

Bernie started the meeting and stated that the first item on the agenda, the appointment of new members to the Cultural Council. Cultural Council member Marge Powell asked the Board to appoint three new members; Rebecca Sheir, Huck Elling and Mary Roy. Eric abstained; his wife is one of the three. Bernie made the motion to appoint all three, Doane seconded, no discussion and both agreed. Marge thanked the Board.

Housatonic Valley Association Presentation – Michael Jastremski

Bernie introduced Michael Jastremski from the HVA. Michael gave a presentation and discussed what the HVA will be doing for the Town. They will be assessing all the stream, roads, culverts and bridges for wildlife barriers and flood risk. The HVA will create a document with all the information and present it to the Town Officials with recommendations for a project which the HVA could conduct with the Town. The Select Board and the HVA will make a list of priorities on which to concentrate on. This is to be incorporated alongside the Town's Hazardous Mitigation Plan.

Also, Michael introduced, Carrie Ann Pietric who discussed the MVP program that included action grants which can fund replacement projects around town. She will contact Marie and discuss the possibility of the Town becoming a partner and get involved with some grant funding.

Fire Department Update – Peter Skorput

Peter was not present when it was his turn to give his update at 6:10 PM.

Peter came to the meeting at 6:22 PM. He handed out his report update (see attached) and discussed it all for the Board.

Fire Chief Status

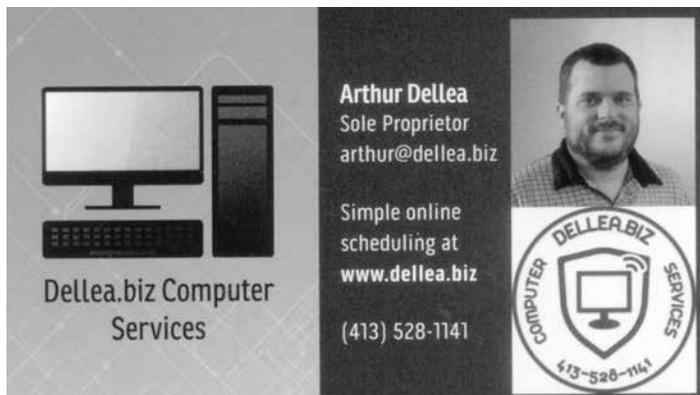
Bernie began to discuss the Fire Chief Status. He told the audience that this is a discussion between the Board and Peter and they will get their time to speak at Citizen Speak Time. Bernie explained that he has agonized over this continued issue going on with Peter. Bernie said that Peter has given a lot to the Town however, Bernie has spoken with several other local Fire Chiefs in regards to issues that have happened recently at the fire scenes. Bernie stated there has been some major concern with availability of water at the scenes due to non-working hydrants.

Peter explained all the issues that happened with each scene. He said that the issues were all due to the equipment; (1) gasket fell out on the ground creating no suction or pressure and (2) there was a hole in the hydrant and that now the hydrants have been fixed.

Bernie then said that most towns all have mutual aid automatically at every call as standard practice. He then asked Peter and Peter did not respond with an exact answer, he just told what happened at each fire. Bernie asked again, this time Peter said the other Towns should be responding. Eric then asked Peter what is the 2nd alarm. Peter stated that he was not sure but he thought it was both engines from Stockbridge. Eric said that he spoke with Berkshire County Sheriff's Department and that they have no alarm cards for West Stockbridge. Peter said he did give them his alarm cards and that they should have them. He was not aware of them not having any alarm cards. Peter stated that no one told him this and that he thought they had his alarm cards for years. Eric asked that if he noted a failure to respond by other communities, he should have questioned that there may be an issue and Peter should have contacted the Sheriff's Department by now. Peter stated that he asked them and that they don't respond to him and that they have a high turnover there.

Bernie asked Peter if there was an issue with his radio not working at the scene on Stockbridge Road recently. Peter said he did have a problem and had to walk away from the scene to get it to work. Peter explained that he has issues sometimes with it but later that night it was fixed and working.

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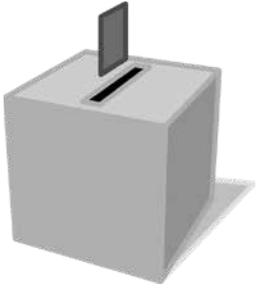
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Peter Bartlett & Susan Powell

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West Stockbridge Votes: March 3 Primary Election Results

How did West Stockbridge vote in the Massachusetts primary election on Tuesday, March 3? According to data provided by Town Clerk Ronni Barrett, of 1,106 registered voters, 509 (46%) voted in the primary, with 474 registered as Democrat, 33 as Republican, and 2 as Libertarian.

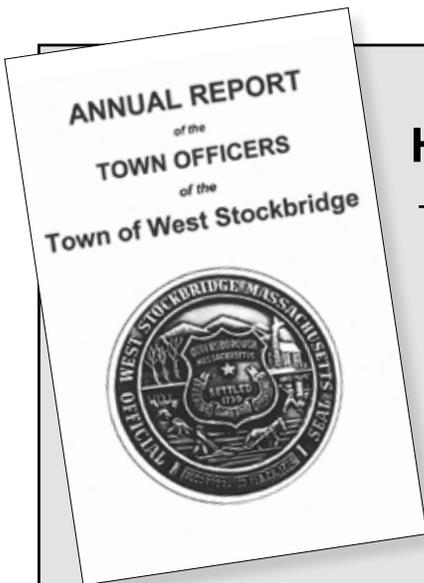
For the Democrats, the results were Biden: 148; Sanders: 147; Warren: 119; Bloomberg: 38; Buttigieg: 4; Patrick: 4; Klobuchar: 3; Gabbard: 3; Steyer: 1; and Williamson: 1. Six ballots were cast either blank or no preference. On the Republican side, results were Trump: 22; Weld: 10; no preference: 1. The two Libertarian ballots were write-ins, but the names of write-ins are not reported unless there are at least five votes.

Burn Permits

Brush burning season in Massachusetts begins on January 15. Residents of West Stockbridge can burn brush (nothing over 4 inches) from January 15 through the end of April, weather permitting. If you want to burn, you must obtain a burn permit from the Public Market on Main Street or Baldwin's Hardware on Center Street.



A burn permit costs \$2, and it is good for two consecutive days. Hours of burning are from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. No one will be issued a burn permit by telephone. If you have any questions about the procedure or have concerns about someone burning, please call the Fire Department at 232-7853.



How to Get a Copy of the Town Report

Town Reports, as a cost savings for the Town of West Stockbridge, will not be mailed to every household this year. Copies will be available at the post office, Public Market, Town Offices, and on the website. The reports will also be available at the annual town meeting and annual town election. If for some reason you absolutely need to have it mailed to you, please feel free to contact Town Administrator Marie Ryan, 232-0300, ext. 319, and it can be arranged. Thank you for understanding, and if you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Town Offices.

Peter also said that there was an issue with a relief valve on one of the packs but that was fixed later in the night.

Bernie asked why we do not have a tanker to help with the water issue. Peter said he had one years ago but that he had to park it outside and it got rusted out so he got rid of it. He said he has no place to put one but that all the towns around us have a tanker and he always calls for them.

