

# Local yokel

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West  
Stockbridge

*September*  
**2020**



*The Fremonts performing at The Foundry in downtown West Stockbridge. Photo by Lear Levin*

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 2005



*In July, the West Stockbridge Chamber Players performed in the amphitheater at TurnPark Art Space. Photo by John Parker*

## Two Open-Air Concerts by the West Stockbridge Chamber Players Fill the Berkshire Hills—at Last—with the Sound of Live Music

*By Liza Bennett*

On the final day of July, a picture-perfect Friday afternoon, a procession of people, masked and socially distanced, began to file across the lush green lawn of TurnPark Art Space. They took up designated positions on the grass in front of the amphitheater, set up their folding chairs, and waited patiently for the benefit concert for the West Stockbridge Historical Society to begin. A tremendous sense of anticipation floated on the light breeze. For many in the audience this was the first time in almost five months that they'd ventured out beyond their small social "pods" and COVID-restricted routines. For almost everyone, it was the first time they'd heard live music in what seemed like a lifetime.

It was a particular pleasure to have that music performed by the beloved West Stockbridge Chamber Players. The Players' artistic director Catherine Hudgins and the West Stockbridge History Society's president Bob Salerno came up with the idea of an open-air concert several months ago. "We just couldn't imagine summer in the Berkshires without live music," Salerno said, "and the Chamber Players were so eager to perform again in front of a live audience."

The program opened with Dvořák's Terzetto in C major, Op. 74, in a stirring performance by Sheila Fiekowsky and Lisa Ji Eun Kim on violins and Daniel Getz on viola. Clarinetist Catherine Hudgins introduced the second piece, Mozart's Clarinet Quintet in A major, K. 581, by saying what a joy it was to perform again. "It's just not the same when we play in front of a computer. We get something very special from an audience." She also mentioned that the Mozart piece was one of her favorites. "It sounds so bright, but there's a lot of sadness in it if you listen carefully. I think Mozart is saying 'rejoice in the moment, but look ahead to a better future.'" It was a message that resonated deeply with the audience and informed the lovely performance by Hudgins, Fiekowsky, Kim, and Getz who were joined by Mickey Katz on cello. Special thanks are due to Sandra and Bill Flannery, Igor and Katya Gomberg and TurnPark Art Space, and the West Stockbridge and Richmond Cultural Councils for their generous support.

The second Open-Air Benefit Concert by the Chamber Players was held on a quintessential Berkshire summer afternoon in the garden of one of the loveliest private homes in West Stockbridge. Under the shade of a large spreading apple tree and socially distanced across the sun-drenched lawn, 50 guests, the new maximum allowed by Massachusetts law, gathered to hear another beautifully curated program by the Chamber Players' artistic director Catherine Hudgins. Welcoming the audience, Hudgins explained that "the first two pieces are both unfinished. I thought it appropriate to perform unfinished work in this time of COVID when so many events are being cut short." Hudgins also noted that her husband William Hudgins, principal clarinetist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, would be playing the basset horn that afternoon, an unusual instrument favored by Mozart for its extended range.

An uninterrupted flow of glorious music followed, starting with Schubert's String Trio in B-flat major, D. 471, performed by Sheila Fiekowsky on violin, Daniel Getz on viola, and Mickey Katz on cello. Mozart's Clarinet Quintet (fragment), K. Anh. 90/580b followed with Getz and Katz joined by Catherine Hudgins on clarinet, William Hudgins on basset horn, and Lisa Ji Eun Kim on violin. Sheila Fiekowsky noted that the next piece, Haydn's Quartet in D, Op. 76, No. 5, was "like so many pieces written at the end of the composer's career, absolutely magical." She performed the quartet with Kim, Getz, and Katz. All six musicians came together for the final piece of the afternoon, Mendelssohn's charming Konzertstück No.1, Op.113.

After weeks of practice by the Chamber Players and intense planning by the Historical Society, both concerts were heart-warming successes, with every "seat" taken and the proceeds earmarked for the \$80,000 matching grant from Massachusetts Cultural Council to replace the Old Town Hall's roof and repair its windows and doors. More than anything else, though, the events were confirmation that—with enough care and preparation—we can still join together as a community and continue to enjoy the things we love.



*In August, guests gathered to hear another program by the Chamber Players at a beautiful private home in West Stockbridge. Photo by Liza Bennett*

# 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 July 22, 2020 21 State Line Road, Town Hall

Open Meeting

**Quorum present:** Roger Kavanagh, Select Board Chair, Kathleen Keresey, Select Board Member, Eric Shimelonis, Select Board Member, Marie Ryan, Town Administrator

### Also present:

DPW Director Curt Wilton,  
Town Accountant Elaine Markham, and  
Finance Committee Members: Bob Salerno,  
Dan Buehler and Andy Krouss.  
Review and sign warrants (payroll and vendor)

Roger opened the meeting at 6:03 PM. He reviewed the agenda, noting that the Board had reviewed and signed warrants (payroll and vendor) before the meeting. He then made a motion to approve the July 15, 2020 minutes, Eric seconded and all were in favor.

### DPW update – Curt Wilton, DPW Director:

Curt welcomed and congratulated the new Board members and provided his regular update to the Board.

- Cemetery Commission- They have a new member, Mary Korte Kinmond and he thinks she will be a great addition. He said she goes to the cemeteries daily and will keep him and the other commissioners updated on how things are going. Curt reported that the contractor who does the landscaping at the cemeteries is doing a great job. He noted that tree work is coming up and there will be more headstone repairs done this year. 48 stones have already been repaired and the Commissioners have money for, and have approved, four more days of repairs.
- Parks and Recreation Committee- The Committee has been working hard. There will be new playground equipment installed in the next month. Curt said this has been a long time coming and has been in the works for at least three years.