Bernie explained that he knows that Peter is hard working and frugal which is nice for the tax payers however, he pointed out that even though money doesn't solve all issues but it could certainly help with equipment and training. He noted the Fire Department budgets of surrounding towns which were all almost triple the budget that Peter submits each year. Bernie suggested that he needs to do a more complete budget with better resources for the Department. Peter said the other towns do have more equipment and more expensive stuff as well as a full-time person that is why their budgets are higher. Peter stated that he adds a little extra each year for maintenance. He also said that the Fire Association does help purchase some stuff for them but Peter hates to spend money.

Doane asked Peter what he would recommend that the Department needs. Peter responded "We are doing good". We have people training with other towns. He invited anyone who wants to see what they do to attend any Monday trainings and get involved.

Bernie suggested that the Department really needs to get more training accomplished and that safety is an issue for everyone. He stated that other towns have a training budget line item which Peter does not. Bernie understood that other towns have a fulltime person but that life is changing in the world and we need to have our members trained up to date. Peter said that each year the Academy comes out with a list of courses and we apply each year and that he has limited budget and space for new equipment. He said he is also trying to get up to date with OSHA regulations as well currently. Doane asked if the small buildings in the lower area for the Highway have any room for storage for Peter. Peter said no they are all full.

Peter told the Board that he has two young men that are planning on attending the Fire academy in the spring and several people who want to do the EMT training. They are looking into all the options for this but that it is very expensive. Doane stated that this is a serious safety situation and asked Peter if he is looking for a solution and Peter responded they have some glitches but they are working it out.

Eric asked about why the Fire Department did not use the hydrant in front of the stone house for the Stockbridge Road fire. Peter responded that it fills up with silt and they used the water from Card Pond for that fire. Eric stated that there are other hydrants on Main Street and why didn't they use them, it would have been quicker. Eric felt that using a hydrant with endless water supply would make more sense then taking the time to get set up with hooking up to the water at the pond. Eric stated that the water issue is a big problem and that other Chiefs have contacted him about this issue. Peter said that if he laid the hose down to the hydrant down the street, then Richmond won't be able to get through to the scene, they would have been blocked access with their trucks. Then there was a discussion about West Stockbridge getting their own tanker truck which progressed into a discussion about a new Fire Station Building. Peter then went on about a design that Sefan Green did for him years ago for a new station. The audience also discussed this and all agreed that a new station should be in the future. The discussion got off topic for quite a while.

Earl Moffatt asked Peter why at the last two fires there were no hoses laid out. Earl said in the past they tried to get Peter to have a tanker and the Fire Department told the Board that they did not need it because they had two engines that could connect the hoses between the trucks. Peter said they did not need to do that because they had other tankers come. Earl suggested that Peter fix the issues with the hydrants, replace them or get them

fixed. Peter asked "Replace them with what? The issue is that the silt gets into them and the water is limited but we do get some water out of it." A discussion continued on the hydrants with questions in regards to, if they do not use them because they don't work right, then why have them at all? Someone asked if the Board could have a study done on the hydrants and Bernie asked Marie to look into this.

Eric stated he believes that the top priority for the Fire Department should be training and medical care. He feels that if the Department has members that are willing to do EMT training that the Association should help pay for that and that the Board is also willing to give money for this important training. Peter stated that they are working on it. Eric believes that there is no planning being done. He said the Town wants to spend money on helping the Department but that Peter is not asking for it to get things accomplished. Peter said he doesn't want to spend all the Association's money at once in case they need it for something down the road.

A resident, stated he was very angry about a letter to the Editor in the Berkshire Record a few weeks ago in which it spoke badly about the West Stockbridge Fire Department. He had written his own letter and asked Bernie to read it out loud for him. Bernie said he would read it to himself later on.

John Whalen stated that he feels the Board clearly has some concerns about the Fire Department and that it appears that training is a major issue for safety. He suggested that the Board put money into a training line item in the budget for Peter.

Bernie said that he felt the meeting was going in the right direction. He said two major concerns were the hydrants and training. The Fire Department spoke up and said that they looking into two options for the training the EMTs. One is option would be to host the training and the members would get it for next to no cost and the other option they are looking into is a course with the best cost. Bernie asked for a time frame on this training. They responded early spring. Bernie said he wants there to be a concrete date for this the next time the Board meets with Peter.

Eric stated that he is working for the Department and the residents and that sometimes it is hard to make the difficult decisions. Sometimes the Board needs to push someone in the direction they need to be and that he does not want to hear somethings not getting done because of money, because the Board is clearly open to assisting in this manner. At this point, Peter got angry and left the room.

Marge Powell said that she thinks the main thing is that there is a frustration with moving forward and getting things accomplished. She thinks that every little thing completed is a move forward. Bernie agreed.

John Whalen said he wasn't sure at the beginning of the meeting what issues the Board was concerned about. He thinks the Board needs to be clear on what they want done by prioritizing the issues. Eric stated that this is not an attack but a conversation in regards to the functioning of the organization.

The Fire Department stated that now that they understand the Board is willing to help pay for the training, they will proceed in a quicker manner on getting things done.

Eric said there needs to be an operational plan to Peter's budget and he needs to have organizational priorities.

Bernie then made a motion to adjourn, Eric Seconded, all in favor.

The Select Board adjourned at 8:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Marie Y. Ryan
Marie Y. Ryan
Town Administrator

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Select Board

21 State Line Road PO Box 525 West Stockbridge, Mass. 01266-0525

Tel. (413) 232-0300 x319

Fax. (413) 232-7195

E-mail: admin@weststockbridge-ma.gov

Dear West Stockbridge Town Residents,

During this difficult time, we would like you to know that if you are in need of meals or food, we have the following options available to you:

The Richmond Consolidated School will be providing "grab and go" lunch each day for anyone who needs it. They have graciously included West Stockbridge Residents in this meal plan. Please email Tammy the number of lunches you will need at tjervas@richmondconsolidated.org or call her at 698-2207, ext 124 the night before. When you call, you will need to let her know how many lunches you need and if need be, the address for delivery. Simply drive behind the school to the kitchen area and someone will meet you at the door. You can pick up lunches from 8:30-9:30 AM. If you would like lunch but have no transportation, please let her know and we will deliver.

If you need any other assistance with food or shopping and are unable to travel please call 413- 232-0300 ext. 300 and we will find a way to assist you.

Sincerely,

Marie Y. Ryan

Marie Y. Ryan
Town Administrator

West Stockbridge Food Pantry at Transfer Station

West Stockbridge is starting a food pantry for residents in need. It will also include dog food.

Please feel free to collect what you may need for your family and/or drop off whatever you are able to leave for others in need. There will be an area at the Transfer Station for anyone to pick up items needed as well as drop off your donations.

The pantry will be open when the Transfer Station has regular hours. These hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Please inform anyone you know who may need assistance and could either benefit from or be able to donate to this pantry.

Stay safe and healthy, and let us know if we can assist you in any other ways.

**Select Board Meeting Minutes
March 4, 2020**

6:00 PM: Open Meeting

Quorum present: Select Board Members: Bernie Fallon, Chair; Doane Perry, Eric Shimelonis and Town Administrator Marie Ryan.

Review and act on previous meeting minutes.

Review and sign warrants (payroll and vendor)

Motion (see attached motion) and voted on changing to new Imagecast Voting Machines

Agenda Items/Action/Discussion Items: Meeting Opened at 6:04 PM

DPW Update – Curt Wilton

Curt handed an update report to the Board.

(see attached)

Curt told the Board that Mass DOT has sent the Town a letter in reference to plantings in front of the Solar Array next to the turnpike. He stated that they will be splitting the cost for this by doing the preparation but that the Town needed to pay for the plantings as well as the maintenance of the plantings. The cost to the Town will be approximately \$11,500. He stated that the Town will need to budget for this.

Recap and Review of Fire Department

Bernie began by stating that at the last meeting he felt the community came together with a good positive discussion. He wanted to recap five important things:

1. The Fire Dept needs to increase their budget.
2. They need to add a training line to the budget.
3. He wants an organizational chart of names and qualifications for a strong dept.
4. He would like to see a five-year plan which Dan Buehler & Kathleen Kersey have started to work on with the Chief.
5. He would like to have the hydrant issues corrected.

Eric then stated that there was some productive discussion however, there were many inaccuracies after the last fire. He said that the other local chiefs told him that there were many concerns. Eric also mentioned that two chiefs actually asked to meet with Bernie to express their concerns. Eric then showed the Board an enlarged picture of the last fire about an hour after the fire started. This picture showed no water being put on the fire.

At this point someone in the audience spoke up that they should not discuss Peter without him in the room. The Board agreed and someone contacted Peter, who then attended the meeting at 6:35 PM.

Eric then continued his discussion in regards to the picture he had and how there was no water on the fire. Peter then stated that Richmond and Lee were doing it because he had trouble with his truck. Peter said there was constant water on the fire and that they never had an issue with running out of water. Eric then read the sheet with the timing of the events and which departments showed up when. Eric said that had the hydrants worked, they should have used them. A discussion continued in regards to what happened at the scene. Eric also mentioned that the other towns have taken West Stockbridge off of their alarm cards. Peter insisted that Great Barrington and Richmond have no issues with West Stockbridge. Eric said that they have no confidence in our department and that West Stockbridge is being isolated. Eric said he would not bring up the Ethics issue. He also stated that there has been an issue for years with no progress, no budget line for training still and that the Town needs to come back from the neglect and poor planning. Eric then stated that he saw nothing happening to improve the department so he decided to run for Select Board because

he feels the Town needs to change faster than it has been to improve the safety.

Then Eric read the following motion:

I make a motion to place Fire Chief Peter Skorput on Administrative Leave effective immediately until further notice and to appoint Richmond Fire Chief Steve Traver to be acting Fire Chief for West Stockbridge on a temporary basis.

Doane then seconded the motion.

Peter then stated that he did training out of his overall budget and that the Ethics thing was mostly due to him not filing the proper paperwork. He said that he gave up and paid the fine because it would have cost more in lawyer fees to proceed with a hearing.

In regards to the last fire, he then said that he knew Richmond was coming so he did not need to lay the line down from the hydrant and that the report Eric had was not correct as far as the timing. Peter then stated what happened at the fire:

- Immediately he checked out the basement, opened door and then closed it and started putting water on the fire.
- Richmond showed up and started to put water on the fire.
- West Stockbridge truck got messed up then he opened the relief valve and it was fixed.
- Lee arrived and used the deck gun.

He then stated that this was an old house and was going to burn quickly. He said he has seen Chief Traver make mistakes as well and blamed Eric for putting the focus on him and that Eric quit on his own from the Fire Department. Peter also said that as far as his budget, people have fixed incomes and he doesn't want to increase taxes and spend money on things he doesn't need as well as the fact that he doesn't have the space for things.

Bid Opening at 7:02 PM - At this point, it was 7:02 PM and Bernie stopped the conversation because he needed to do a Bid Opening for Tree Pruning and Removal contract for the Town. He said they received two bids. One from Brush Hill Tree Service as well as John W. Field Tree Service. Curt will look over the bids and announce winner at next meeting.

Continued Fire Department Discussion –

Joe Roy asked Peter about the West Stockbridge Fire Department relationship with neighboring towns' departments. Peter stated that Great Barrington had no issues with them. Joe asked if the other chiefs had told Peter about any concerns they may have with the West Stockbridge Fire Department and Peter answered, "No". Another discussion continued in regards to the hydrants and whether or not they work, Peter said "yes, they do and we do test them". Bernie asked Peter if he is confident that there is always a water supply and Peter answered, "Yes".

Kardin asked Peter, "Why do the other departments not want to work with us? Why would they do that?" Eric said that the other departments no longer want to work with us because of risk. Peter responded to Kardin that they were manipulated into it.

Eric stated that he is just giving everyone the facts. He only wants what is best for the Town and that he has sacrificed some friendships over this issue but he wants to be honest and have truthful facts. He stated that we need to have a functional department with good relationships with other Chiefs. Eric feels the Town needs to move forward and not build the department with setting a low bar.

Jennifer Kilmer read a statement about her sons in the fire department and how important it is for them. Eric agreed this was an emotional, compelling letter but he is trying to help move the department forward and it is

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Fire Department Report

By Peter Skorput, Fire Chief

MARCH 2020

Calls:

Medical	2
Structure Fires	2
CO Alarms	1

Training:

2/3	Station Maintenance
2/10	SCBA Drills
2/17	Tanker shuttle with Richmond
2/24	EMS Training (Scheduled)

Equipment:

No new equipment this month

Membership:

We have gained a new member bringing us up to 21 firefighters.

April History Quiz Question:

In November 2017, the History Question discussed World War I and the influenza pandemic that followed. Little did we know that we would be covering it again 30 months later.

The Great War resulted in more than 20 million deaths including 10 million civilians and 21 million wounded, a global tragedy. West Stockbridge was fortunate in that only two of its citizens died during that period, both from influenza. Deadlier than the war was the influenza pandemic that arose toward the end of the war and lasted until 1920. A particularly virulent strain, it raced through a war-weakened global population, and an estimated 500 million people were infected and between 50 and 100 million died. Many were young, healthy survivors of battle, only to die quickly of the virus. Others were weakened by general malnourishment, poor hygiene, and overcrowding, and thus easily succumbed.

How was West Stockbridge impacted during that time?

(Find the answer somewhere in this issue!)

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.



West Stockbridge Historical Society
Incorporated in 1994



The *Local Yokel* is published monthly. Please mail submissions to: **The Local Yokel**, P.O. Box 238, West Stockbridge, MA 01266, e-mail info@thelocalyokel.org, or visit www.thelocalyokel.org. Copy deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the publication. Editors: **John Parker**, 394-4368, john.j.parker53@gmail.com; **Vicki Grayson**, 232-6131, vicki.grayson@rocketmail.com; **Susan Fisher**, 232-4443, suefish12@gmail.com; **Anne Lesser**, 717-0277, anne@annelessercommunications.com; Designer: **Kim Bradway**, kim@bloominarts.com.