- Card Pond Beach – The beach is open with social distancing and masks. The dock has not been installed this year and a handicap restroom has been placed there.

- Transfer Station- Curt informed the Board that this area is getting a facelift. They have new signs coming, a roof will be installed over the trash compactor, which previously had no cover and the road will be repaired and repaved sometime in September-October.

- He also told the Board that the new metal, glass, plastic recycling compactor is saving the town money because compacting eliminates wasted space in the container. That means it holds more material and takes longer to fill, which reduces the number of containers per year that have to be hauled to the recycling vendor site at \$275 per load.

- Highway Department- Everyone has been extremely busy and working hard. No one has gotten sick due to COVID-19. Curt said the State Aid was recently approved so the Town will be getting approximately \$151,000 of State Chapter 90 funds for road work, He said they will start as soon as possible on the West Center Road project and will have the majority of the road completed and ready for winter with the final paving being completed in the spring.

Eric thanked Curt for allowing the Board to speak with him by phone at the last meeting regarding the closure of Center Street to accommodate outside dining at Rouge Restaurant.

Curt asked the Board to sign the paperwork he needs to submit to get the Chapter 90 funds. Roger asked Curt to set the closeout time on the bid documents for the West Center Road project at 6PM or earlier so the bids could be opened at the beginning of a Board meeting. Curt agreed.

- Shared Streets and Spaces Grant -Curt spoke about the draft grant application he and Marie had put together. He believes the timing for this grant is perfect, especially since Towns are trying to be creative in helping businesses stay open and become financially stable, which benefits the whole community.

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Rouge street dining. Photo by Joe Roy, Jr.

## West Stockbridge Businesses Get COVID Creative

By Joe Roy, Jr.

West Stockbridge businesses have become creative, adjusting to the pressures of the pandemic conditions we all face lately. The Foundry is using its outside facilities to attract customers. Rouge is serving diners in the street. Six Depot is utilizing its porch tables. The Orient Express is serving a full menu for curbside pickup, and The Tap House has reincarnated its unique outdoor entry pavilion. The Farmers Market is attracting visitors on Thursdays. Most downtown businesses are “open” again, and—wonder of wonders—the public restrooms have reopened!

From <https://www.facebook.com/WestStockbridge/>



The Fremonts performing at The Foundry. Photo by Lear Levin

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The Board had a draft copy of the application which included durable plastic materials that can be used to support outside dining and other business activity in the immediate future and for other purposes in the future. The application also included a project to pave the parking area near the public restrooms. Curt read an e-mail from Kathleen that spoke to other potential ideas the Vision committee and Master Plan committee had been discussing related to the area Curt was proposing to pave. Curt said that it could take a long time for those ideas to be developed and approved and in the meantime, the Town is really in need of a usable parking lot. He said the Select Board may also want to add more ideas to the application.

Kathleen stated that she would like to see ideas from the Committees all dovetail together, taking into account other creative uses for that space and for the funds from the grant. She mentioned the possibility of sidewalks on Swamp Road, work on the Williams River Trail and the road behind Trucs. She would like to see expansion of the downtown into the neighborhoods, making the whole area more walking friendly. Eric suggested parallel parking on Moscow Road and marking the parking lot on Main Street with a staircase going up to the parking lot behind the old Town Hall.

Roger asked Marie to coordinate with Kathleen, Eric and Curt on this to create a revised application that would reflect some of these other ideas. Kathleen said she would like to contact someone at the State about the grant before the application is submitted. She agreed to arrange a meeting in the coming week with Eric and Curt where they can all discuss and agree upon other ideas to include in the revised application.

Joe Roy asked if he could provide his insight on this discussion from the perspective of a downtown merchant. He asked the Board not to

take away the parking lot or any parking in Town. He feels the Town needs more parking not less.

He also spoke about the public restrooms. He noted that they are closed right now but they really need to be opened. He asked the Board to consider hiring a cleaning service to ensure that they can be opened and that they are maintained in safe and sanitary condition (a proposal the Town Administrator is actively pursuing). He added that the Town should also think about modifying the current restroom building so that it could be used year round versus just seasonally.

The Board thanked Curt for his detailed DPW update.

**Finance Committee Appointment – Frank Landsberger**

Roger made a motion to appoint Frank Landsberger to replace Kathleen Keresey on the Finance Committee. Eric seconded the motion and all were in favor.

**Finance Committee Presentation – Bob Salerno**

Bob introduced Elaine Markham, the Town Accountant and members of the Finance Committee who were in attendance. He stated that since the Board had two new members he thought it would be a good idea to provide an overview of how Municipal Finance works by covering the Budget process, Municipal Accounting and the process of setting the tax rate.

Budget Process and schedule:

- December: Departments begin giving the Town Administrator their budgets
- January: Department Heads meet with the Select Board to discuss their budget
- February: Town Administrator puts all the numbers together
- End of February: Finance Committee gets the budget and meets with Department Heads

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Select Board Meeting Minutes ...continued from page 5

- March & April: Meetings continue with Select Board and Finance Committee
- April: Select Board approves budget and Town Meeting Warrant is posted
- May: Budget is voted on at Town Meeting
- July: The new budget is effective July 1

Bob emphasized that the Finance Committee's role is to advise the Select Board on the development of the budget and the final responsibility for the Town Budget rests with the Select Board.

Municipal Accounting:

Bob told the Board that Elaine will close the books on the prior fiscal year around October of the current fiscal year and then an audit is performed by a firm under contract to the Town.