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not a personal attack. He stated that the Select Board is the appointing authority and they look at each position they appoint. He said he is trying to help the Town have the best emergency services and it is not about himself or Peter. Eric said the Board may decide to have the last three fires get reviewed, not to put blame on anyone but to move forward with any issues. He then asked to move forward with the motion.

Peter stated he feels like Eric is attacking him and that there is nothing wrong with the Fire Department, they are doing their best. Peter said to Eric, "You want to get rid of me because we did not let you do what you wanted to do when you were in the department. I do as good as Traver, he makes mistakes too. We train with them. I have been doing this for a long time, 36 years and I always pay for training in my budget."

Doane told Peter that he disagreed even though he respects him, they are trying to improve the department and the town. Doane asked Curt Wilton if he had any answers. Curt said he makes sure he gets the best, most qualified people. Curt makes them all accountable and it is all about the process for the department to run the best it can. Curt also said that training is very important. The more you repeat things the better you get at it. Another important issue Curt said was paperwork. You need to log everything. Peter answered that they do train.

Eric said that he tried to show compassion but that he knows there are issues and if three towns don't want us to help, it is a real issue. Peter said that the MRI study was exaggerated and that he has done all the things they said in it. Doane stated he feels that we are dealing with risks and we all need to work together.

Roger Cavanaugh then asked the Board where they are with the motion on the table. Bernie then stated that they need to address the motion.

A new resident spoke up that he is not feeling very safe with this conversation and that he thinks this should not be about personalities. Peter asked

what he needed to say to him to make him feel safe. The resident said he feels that the leadership should demand what they need from the Fire Department. They should create a policy or guideline to be followed for them to be successful. Eric said the Town did that previously but the process has been on going for 4 years. He also stated that when the study came out, he said he could help and that today when the Finance Committee tried to help Peter with a 5-year plan, Peter only put some smaller equipment on that list. Eric said that they are only surviving and not improving.

Bernie asked Dan Buehler, Finance Committee member, how was Peter's 5-year plan when they meet. Dan responded that it is very skimpy, especially for someone under attack. He had no doubt that Peter's budget has been very minor every year and that we are under covered. Bernie called for a vote on the motion. He then stated that he wants the Board to be respectful and careful and to weigh the factors. He was concerned about the Fire Department as far as an organizational chart. He understands Peter has served the Town for many years but that there are many questions. Bernie also stated that he had a concern about the department blowing up and what would happen next.

Bernie then asked for the vote. Eric said, "I made the motion so I will vote". He then voted yes. Doane then voted yes and Bernie abstained. The vote was 2 for Administrative Leave so the motion passed. Peter then yelled, "I'm done" and he left the room and the fire fighters in attendance followed him.

Carol Kruller said that it is unfortunate that the Fire Department left with Peter because they serve the Town not the individual. She said it is important for the Town to base these issues on the facts not the personality. She said it takes courage to raise the issues and you need facts to be presented and the person who brings these up should not be attacked.

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Liz Digrigoli asked the Board why they have Steve Traver, Richmond Fire Chief to be one to cover. Eric said that West Stockbridge has had a long-standing working relationship with Richmond and that this will only be a temporary measure. Then a discussion ensued in regards to the safety of the town now that Peter has been taken off of his duties. The Board stated that the Town will be covered for emergencies.

Steve Traver, Richmond Fire Chief arrived and answered any questions the audience had as far as the Town being covered for fires and emergencies. He stated that he had contacted all the neighboring towns of Great Barrington, Alford, Lee, Lenox and Stockbridge and that all those towns are willing to assist in covering different areas of West Stockbridge. Steve commented that there will be complete coverage and he would also notify the Sheriff's office as well.

Bernie stated that as far as what is next, we will move forward with where we are now and that the Board would meet again next week and give an update on any information that they can give out to the residents. Police Chief Marc Portieri also stated that he will have 24/7 coverage for the time being to assist as we work through this transition. Bernie said that he will summarize and give updates at the next meeting as well. Eric thanked his Board for having the difficult discussion and said that he will work hard to help build better services.

Bernie then made a motion to adjourn, Eric Seconded, all in favor.

The Select Board adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Marie Y. Ryan
Marie Y. Ryan
Town Administrator

Select Board Meeting Minutes
March 11, 2020

6:00 PM: Open Meeting

Quorum present: Select Board Members: Bernie Fallon, Chair; Doane Perry, Eric Shimelonis and Town Administrator Marie Ryan.
Review and act on previous meeting minutes.
Review and sign warrants (payroll and vendor)

Agenda Items/Action/Discussion Items: Meeting Opened at 6:05 PM

Bernie opened the meeting by stating he wants the community to heal and move forward from the last meeting. He mentioned that it was a difficult meeting but he knows we can work together to get through this.

Bernie noted that Carrienne Petrik from the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program is unable to attend tonight's meeting due to her company's policy in regards to the Coronavirus.

Bernie read the following statement from DPW Director Curt Wilton:

The Town's "Tree Pruning and Removal Contracts" were open on March 4, 2020 at 7:00 PM and have been taken under advisement and carefully reviewed by Public Works Director (Curt Wilton) and the Town Tree Warden (Andrew Fudge). All requirements and necessary documentation have been met. It is our recommendation to the Board at this time to award the contract to the "Low Bid", Brush Hill Tree Services. Once awarded, the winner will be notified and we can begin to utilize their services.

The Board all voted to approve and accept the bid from Brush Hill Tree Services.

...continued on page 11

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Town Administrator, Marie Ryan stated that the current Animal Control Officer has resigned. She said that she is working with the Town of Richmond to jointly hire a new person for this position in the near future.

Citizen Speak Time:

Bernie then announced that since they need to wait for Acting Fire Chief Steve Traver to arrive, he opened Citizen Speak Time.

Dan Breton, EMT and Fire Fighter since 2018 spoke. He stated that he and Eric have been friends for 20 years but that he felt very insulted by what happened at the last meeting. Dan said he thinks Eric was very vindictive and that showing the picture of the last fire in town was disrespectful. He feels that now the mood has changed with regards to the West Stockbridge Fire Department by the other Towns. He feels the Fire Department gets no respect from other Towns. He then read an article that Eric wrote in the Local Yokel in 2018 about the Fire Department and Pert Skorput which was a positive article. Dan stated he feels that now Eric has the total opposite opinion about the Fire Department. Dan felt that the truth is somewhere in the middle. He said that the Department now has many young people who are enthusiastic and want to learn. These people need mentoring and not to be criticized.

Eric then thanked Dan and said that he apologized for the theatrics with the picture and that it was in not intended to be insulting. Eric said it is hard to make changes and he only wanted to show the facts. He hopes that everyone can move forward and he will help do whatever he can to assist.

Doane also thanked Dan for his comments and he also hopes everyone can move forward and improve the Fire Department.