He then stated that he feels the Town should seriously consider finding a different audit firm that would conduct and complete the annual audit in a much more timely fashion. He said that the current auditors get all the information they need for the audit before December but we don't get the draft report until June or July. Elaine added that she thinks we're not getting the service we should expect for the money we're paying. Bob agreed and asked the Board to give Elaine approval to solicit bids for a new audit firm.

Roger made a motion to have the Town Accountant prepare an RFP seeking bids for a new audit firm. Kathleen seconded the motion and all were in favor. Elaine will start working on this right away.

Bob stated that each month Elaine also prepares budget sheets that the Finance Committee and the Department Heads receive. He feels the Board should also get these reports so they can see the status of the Budget at any given time. The Board agreed and stated that they will be actively monitoring budget versus actual throughout the fiscal year.

Bob explained that the Finance Committee usually asks for a Special Town meeting near the end of the fiscal year to seek approval for shifting funds from underspent accounts to other accounts in order to cover expenses at the end of the year.

Elaine explained that looking at a monthly report may be deceiving because some departments have increased costs at different times of the year, e.g., Cemeteries in summer/spring and DPW with ice and snow expenses in the winter.

Bob asked the Board to periodically look at budget versus actual expenses in order to keep an eye on variances throughout the year. He explained that about 70% of the budget is locked in due to contracts and commitments, such as the Town's share of the Regional school budget and the various insurance policies the Town is required to have. That leaves approximately 30% of the budget that can be somewhat controlled. He said the bigger departments, such as DPW, Police and Fire Dept will have some wiggle room in their budgets, but not much.

Then Bob explained the following:

Free Cash – This is used for capital items (not extremely expensive) or special articles in the warrant. This money is like a savings account and the amount in the account is certified by the State each year.

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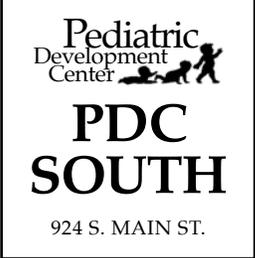
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**Capital Reserve Fund** – Funds in this account can be used for large purchases (like Fire trucks) to help offset the amount that has to be borrowed. Use of these funds requires approval by a 2/3 vote at a Town Meeting.

Bob explained that the Town gets a small amount of income each year from the State based on meals and hotel taxes collected. Last year this amounted to \$37,000.

**Tax Rate:**

When the tax rate is calculated by the State, it takes into account the budget that was passed at Town Meeting, the valuation of taxable property in Town, and other sources of income. The tax rate for the fiscal year gets set in October-November each year.

Bob told the Board that the Town does borrowing on major capital items such as the West Center Road project and renovation of Town Hall. He said that this borrowing is primarily done through State House notes that have extremely low rates and no transaction fees.

To summarize, the Board is responsible for setting the budget which in turn effects the tax rate. Throughout the fiscal year the Board can decide not to spend some of the money approved in the budget, but it cannot change the tax rate once it is set.

The Select Board thanked Bob for his review and discussion.

**Select Board Speak Time:**

Roger spoke about the Exec Session that was held on July 16, 2020. He read the following announcement, which had been prepared by Town Counsel:

“Peter Skorput is no longer employed as Fire Chief of the West Stockbridge Fire Dept. As this is a personnel matter, I am not authorized to comment further.”

Roger also wanted to bring the Board up to date on a call he received from Heather Bellow, a reporter for the Berkshire Eagle. She wanted to know if he would comment on the cost of a police detail that was making it impossible for Maggie Merrell to open the Rouge restaurant for outdoor dining. He told the Board that he took Heather through the details of the last two Board meetings when the Board approved the Rouge restaurant application for outdoor dining and the other where it approved closing the street as needed, with the caveat that the details would be worked out with the Police Chief and the Director of the DPW. He also told her about the thank you note Maggie sent to the Board and the Town Administrator which stated that Rouge was not going to use the street and would open using the sidewalk and the back deck. He said he ended the conversation with Heather stating that the Board had left the door open for more conversation if Maggie needed to revisit this and that he was surprised and disappointed that Maggie had taken her issue to the public through a press release rather than contacting a Board member or the Town Administrator about what appeared to be ongoing issues. After some discussion between Board members, Roger asked Marie to get in touch with Maggie the next morning and tell her we wanted to address and resolve whatever issues she was having that were preventing her from opening her restaurant.

Eric mentioned that the Class 2 /3 business license renewals will be coming up in the next few months and he thinks that the D’Aniello’s have done a great job improving the appearance of their property. The Board agreed. Roger said this is one of the processes he would like the Board to understand better, with the expectation that the annual license renewals would be a very routine event based on compliance with the existing bylaws. All agreed that this should be an item for a future meeting agenda

and that Brian Duval should be asked to join that meeting to provide the perspective of the Town Enforcement Officer.

Kathleen requested that the file name on the Selectboard minutes be changed so the date is at the beginning of the file name. She thinks this will make it easier to store and retrieve them in meeting minute archives. All agreed and Marie will make that change starting with the minutes of this meeting.

After checking to see if there were any more items for discussion, Roger made a motion to adjourn, Kathleen seconded, all were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:01PM

Respectfully submitted,

*Marie V. Ryan*  
Town Administrator

**Special Select Board Meeting Minutes  
July 27, 2020**

**21 State Line Road, Town Hall**

5:30 PM Site visit Rouge Restaurant

Quorum Present: Roger Kavanagh, Selectboard Chair, Kathleen Keresey, Selectboard Member, Eric Shimelonis, Selectboard Member,

Also present: Marc Portieri, Police Chief, Steve Traver, Fire Chief, Curt Wilton, Director of Public Works, Jeremy Kenney, Rouge Restaurant Manager, Maggie Merrell, Rouge Restaurant Owner

Jeremy Kenney briefed the meeting participants on how Rouge is planning to conduct outside dining. He also reviewed the “soft opening” they did over the past weekend with dining on Friday and Saturday evening on the sidewalk in front of the restaurant.

The discussion covered a broad range of topics including:

- when and how to close the street off
- the physical layout of the street closure barriers,
- hours and days of operation,
- coordination with other Center Street businesses,
- the process and timing of blocking parking spaces in order to prepare for table set up after street closure

The site visit ended at approximately 5:50 PM and the participants, except for the Fire Chief, adjourned to the Town Hall for the Special Select Board Meeting

**Special Select Board Meeting Minutes**

This meeting was conducted in person at Town Hall and shared with external participants via Zoom.

Roger opened the meeting at 6:03 PM. He notified the participants that he was going to record the meeting since Marie was not there to take notes and he would use the recording to prepare the meeting minutes.

Roger asked Jeremy if he would repeat his overview of the proposed plan for opening and operating outside dining at Rouge Restaurant so that people attending via Zoom would be on the same page as those who had been at the site visit.

Jeremy stated that the site visit was conducted outside Rouge Restaurant where we discussed the use of sidewalks and roadways as outdoor dining spaces in order to allow their business to open and viably operate. He

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# The Community Preservation Act: What You Need to Know

By Joe Roy, Jr.

On May 6, 2019, the annual town meeting, attended by 72 West Stockbridge voters, approved the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act (CPA). The article was amended by Town Administrator Mark Webber to include: (a) surcharge of 2% to begin July 2021; (b) the tax to take effect after the first \$100,000 of property value; (c) property owned and occupied may use funds [\*see footnote]; and (d) commercial property will be taxed at the same rate. According to the Town Report that recorded the meeting, future town meetings could change the percentage rate of taxation. Mark gave an example that a home valued at \$300,000 would be assessed an additional \$48 at present tax rates. The article passed unanimously.

This was the first step of a two-step voting process as required by law. The second vote appeared as a question on the 2020 election ballot. On June 29, 2020, the CPA ballot question passed with 263 votes in favor, 70 no votes, and 74 blank votes. According to the Community Preservation Coalition, West Stockbridge became the 177th CPA community in Massachusetts. In a post on June 30, 2020, their newsletter included the following:

*“During last night’s annual “spring” election (delayed from their original early May date), West Stockbridge voters passed the CPA measure with a sizable majority. The question passed at the ballot with 79% in favor. The town adopted a 2% CPA surcharge with exemptions for the first \$100,000 of residential property value and low-income and low- to moderate-income senior homeowners. Their local surcharge is expected to raise approximately \$76,000 annually, with additional funding coming from the annual distributions from the statewide Community Preservation Trust Fund.”*

The CPA allows cities and towns in our state to create a special fund for housing for local families, open space, historic preservation, and outdoor recreation. The town will receive matching state funds for these purposes. The CPA has been so successful that no community has ever attempted to repeal it. This is very exciting news for West Stockbridge!

## How can CPA funds benefit West Stockbridge?

- Restore and improve existing public parks like Card Pond and behind the Town Offices
- Create new public amenities like ball fields, walking trails, and playgrounds
- Help save historic buildings before they are lost forever
- Help preserve town records
- Leverage additional grants from state and federal programs
- Improve quality of life by making many improvements more affordable
- Create local jobs
- Restore neighborhood buildings or historic properties to provide affordable housing for local families
- Increase property values
- Provide a valuable tool for the Master Plan Committee as it proposes new ideas for our constantly evolving community

## Who will decide how CPA funds are used?

West Stockbridge CPA funds will have its own local authority. West Stockbridge residents will make up a local CPA Committee that will consider proposals for local projects. The CPA Committee will include one member of the Conservation Commission, one member of the Historical Society, one member of the Planning Board, one member of the Parks & Recreation Committee, and one member of the Housing Authority, along with as many as four additional at-large members.

The CPA Committee will determine the needs of the town by consulting with existing municipal boards. It will hold one or more public informational hearings on the needs, possibilities, and resources that can be appropriated for various projects. Notice of the public hearings must be posted to inform citizens of the town.

As required by law, our town meeting has approved the CPA in two separate votes, and the state attorney general’s office has approved that action. Now an article needs to be acted on at a special or annual town meeting that will put forward a bylaw for the creation of a Community Preservation Committee. Once our CPA Committee is appointed by the Select Board, it will follow the rules set out in the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act (Chapter 44B of The General Laws). Stand by for additional information as this process continues.

Anyone interested in the future of West Stockbridge is encouraged to visit the West Stockbridge Vision Committee (WSVC) website at [www.wstockvision.com](http://www.wstockvision.com). Webmaster and fellow Vision Committee member Stephen Graham updates the site regularly. There will soon be a page dedicated to the CPA as it applies to West Stockbridge. There will be places to submit comments, recommendations, and questions. It’s a work in progress. Please visit soon and often! Information will also be available on the town website, [www.weststockbridge-ma.gov/](http://www.weststockbridge-ma.gov/).

I’d like to acknowledge Stephen Graham’s research on the CPA that contributed substantially to this article. Thanks also to Marie Ryan for direction on a few points regarding this process.

*\*Town Administrator Marie Ryan explains, “For (c) Property Owned and Occupied may use funds, this means exemptions from the surcharge will apply to property owned and occupied as a domicile by a person who would qualify for low-income housing or low- to moderate-income senior housing in town.”*

pointed out that they do not want to use interior space for dining. He and Maggie don't want that, their staff doesn't want that and their customer don't want it either. Outdoor dining is their only option.