Amanda Gadd:

Amanda stood up to speak at the last fire at her home. She thanked the Fire Fighters and the Police Department for all their help that night. She then told Eric that he exploited her tragedy. She felt that she should have been contacted prior to the last Select Board meeting since they discussed the fire at her home. She felt that Eric should have never shown that picture of the fire at her home. She was upset that she had to see the picture in the newspaper and was never contacted and Eric never even said he was sorry for her loss. She gave a very emotional speech about her experience. She then asked the Board to act to help the Fire Department and that action needs to be taken to help them improve. Amanda praised and thanked for the Fire Fighters but explained that in researching her incident, she discovered several problems with the incident: she brought up response times, running out of water, and the late calls for mutual aid. She then demanded the Board to take action to help the Fire Department, warning that inaction could be tragic. Eric then said that at last week's meeting, we took exactly that action that she is demanding and made a change in leadership. Bernie agreed that the action is going on now and will continue.

Resident in Town:

A resident in town wanted to discuss an accident that happened recently on Route 41. The driver was joy riding at extreme rates of speed on Rte. 41, then he crashed into a telephone pole. She was concerned that he could have hit her child who could have been crossing the street at that time or playing in the yard. She told the Board that something needs to be done about the speeders on that stretch of road and asked for suggestions and help with this issue. She suggested possibly using the flashing speed signs

...continued on page 12

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or more police presence after school hours, weekends and evenings. Police Chief Portieri stated that they are doing more patrol and radar in that area. He said also, that no one called about someone drag racing there or they would have gotten there before he crashed. He also stated, that as it was, a police car was in the area so when the crash happened, he was there within about 5 seconds. A discussion ensued in regards to possible helpful suggestions. Bernie noted that he will have this on the agenda for the Board to discuss further for their April 1 meeting.

Fire Department Update:

Acting Fire Chief Steve Traver asked for an applause for the Fire Fighters that were in attendance for all they were doing and working on and the fact that they did not quit despite the last meeting. He said that they are all doing an excellent job. They have made a few small changes, purchased new radios so each person has a radio at a fire and have been put on the Richmond run card for now. They have also changed the policy for responding on the turnpike so a lane is closed so it is safer for them to work when responding to an accident.

Steve stated that he needs the Select Board to meet with him and the Richmond Select Board for future plans for the two Fire Departments.

Steve then said that the Members wanted him to ask the Board if the sirens can be turned back on in town. Steve asked if they were turned off for a reason like complaints. Bernie said he seems to remember that there were complaints and Peter turned them off but never back on again. The members asked if they could be turned on again maybe from 8 AM – 8 PM so there won't be as many complaints. The Board agreed and Steve said he would contact Tom Grady at the Sheriff's Office so they can program the tones again for them.

Another issue Steve said is that one of the trucks is vibrating when you drive it and he will have that looked at and fixed. He also stated that he discussed with the Richmond Select Board about how long he can continue to be the acting chief in West Stockbridge and they told him it is up to him. Steve wanted to assure West Stockbridge he won't leave until they are settled and have a new or interim chief in place.

Bernie also stated to the press, that to be clear, Peter did not quit and is not fired. He is on Administrative Leave. He then asked Marie what Town Council about this. Marie said that he is on Admin Leave not quit or fired. He will be on Admin Leave for as long as the Board determines and that when on leave they can proceed with any investigation they would like such as the After Action Review which is up next for discussion.

Bernie then asked if any of the members of the Fire Department wanted to speak and no one responded.

After Action Review:

Homeowner in the audience:

A homeowner in the audience thanked the Fire Fighters for all they do but suggested that looking into the last three fires could be extremely helpful for future fires. He doesn't ever want what happened at the last fire to happen again. He doesn't think the review is to point fingers at any one person but to help see if they need improvements with procedures or equipment as well. The data could start this path of improvement and to honor the fire fighters.

Eric said that it is very hard to sit here and make the difficult choices but hopefully time and perspective will heal this situation. He stated that he came to this meeting against spending this money on looking back, but hearing the distance between points of view in this meeting, we might need this objective review and he is all for having it completed.

The homeowner thanked the fire fighters and the Select Board, he knows it is not an easy job.

Amanda Gadd reviewed her fire again and said that she feels they need to have this after-action review completed to help with any issues that were not realized at the time and could help so that no one else has to go through what she has been through with her fire.

Select Board:

Bernie said the Board needs to discuss the After Action Review. Bernie commented that this review will look into the systems and procedures and look at ways to get better. He then asked Marie the cost, she said it was \$6800. Doane said that he is in full support of having this done. He thinks that this is a good, in depth review that will help to go forward. Eric said that they need an objective review and he is all for having it completed.

Steve Traver said that this could be a good thing to help the department improve. One of the fire fighters also commented that they felt it was a good idea to have from an outside person to help them rebuild for a brighter future and give them a better department.

Bernie said he is also for having this done.

The audience thanked the Board and the Fire fighters for all they do. Doane stated he felt this was a great meeting.

Bernie then made a motion to adjourn, Doane Seconded, all in favor.

The Select Board adjourned at 7:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Marie Y. Ryan
Marie Y. Ryan
Town Administrator

Local yokel	Pick up a copy FREE AS ALWAYS at these locations around town:		Berkshire Bank Charles H. Baldwin & Sons Flourish Market Library No. 6 Depot Public Market Queensboro Wine & Spirits Town Offices	Or you can choose to have the <i>Local Yokel</i> mailed to you for a minimum annual contribution of \$25.
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“We Remember When . . .” Growing Up in West Stockbridge in the 1950s

A Series of Recollections by John Bormolini and Friends

Food Markets

The 1950s brought an economic recovery where people were able to do more than work to eat and keep a roof over their heads. For the first three years of the decade, people were still recovering from World War II, and a war-weary population had to endure another war in Korea. Eventually the economic uptick in this country trickled down to the hard-working ordinary guy and gal. And so it was with West Stockbridge. The one word that best characterizes this lifestyle improvement is “mobility.”

This is not to say that residents of West Stockbridge flocked to the so-called big cities of Pittsfield or Great Barrington to do all of their shopping. They continued to patronize local businesses that saw them through the war years. We highlight a few and thank them for providing for the basic needs of town residents during those difficult years. Like today, there were no supermarkets in West Stockbridge, but our little town had three markets to serve everyone’s shopping needs. All three were on the west side of Main Street and had the Williams River at their back door.

Fallon’s Food Town Market has had a long history of serving the people of West Stockbridge and surrounding communities. In the late 1920s, the Fallon brothers (Tom and Francis) had a meat wagon delivering to West Stockbridge, Richmond, and neighboring New York. In 1930, the property at 8 Main Street was purchased by the brothers. It proved to be the beginning of a succession of grocers at that location.

Fallon’s Market became the place to go for quality meats, produce, and groceries through the 1950s. The brothers finally sold the business after more than 32 years. After a succession of owners, Francis’s grandson, Bernie, took over the store in 2003, remodeling and cleaning up the inside of the building. Increased traffic flow returned to the renamed Public Market that specialized in the sandwich, lunch, and coffee business.