He then provided the following summary of the site visit:

- Rouge is requesting a temporary closure of Center Street on Friday and Saturday, closing the road straight across the Main Street / Center Street intersection and closing the Depot St / Center Street end on a diagonal, starting at the end of the Rouge property and ending near the corner of Baldwin's Hardware store. This would keep both the hardware store parking lot and the emergency access to the river open after the street is closed.
- This would just be Fridays and Saturdays, starting as early as possible. They will work with the neighboring business to coordinate timing. They will maximize their seating for the other days of operation on the sidewalk. He noted, as an aside, that blocking off the parking spaces next to the sidewalk as they became available after 3PM was much appreciated by their customers dining on the sidewalk as they didn't have to sit right next to a parked car. Jeremy also apologized to Chief Portieri for not notifying him beforehand that they were going to block off those parking spots prior to starting service at the sidewalk tables.

In response to a question about what other days they are asking to close the road, Jeremy stated that it would be just Friday and Saturday to start, with the potential to expand to Wed thru Sunday nights, if they had the demand for additional nights and if they are able to staff up to support an expanded schedule.

Kathleen suggested that whatever plan we approve should include the full schedule that Rouge would hope to have, and not just Friday and Satur-

day, so we don't have to revisit this again if they discover that conditions are favorable for additional days of operation. Everyone agreed with her suggestion.

A wide ranging discussion ensued covering numerous details including: days and times of operations, coordination with abutting businesses, set up and take down of street barriers (provided on loan by the WS DPW), storage of street barriers when not in use, notification of WSPD on days the street will be closed, blocking of parking spaces prior to street closure, and the exact configuration of the barriers at each of Center Street.

Kathleen reviewed the details of the agreement that she had documented during the discussion. The Board agreed to put those details into an agreement that would be sent to Rouge management and shared with all the abutting businesses so they will have an opportunity to provide feedback.

In addition to discussing Rouge outdoor dining operations, the Board discussed two other items related to the Center street closure.

The first item, introduced by Kathleen, was about asking other downtown businesses, particularly those that serve food, if they would be interested in looking into the Center Street closure as an opportunity to generate some additional business for their respective establishments. The Board thought this was an idea worth pursuing and Kathleen agreed to take the lead on how / when to begin outreach to downtown business owners.

The second item was about additional security on nights the street is closed. Eric pointed out that this Friday (July 31), the first day the street is scheduled to be closed, is the same day of two other downtown events, one at The Foundry and the other at Turn Park. Eric's suggestion was an additional police patrol to monitor the entire downtown area during the hours of the road closure. He positioned it as a "downtown patrol" not just for Center Street but for the whole downtown area as businesses and venues operate outdoors.

Chief Portieri expressed support for the idea but noted that the cost of the patrol would be an unbudgeted expense that would negatively impact what he already considers a pretty tight FY21 budget. The Board acknowledged that this would be a previously unbudgeted expense but they thought that the downtown patrol was an idea worth trying, at least for this weekend. They assured the Chief that they would work with the him to find funds in the overall Town budget to offset the cost of this weekend's patrol.

Having agreed in principle to the weekend patrol, Roger asked for a motion to authorize the Chief to schedule the additional patrol. Eric made the following motion:

"I move to authorize the Chief of Police to provide an additional officer who would be on patrol in the downtown area during the hours of the Center Street closure on Friday, July 31 and Saturday, Aug 1. This authorization is only for these two days. After this weekend, the Board will solicit input from the Chief and from downtown business and venue owners in an effort to assess the value provided by the additional patrol and determine if this might become a regular patrol for the rest of the outdoor dining season."

Kathleen seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Before a motion to adjourn, Roger spoke briefly about the effort the Board and other Town functions had been making over the past few weeks to work out an agreement with Rouge management that would enable them to open for outdoor dining. With that in mind, he told Maggie that he didn't think she had been fair to the Board by taking her issues to the media through a press release versus just coming back to the Board immediately after the last meeting to share her concerns. He added that if she done that, this meeting could have happened at least two weeks ago.

...continued on page 10



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Select Board Meeting Minutes ...continued from page 9

Having no other business to conduct, Roger made a motion to adjourn. Eric seconded and all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:06 PM. Respectfully Submitted, Roger Kavanagh

Select Board Meeting Minutes July 30, 2020 21 State Line Road, Town Hall

Meeting Minutes for Thursday July 30, 2020, Special Selectboard meeting which was conducted as a virtual meeting on Zoom.

Quorum present was:

Roger Kavanagh, Selectboard Chair, Kathleen Keresey and Eric Shimelonis, Selectboard members

Also in attendance: Curt Wilton, Director, DPW

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 PM

Roger reviewed the agenda and introduced the first agenda item:

1. Briefing from the Planning Board about next steps for the Master Plan development

Since Dana Bixby was unable to meet with the full Planning Board before today's meeting she asked to move this item to a future meeting.

Eric provided an update based on prior discussions with Dana regarding the Master Plan committee which would provide some insight into potential next steps toward developing the Master Plan.

The first step previously discussed would be getting Berkshire Regional planning to start researching map overlays, which would create one place to see all our green spaces and BNRC lands as a reference for the planning process. Berkshire Regional planning is ready to get started on this and they're looking forward to working with us.

Kathleen noted that the Master Plan Committee is loosely organized now and asked Eric if Dana had given him any indication about when the Planning Board would have some ideas about what they want their role to be and how they would incorporate the current Master Plan committee

members and the work they had done to date.

Eric responded that the Planning Board has a pretty clear sense of how to structure this effort. Dana's hope is that they will come to a consensus on how to proceed at their Aug 3 Planning Board meeting which she would document and forward to the Board for discussion at a future meeting.

Roger asked Eric if it is right to assume that the Planning Board is going to be taking the lead role on the development of the West Stockbridge Master Plan. Eric said he believes that is true but thought it would be best to hear directly from Dana about how she envisions the process working and the structure of the team that will be developing and communicating the plan.