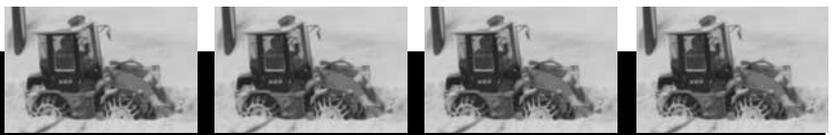
In 2010, the business was purchased by Randy Burkhart and his wife Erika, who made many improvements to the store including cozy tables, a bench, and chairs in the front of the building, providing a great location for locals to sit, enjoy a coffee, and discuss the latest news. In 2012, Tim Walsh purchased the business, and it has been



Photo from
<https://www.weststockbridgepublicmarket.com/our-vision>

...continued on page 15

Winter Parking Ban



The winter parking ban is in effect from November 15, 2019, to April 30, 2020, between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. for all streets in West Stockbridge. Violations of this ban may result in a \$25 fine for parking in prohibited areas or a \$50 fine for impeding snow removal. In addition, if the vehicle is impeding snow removal, it may be towed at the owner's expense.

The municipal parking lot across from the Public Market and the parking area on Moscow Road near the public bathrooms may be used for overnight off-street parking. However, vehicles in those lots must be moved by 8 a.m. to allow the Department of Public Works to manage snow and ice removal. For any concerns about off-street parking or the winter off-street parking ban, contact Chief of Police Marc Portieri at 232-8500.

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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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successful ever since. The Public Market's coffee business starts the day with a bang. Mid-morning patrons consume pastries, and midday customers enjoy a unique and diverse lunch menu. Today, the West Stockbridge Public Market continues a tradition of service going back to 1930 and the original Fallon brothers.

Masiero's Market: A remembrance by Judie Masiero (Bodnar):

My parents' store was a mom-and-pop Italian butcher shop and grocery store, fresh fruit and vegetables, and meat cut to order. Everyone, of course, knew everyone else, and usually my parents would know exactly what kinds of meats a family wanted. Every Friday, without fail, my father made his Italian sausage. It would sell out every week. After all these years, I still miss my father's homemade Italian sausage. Bread being a staple, we would travel to Pittsfield to buy a special Italian bread for resale. We called it airplane bread, but in my adult years when I moved to Springfield, everyone called the same bread Star Bread (and still do).

My parents, my brother, and I lived in the apartment above the store. My mother, bless her hard-working heart, would work in the store during the day and run up the back stairs to start supper when things weren't busy. Sometimes I would have to watch the store while she did this.

It was several years, after I married and moved away, before I could eat hamburger in any form because we usually had what was left over and didn't sell that day from the store!

A small town has many special advantages. Frequently after hours, when the store was closed, a knock would come at the door of our upstairs apartment when someone desperately ran out of one necessity or another. Either my mother or father would go down and help them.

Frank Frana Market

Mr. Frana specialized in fruits, vegetables, groceries, meats (homemade Italian sausages and salami), imported olive oil, and cheese. Frana's selection was small and practical, mostly canned good, always tomatoes, and other staples. He made frequent buying trips to Albany to stock up on meats, cheeses, and olive oils. In those days people bought olive oil in gallon containers with distinctive scenes on the cans. Because many residents in town were Italian immigrants or first-generation children, they used olive oil in lieu of butter, much like it was done in the old country. My recollections are that as you entered the store there was a waft of garlic and other tantalizing spices, most probably associated with the Italian sausages and salami that he made in-house.

I can remember these markets like it was yesterday—or maybe a week ago! With the help of others, I have been able to relive some of the early years of my youth with great joy. Author John Steinbeck once said, "You can't go home again because home has ceased to exist except in the mothballs of memory." Although not physically, I have been able to mentally return to the West Stockbridge of old, "My Hometown."

Watch for future installments of "We Remember When..." in the Local Yokel. John Bormolini is a West Stockbridge "ex-pat," now residing in Leavenworth, Kansas. Readers who would like to share their stories of 1950s West Stockbridge are invited to e-mail John at johnbormo@aol.com.



West Stockbridge Cultural Council Grants Announced for 2020

By Margie Skaggs

The West Stockbridge Cultural Council recently completed its granting process for FY2020. For this cycle we received 33 applications and provided funds for 15 of them. All of these met our top criteria for funding: supporting programs in our local area that appeal to our diverse constituency, including school, library, and nature programs, and music, dance, theater, and arts events.

The organizations receiving funding for 2020 are:

- Arts in Recovery for Youth (AIRY)
- Mass Audubon: Nature to Libraries
- Bazaar Productions at The Foundry
- Berkshire Pulse: Math and Drumming
- Berkshire South: Ukulele Band
- Community Health Programs: Botanical Garden passes
- Flying Cloud School Science Program
- Friends of the West Stockbridge Public Library: museum passes
- Greenagers: Environmental Stewardship
- *The Local Yokel*
- Shakespeare & Company: Fall Festival of Shakespeare
- Turn Park: Veer Dance Performance
- WAM Theatre Season of Events
- West Stockbridge Historical Society: Chamber Concert
- West Stockbridge Public Library: Nature Matters

Current members of the West Stockbridge Cultural Council are Marjorie Powell (chair), Susan Leo, Jackie Moffatt, Miki Reuchlin, Scott Sawyer, Margie Skaggs, and Curtis Thierling (treasurer). We always welcome comments and suggestions from our West Stockbridge neighbors.

For more information about the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the local grants process, go to www.massculturalcouncil.org and click on Grant Programs and then Local Cultural Council.

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Grist *from the* Mill

by Kelt Wilksa

Musings on Books and Writing

Say you're a bookseller hunting for rare titles in a dusty Berkshire attic. Creased paperback beach read: dollar section. Hardcover bestseller from the 90s: eh, maybe five bucks. Then you stumble upon a faded cloth cover . . . it's an Ernest Hemingway! You go through your checklist. No major scuffing on the spine? Check. Pages free of splotching? Check. First edition? Check. This is a good find for sure. But is it signed? The difference between a yes and no could be tens of thousands of dollars.

Why do we treasure signed books? And don't just say, "Because they're worth a lot of money." Dig deeper. That's not why you keep an inscribed Hemingway on the bookshelf next to your fireside reading chair. You keep it to pull it off the shelf once in a while and simply flip to that front page. You keep it to retrace the name in your mind and imagine where he signed it. Maybe at his shaded tropical retreat in Havana, perhaps at his mountain-view abode in Idaho before his untimely passing? A quick scrawl on a page is a tunnel through time to infinite stories.

Since the rise of the eBook, there has been an attempt from the industry to accommodate digital signatures. Sometimes they are inscribed via stylus. Sometimes they are added to a picture taken with the author at an event and then downloaded into your eBook file. Not feeling the personal connection? That could be why the digital signature has largely fallen flat. Nothing beats pen on paper. One of the titles on our shelves at Shaker Mill Books aptly embodies this inherently human connection. When the renowned author and type designer Bruce Rogers accidentally pricked his finger on a pen while signing the book and a drop of blood fell on the page, he added to the inscription something along the lines of "See! I bled for you!" Whether it's blood, ink, or maybe a coffee ring, we have come to cherish these unique portals to another time and place—one thin page separating us from gifted writers and the lives they lived between the lines.

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April greetings to everyone from the library staff and trustees. As of this writing, the library is closed for book and DVD browsing, and there is a suspension of the vans delivering books from libraries throughout the region and state. Please stand by for updated information at:

- The library page on the town website: <https://www.weststockbridge-ma.gov/library>
- Our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/West-Stockbridge-Public-Library-186480211473376/>
- Our website: <http://www.weststockbridgelibrary.org/home>

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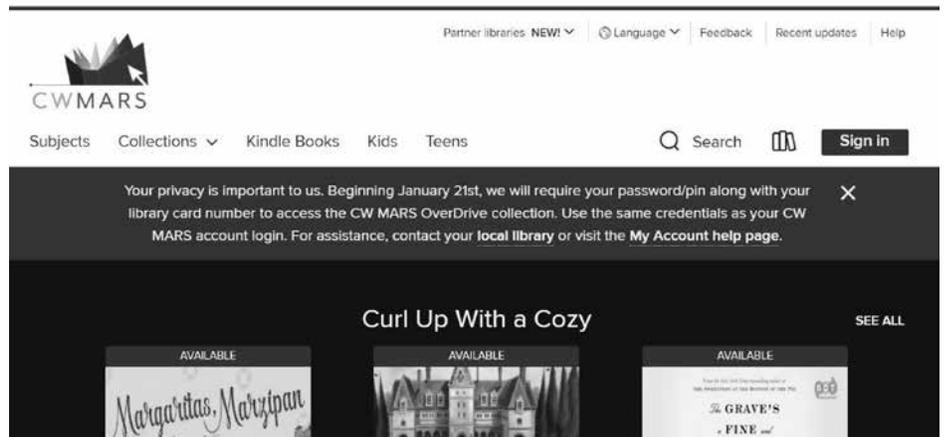
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AND, in case you are looking for new ways to keep kids learning while they are home, loads of great resources are available at the WSPL website's databases page: <http://www.weststockbridgelibrary.org/Research-Databases>

 Rachel Alter, Vicky Cooper,
 Brad Havill



Scrapbook April 2020: TEST YOUR TRIVIA KNOWLEDGE!

1. What caused an increase of 1.4% in the 2011 town budget?
2. Voters were asked to approve a local option at the town meeting. What was it?
3. The Quinn bill addresses what issue?
4. What happened to Terrence and Veronica Timmons on March 28, 2011?

Answers: 1. A 3% assessment for the Berkshire Hills Regional School district. 2. A three-quarters of 1% of 38 cents on a \$50 restaurant bill. 3. A police-education initiative. 4. They became maternal grandparents to twins Addison and McKenzie Timmons.

History Quiz Answer:

The so-called Spanish flu (that actually did not begin in Spain) probably originated in France in March 1918 and quickly spread throughout the rest of the world. Global travel with soldiers returning from the war, refugees, guest workers, and general trade and commerce made it a global pandemic. Rural communities in western Massachusetts were not exempt. The first wave of the H1N1 virus lasted until early 1919. Although many were infected, the initial death rate wasn't that high.

West Stockbridge lost its only doctor, Dr. Eugene Hull, while stationed in Little Rock, Arkansas, in October 1918. Then in January 1919, John Bossidy, a US Navy sailor, died in Queenstown, Ireland. The Bossidy family lived in the house adjacent to the cannon on Albany and State Line Roads.

The pandemic had multiple waves after 1918, each more lethal than the previous one. By 1920, when it subsided, more than 35 residents and visitors in West Stockbridge had succumbed to influenza and related disease. The exact number is difficult to know because the listed causes of death were not directly attributed to the virus. Our full-time population at that time was smaller than today at 1,050 people (versus 1,305 now). The impact on the town must have been significant. Everyone knew someone who was affected.

Health care was difficult as well. The town had one doctor who was part time, covering Lee, Lenox, Becket, and Great Barrington. The closest hospital was the House of Mercy (now Berkshire Medical Center) in Pittsfield. Travel between towns was arduous, at best, with dirt roads, mud, and snow six months of the year. The only option was the train. If you were sick, you likely stayed home, infecting other family members, and your house was quarantined during the pandemic. It was difficult times for our mining and farming community.



*Baseball players wearing protective masks during the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918.
Photo credit George Rinhart/Corbis, via Getty Images*

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The Community Health Association of Richmond and West Stockbridge
**Invites you to join us for a dinner and lecture with
Lea Finck, RD, LDN, CNSC**

“What Kind of Diet Should I Follow?”

This lecture will highlight current nutritional recommendations and dietary trends that will assist you in choosing the diet that is best for you.

Cost: \$10 per person for the buffet-style dinner catered by On a Roll Cafe

No charge for attending the lecture only

When: Thursday, May 21, 5–7 p.m.

Where: The Richmond Congregational Church, 1515 State Rd., Richmond, MA

~Reservations are required~

When making your reservation, please indicate if you are planning to join us for both the dinner and lecture or the lecture only.

Contact: Emilie Jarrett: 232-0122; -email: emilie@charws.com

This event may be postponed due to the COVID-19 situation. Please check our website or call 232-0122 for details.



LOCAL EATS • DRINKS • MUSIC

CLOSED TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY • 413.232.8565

Every issue costs us about \$1,300 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 \$ _____
made payable to WSLY.

Name (as you want it to appear in acknowledgments)

Address (location you would like the *Local Yokel* and/or bumper sticker sent)

City State Zip

E-mail

Check any that apply:

- I would like my contribution to remain anonymous.
- Thanks, but don't mail the *Local Yokel* to me. Save the postage; I'll pick it up myself.
- Yes, please do send me a YKL Bumper Sticker for my donation of \$35 or more.



Please mail this form with your check to:
WSLY
P.O. Box 238
West Stockbridge, MA 01266

Community News & Events

Due to the coronavirus health emergency, many meetings and events are being cancelled or postponed. The town has announced the closure of the Town Offices through April 7. We are including all information available to us up until publication, but with the likelihood of changes, readers should check with the office, department, or organization for the latest information.

Community Health Association

Blood pressure clinics are held Mondays and Wednesdays, 9–10 a.m., at the CHA office at the West Stockbridge Town Offices. For more information about additional free skilled nursing services, such as home visits for residents, contact Emilie Jarrett, RN, at 232-0122, or visit our website, www.rwstcomhealth.com.

Stockbridge Grange Dinner

On Sunday, April 19, the Stockbridge Grange will serve a roast pork dinner in the Grange Hall at 51 Church Street, Stockbridge, from 1 to 2 p.m. Cost: \$12 adults, \$6 under 12, and under 5 free. Takeouts are available. Please call 298-3185 in advance to see if the dinner is canceled.

Council on Aging

The West Stockbridge Council on Aging tentatively plans to hold their usual potluck lunch at noon on Tuesday, April 14, at the Town Offices Community Room. Plans depend on coronavirus restrictions and building access (as of this writing the Town Offices are currently closed to public use), so please call Paula at 232-4394 to confirm if you wish to attend.

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



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or visit www.thelocalyokel.org for info.