Briefing about next steps for the Shared Streets and Spaces grant application

Kathleen briefed the Board about:

- People she has been in contact with from Mass DOT and from Kittelson & Associates, one of the consulting firms (funded by the Barr Foundation) who are providing support to towns preparing grant applications for the DOT Shared Streets and Spaces program.
• The list of potential projects that she, Eric Shimelonis, Curt Wilton and Dana Bixby had developed in a brainstorming session earlier in the week that could be included in the Shared Streets and Spaces grant application.
• Her conversations with folks at Mass DOT who told her that the program is really young, that they have funds they want to get to municipalities and that they suggested applicants should be thinking broadly, innovatively and should be pro-active.
• Her conversations with Liz Flanagan, a consultant from Kittelson & Associates, who thought that some of the things on the potential project list don't really fit in within confines of program, but the program is new and consultants are figuring it out as they go along.
• Liz suggested that it's really important for West Stockbridge to work directly with Mass DOT because our town center has two state highways going thru it so Mass DOT may need to be con-

...continued on page 11

September History Quiz Question:

Schools and education have been an integral part of West Stockbridge life since the town's founding in 1774. Our first formal school was established in 1778. It was part of the church, and the sum of 18 pounds was raised to pay for education. At one point, the town had seven school districts, each with a one-room schoolhouse and a teacher for early grades. We also had a larger village school in the town center to teach grades 7 and higher. By 1884, we grew to 11 school buildings with more than 380 students.

As September and Labor Day start the traditional school year, think about what school was like 100 years ago in 1920. How different was education and the schools then versus now?

(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

sulted more in depth than they might otherwise be consulted. She added that we should keep in mind the program is really about the roads, roadways, shared spaces, bike lanes and walkways, so its important to keep in mind that Mass DOT is funding the program so everything needs to be looked at through that lens.

- She noted that we can apply for up to 3 grants for a total of \$300K. Mass DOT likes the projects to be related / interconnected, to dovetail into one another. If they determine that one of the grants does not meet their criteria, they won't turn down the whole application – they'll just cross out the part that doesn't fit.
- She thought we have 3 really obvious things that would fall into what DOT does:
  - Traffic calming – state would be interested in and would help you with it. Examples included curb extensions, raised crosswalks, striping, rumble strips
  - Cones, barricades, signage
  - Reallocating parking to create open spaces

Kathleen stated that there is a lot of conflicting information regarding the application process and that more research needs to be done and coordination with Mass DOT is essential. She will take the lead to set up a teleconference with Mass DOT and Kittelson to get the application completed.

Roger noted that Kittelson has been providing support without a formal agreement and asked if something needed to be done to formalize the arrangement. Kathleen answered that Kittelson's contract is with the Barr Foundation and that Kittelson can provide us with up to \$15K of consulting services under that contract.

Roger asked Curt to share his thoughts since he is in the group that is working on the grant application. Curt asked about the deadline for applications, stating that he is concerned about missing out. Kathleen said she thinks the deadline is the beginning of Sept so there are still a few weeks to complete and submit the application.

Roger asked Kathleen if she is driving the revision to the application. She said she is and that the consultants would be particularly helpful in this process

#### **Selectboard speak**

Roger spoke about the agreement with Rouge restaurant covering the closure of Center Street for outdoor dining and the process he and Kathleen were following to bring the agreement to abutting merchants and get their feedback. He noted that all those contacted supported the agreement and one merchant, Queensboro Package Store had an issue about parking that he would speak to when we get to Citizens Speak on the agenda.

Roger spoke about the Board's intent to share information about the agreement with all downtown merchants and that Joe Roy, the leader of the Downtown Merchants Association would facilitate that process. He also mentioned that the Board would be contacting downtown food businesses to see if they would be interested in doing something on Center Street on the nights that it is closed. Kathleen said that she had started that process, that Truc's and No. 6 are not interested and she is working on getting a response from SOMA and the Tap House.

Roger shared that the Board had discussed and approved a one weekend trial of an additional police patrol in the downtown area for Friday July 31 and Saturday Aug 1 during the hours of the Center Street closure. The Board will assess the cost / value of the patrol at its next Board meeting before authorizing any additional weekend patrols.

Eric suggested doing a Press Release to make the general population aware of the Center Street closure and to create some good publicity for joining neighboring communities in coming up with innovative solutions for street closures. He will draft the press release and circulate for Board review and approval.

Eric mentioned a letter the Board had received from one of his neighbors about an increase in heavy truck traffic on Great Barrington Road. He said he had noted the same thing and asked Curt, since he was attending the meeting, if he was aware of this and had any information to share.

Curt responded that the increase in heavy truck traffic was the result of a change in ownership of the Formel Salvage yard in Housatonic. The former family business has been sold to a company that is turning it into a major junk car recycling location, bringing in trucks with 3-4 cars per load or 18 wheelers, 8 -10-12 times per day. Trucks are crossing the center lines and the white sidelines; they are just too big for the road. He sees it as a patrol issue.

After a broad ranging discussion about truck traffic going thru town, j-braking down hills and speeding, Curt suggested that the Police Chief visit the salvage yard to talk to management about West Stockbridge residents' concerns and find out about the new company's long term plans. Kathleen thought it would be more appropriate for the Board to send a letter to the company rather than have the Chief speak to them. The Board members agreed and a motion was made and seconded to draft a letter from the Board.