The town has announced the closure of the Town Offices through April 7

Town Government Boards and Commissions, Phone Directory, and Office Hours Town Offices Main Number 413-232-0300 • Fax 232-7195

Animal Control	<i>Brian Hoskeer</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>Earl Moffatt</i>	232-0300	ext. 314	Fri. 9 a.m.–4 p.m., or by appt.
Select Board	<i>Bernie Fallon, Doane Perry, Eric Shimelonis</i>			
Town Administrator	<i>Marie Ryan</i>	232-0300	ext. 319	Mon.–Thurs. 7 a.m.–3 p.m. Fri. 7 a.m.–11 a.m.
Building Inspector	<i>Brian Duval</i>	232-0300	ext. 313	Leave Message for Inquiries
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>Steve Traver, Acting Chief</i>	911 or 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>Rachel Alter</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	<i>Marc Portieri</i>	911 or 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>Wayne Cooper</i>	232-0307		Tues. & Thurs. 10 a.m.–6 p.m. and Sat. 8 a.m.–6 p.m.
Tree Warden	<i>Andrew Fudge</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: visitweststockbridge.com

PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES

On Monday March 30th the combined Richmond and West Stockbridge COA's are hosting a special
Emergency Preparedness Training Session
12:00 Noon at the St. Patrick's Church Parish Hall
Route 41 in West Stockbridge.

You will learn about the personal steps to take to prepare for different emergency situations and "Emergency Go Packs" will be provided.

A federal report on the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina found that up to HALF of all deaths were a Result of the failure to adequately plan ahead.

Please call Phyllis at 413-553-7793 or email her to reserve your seat at COA@richmondma.org.

Training is free.

Cancelled due to coronavirus health emergency



2020 U.S. CENSUS

Stand Up! Be Counted!



Did You Know?

Census data is confidential.

- Your personal information is protected by law and is never released to any other local, state, or federal agencies (Title 13 of the U.S. Code).

Census data affects your community.

- Census data determines federal and state funding to many programs, including transportation, education, and healthcare.
- The data collected by the U.S. Census will determine your political representation for the next 10 years at the local, state, and federal levels.

Responding to the Census is easy.

- You can respond to the U.S. Census online or over the phone in 13 languages, or wait for the paper form to be delivered to you.

[Learn More: 2020census.gov](https://www.2020census.gov)



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts 2020 Census Liaison

For more information:
www.ma2020census.org
1-855-MA1-2020 (1-855-621-2020)
ma2020census@sec.state.ma.us

Scan to read more
on how census
affects your
community.



The West Stockbridge Historical Society presents:

WEST STOCKBRIDGE JAZZ SERIES

YOKO MIWA TRIO



**Due to the coronavirus outbreak,
now RESCHEDULED to
Saturday, September 26, 2020, at 8 p.m.**

Saturday, 18 April 2020, 8pm
The Old Town Hall at 9 Main Street
Tickets \$35
weststockbridgehistory.org

April Art Calendar

Guild of Berkshire Artists | BerkshireArtists.org | gobasocial@gmail.com 2020

PLEASE NOTE: These events are listed as ideally scheduled, due to cancellations that may be prompted by the coronavirus pandemic, please check for calendar updates via our homepage at www.berkshireartists.org, Facebook, or with the member running the program!

April 1, Monthly art seminar and Guild business meeting. Wed. Apr. 1, 4-5pm Call for Art Berkshire Humane Society and Adrian Holmes demonstrating. **5-6pm Business Meeting.** Plan upcoming shows and activities. Community Room Town Hall, 21 Stateline Road (Route 102) West Stockbridge.

April 3, Collage Group. Friday Apr. 3, 12-30-3pm Richmond. For info and availability inquire at: berkshireartists@gmail.com

April 3, First Fridays Artswalk. Fri. Apr. 3, 5-8pm Pittsfield, North and South Streets. www.firstfridaysartswalk.com. Irene Collias, Deb Buratto, Tom Rubino, and Laurie Rando displaying at TKG Real Estate, 137 North street.

April 5, First Sunday Free at the Clark. Sun. Apr. 5. 10am-5pm. The first Sundays of the month are free Oct. to May. Connect w/others to carpool.

April 17, Photo Explorers: Taft Farm. 119 Park Street, Great Barrington. Join Carole Quinn on Fri. Apr. 17, 8:30am for coffee/breakfast. Explore the area.

April 24, Art Book Gathering Friday, Apr. 24, 2-4 pm. Share a favorite book: artist, process. Shaker Mill Books, West Stockbridge.

April 25, Members' Potluck. Sat. Apr. 25. 3-6pm West Stockbridge. Bring main dish, hors d'oeuvres or dessert for ten and what YOU want to drink. Partners welcome. For location, RSVP: ftsegal@nycap.rr.com

April 26, Berkshire Photo Gathering. Sun. Apr. 26, 2-4 pm \$5. Berkshire South Regional Comm. Center, 15 Crissey Road, Great Barrington, MA 01230 Put photos on website to share.



April 16, Berkshire Humane Society Reception. Thurs. Apr. 16, 5:30-7pm, 214 Barker Road, Pittsfield. Works of art by various artists, inspired by animals and nature. Artists please bring a plate of hors d'oeuvres.

MONDAYS, Classic Drawing, Still life, and Watercolor. Bring paper, pencil, charcoal, watercolor. Still life set up. Free and open to the public. **BSVP required** via berkshireartists@gmail.com. West Stockbridge Community Room, 21 Stateline Road, Rt. 102. Mondays 12:30-3:30pm.

Tuesdays Figure Painting, Open Studio. 1-4pm. IS183, Stockbridge. \$100 for GBA/IS183 members for all 5 sessions via class registration (413-298-5252x100) or \$30 drop in. 5-class sessions run March 17 - April 14 and April 21 - May 19. Bring your supplies. Check IS183 for any class updates.

April 27, CALL FOR ART: Shaker Mill Inn. Mon. April 27, will be the drop off date for new work to be added to the Inn this Spring. Visit www.berkshireartists.org/show-forms for details once available.

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

thelocalyokel.org



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			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		

Photo by Emily Weiland

April 2020 Calendar of Events

Due to the coronavirus health emergency, many meetings and events are being cancelled or postponed. The town has announced the closure of the Town Offices through April 1, which was extended by the governor to April 7. We are including all information available to us up until publication, but with the likelihood of changes, readers should check with the office, department, or organization for latest information.

4/1	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
4/1	Select Board meeting	6 p.m.	Town Offices
4/2	Board of Health meeting	6:30 p.m.	Town Offices
4/5	Palm Sunday		
4/6	Parks & Recreation Committee meeting	5:30 p.m.	Town Offices
4/7	Planning Board meeting	7 p.m.	Town Offices
4/8	Passover (begins at sundown)		
4/8	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
4/10	Good Friday		
4/12	Easter		
4/14	Council on Aging (COA) Potluck Luncheon	12 noon	Town Offices Community Room
4/14	American Legion meeting	7 p.m.	Town Offices
4/15	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
4/15	Select Board meeting	6 p.m.	Town Offices
4/19	Grange Dinner	1-2 p.m.	Grange Hall, 51 Church St., Stockbridge
4/21	Vision Committee meeting	6 p.m.	Town Offices
4/22	Earth Day		
4/22	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
4/23	Ramadan (begins at sundown)		
4/24	Arbor Day		
4/29	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
4/29	Select Board meeting	6 p.m.	Town Offices