#### **Citizen speak**

Steve Dixon spoke about the impact of the Center Street closure on the 20 minute parking spots in front of his store. He is concerned that people coming to dine outdoors at Rouge will park in the 20 min spots and their cars will be there for hours, making it difficult for his customers to park and shop in his store. He suggested that the police should enforce the 20 minute parking. A discussion ensued about the 20 min parking signs being informational only, that there can't be enforcement. As an alternative, Steve asked if he could mark 2 of the 20 minute spots as "reserved for Queensboro Package store". After discussion, the Board agreed that this is a reasonable accommodation to make on the nights that Center Street is closed and that they would make that authorization formal at the next scheduled Board meeting. Curt agreed to provide the cones and said that he may have signs that could be used.

On the subject of the town providing tables for people to eat take out from local food businesses which was an idea discussed as part of the Shared Streets grant proposal, Frank Landsberger cautioned the Board to think about incremental costs to the Town for maintaining / cleaning those tables if they are provided.

He also asked about spending money in anticipation of grant money from the Shared Streets program and Kathleen assured him that the money would have to be in-hand before expenses are incurred because the grant doesn't cover reimbursements for prior expenses.

Robin Schmitt asked about placing detour signs to direct people where to go when Center Street is closed. Curt answered that the only signage currently planned is for road closure but he would monitor the situation to determine if additional signage might be useful.

With no other citizens asking to speak, Roger asked for a motion to adjourn. Eric made the motion, Kathleen seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger Kavanagh

# New Playground Open for Use

All of us at West Stockbridge Parks & Rec are pleased to announce that the new playground behind the Town Offices is open for use. Everything went as planned, and the new equipment fits perfectly. Public Works finished it off by putting down a new layer of mulch that really pulled the whole project together.

There are still a few odds and ends to finish up over the coming weeks. An old slide that was salvaged from the old playground will be reinstalled, and the swing set will be getting all new chains and seats. Stay tuned for future updates. Stay safe and enjoy the new playground!

*The West Stockbridge Parks & Rec Committee  
weststockbridgeparks@gmail.com*



*Photos by John Parker*



**Mass  
Cultural  
Council**

## **West Stockbridge Cultural Council Invites Grant Proposals for 2021**

The Massachusetts Cultural Council has announced a delay in the local Cultural Council grant cycle timeline by one month because of the delay in the state budgeting process. This means that applications for grants for FY2021 should be submitted and postmarked between Thursday, October 1, and Monday, November 16, 2020.

In West Stockbridge our priorities are to provide a variety of cultural resources for our diverse community from preschool to seniors. Our grants can support many kinds of cultural projects and activities such as performances, lectures, school programs, workshops, and festivals. Subsidies may also be available for school-age children to attend cultural field trips to local museums and other cultural sites.

For specific guidelines and complete information on the West Stockbridge Cultural Council, contact Marjorie Powell at ladyeasland@gmail.com or 232-0222. Application forms and more information about the local Cultural Council program are available online at [www.mass-culture.org/lcc\\_public.asp](http://www.mass-culture.org/lcc_public.asp) (click on "application process"). Application forms are also available at the West Stockbridge Town Offices and Library.

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

Greetings to all from all of us at the library! As we write this we continue to offer books and movies to go, with high hopes of being able to open up for you to visit and browse as soon as public health regulations permit.

Thanks to all who participated in our Summer Story Walk. We especially send our sincere thanks to all of our friends at businesses and public offices (and one private home!) who hosted the pages of the book:

**No. Six Depot**, who not only hosted a sign but also treated walkers to free lemonades so they could cool off as they walked!

**Flourish Market**, for the map template!

**Troy's Garage**  
**Shaker Mill Books**  
**The Foundry**  
**Charles H. Baldwin & Sons**  
**WS Historical Society**  
**West Stockbridge Town Offices**

**Berkshire Bank**  
**Truc Orient Express Restaurant**  
**West Stockbridge Post Office**  
**Baldwin Hardware**  
**The Tap House at Shaker Mill**

Rachel Alter, Vicky Cooper, and Brad Havill

NEW DVDs  
*Blade Runner 2049; David Crosby: Remember My Name; Jojo Rabbit*

Iftin, *Call Me American*  
Jones, *White Too Long*  
Jordan, *The Art of Her Deal*

NEW ADULT FICTION  
Donoghue, *The Pull of the Stars*  
Thor, *Near Dark*

NEW YOUNG ADULT AND CHILDREN'S BOOKS  
Kissen, *Rewire Your Anxious Brain for Teens*  
Miller, *Don't Touch My Hair!*  
Reynolds, *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You*  
Wang, *Stargazing*  
Woods, *The Boy, the Bird, and the Coffin Maker*

NEW ADULT NONFICTION  
Bolton, *The Room Where It Happened*  
Crawford, *Notes on a Silencing*

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**ONE PERSON IN THE VESTIBULE AT A TIME THANK YOU**

**MASKS ARE REQUIRED\*\*\***

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**PICK UP TIMES ARE TUES 11-2; WED, THURS, FRI 3-6**

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# "We Remember When . . ."

## Growing Up in West Stockbridge in the 1950s

*A Series of Recollections by John Bormolini and Friends*

### Farms of West Stockbridge

Agriculture was one of the primary occupations of the early settlers of West Stockbridge and continued to be prominent until the 1950s. By then, agriculture was no longer the mainstay. Many farms reduced their output while others continued to prosper. Some of those West Stockbridge farms are the focus of this article.

As a testament to the importance of agriculture, Williams High School still offered a vocational agriculture curriculum through the 1950s. Students were active in the Future Farmers of America (FFA) and proudly wore their distinctive FFA jackets to school.



*John Bormolini's mother Anna, neighbor boy Victor D'Aniello, dog, and our barn. From John Bormolini, ca. 1953*

For some families, agriculture supplemented their primary source of income, growing or raising what they would consume. There were gardens of various sizes (featured in the March *Local Yokel*). Some families had chickens, and quite a few had a cow or two, usually milkers. Many families raised a pig starting in spring to be butchered in the fall. My family did that until the passing of my father in 1951.

If you had livestock, some kind of shelter was needed. Many properties in West Stockbridge had barns, and quite a few still stand today. We had a barn that sheltered our pig during the colder days and nights.

Louise Faggioni and I came up with a list of working farms in the 1950s that were operated by these families: Sartori, Kersey, Baldwin, Warner Scholz, Silvernail, Fadding, Springstube, Barrett, Faraway Farm (owned by Randall O. Walker), and one chicken farm (Mooney). We will come back to the Mooney farm in a future issue.

**Sartori's** dairy farm was about a mile from town center on Swamp Road. It was operated by Anthony Sartori and his two sons, Louie and Anthony, Jr., and daughter Lucy. One thing that always struck me was the large beautiful white family home with a porch on the front and side of the house.

Anthony had a large white horse he would ride in Memorial Day parades. On occasion, the horse could be seen tethered outside of the Card Lake

Hotel waiting for its rider who enjoyed socializing with friends at the hotel. The horse knew the way back to the farm!

The other recollection that I have was bathing in the cold waters of Sartori's brook downstream from the farm. My brother Joe worked construction and would often go to the brook to bathe. It saved water at our house!

**Kersey's farm** was on the crest of a hill about 2 miles west of town center on Route 102. It was owned and operated by Joseph (Joe) Kersey. I recall the view of Crane Lake Camp and the lake from the farm. When the Thruway was built, a large chunk of farmland was procured by eminent domain. Ah, the price of progress!

I had the opportunity to talk to Kathleen Kersey, great-niece of Joe Kersey, about the farm. She described Joe as a "gentleman farmer." Kathleen discovered a signboard that displayed local businesses, including West Stockbridge, from some time in the 1930s or 1940s, judging from the 2- or 3-digit telephone numbers. On it was an ad for Overlook Farms, "specializing in quality cows and horses," that apparently was the earlier name of the Kersey Farm.

**Baldwin's Farm** was on West Center Road. The family engaged in a variety of farming activities through the 1950s including orchards, turkeys, sheep, and dairy cattle. The farm had remained in the Baldwin family and then was purchased by grandson Toby



*John Bormolini in front of neighbor's barn. Photo courtesy of John Bormolini, ca. 1956.*



Signboard displaying mostly West Stockbridge businesses in old Grange Hall. Photo courtesy of Kathleen Keresey

Casey and his wife Cameo in 2017, who with their eight children set about restoring the farm. Over the last three years they have made a quantum leap. I liken it to the rising of the phoenix out of the ashes! Visit their website at <https://thebaldwinfarm.com/>.

**Warner Scholz Farm** was in West Center, the often forgotten part of West Stockbridge. Louise Faggioni recalled, “It had lots of acreage and cattle. Also Mr. Scholz leased property to farmers who did not have enough acreage for their cattle. Warner Scholz also ran a cider mill on Hotel Street in town just below my house where I have resided for years.”

**Silvernail Farm.** While Louise chatted with Russell Fadding about their farm, he also recalled that the Silvernail Farm had at least 100 milkers during the 1950s.

**Fadding Farm** was active in the 1950s. Russell Fadding recalled that there were 60 milkers, and they sold milk to a coop. By then all of the dairy farms had milking machines.

**Springstube Farm**, located in West Center, was very active in the 1950s, and according to Edna Garnett’s book, “was still in business in the early 1970s.”

**Barrett Farm** was located on Woodruff Road. It was purchased by Raymond and Gladys Barrett who relocated from Vermont in the late 1940s. They were quite successful until disaster struck. They lost two barns in the early 1950s. They rebuilt the barns, but it never returned to its original thriving status. In addition to milkers, they raised pigs and had four horses, two of which were workhorses. You don’t see those anymore.

**Faraway Farm, aka the Walker Farm**, was on the East Alford Road. It was owned by Randall O. Walker and operated by his son John. I remember that Mrs. Walker loved to bake. She displayed her baked goods at an unattended stand at the end of her quarter-mile driveway. Each item had a price tag, and there was a slot to put the money. I asked her if people ever took the goods but did not pay. She responded that there was always more money in the slot than the total worth of the goods. Honesty was alive and well!

I enjoy writing about “My Hometown,” and I would not be able to do it without help from my friends. I hope that, by this time next year, the pandemic will be history and I will be able to get back for a long visit.

*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](mailto:johnbormo@aol.com).*



John Bormolini with more neighborhood barns, upper left. How about those white buck shoes! Photo courtesy of John Bormolini, ca. 1956

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# September Art Calendar

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

2020

**TUESDAYS, Demonstration, variable time.** Watch an artist demonstrate various mediums and techniques each week via Zoom. Start time may vary by artist, please check the website for each session's updated details as they become available. Details on how to watch are posted on our homepage and events page.

**FRIDAYS, Art Together, 2pm.** Join Eva Schuster and other Guild of Berkshire Artists making Art Together online using the Zoom platform, every Friday afternoon 2-5pm. Details on how to watch are posted on our homepage and events page.

**FRIDAYS, Meet the Artist: Zoom Edition. 5pm.** Join a different artist each week to gain an insight into their processes and art. Every Friday evening at 5pm. Featured artists and details on how to watch are posted on our homepage and events page.

**September 27, Berkshire Photo Gathering, Sunday September 27, 2-4 p.m.** Online. See webpage <http://berkshirephotogathering.com/online-meetings> for more information.

Due to physical distancing, the Guild of Berkshire Artists has suspended most in person events until further notice.

New events may be added as opportunity arises, please check online for the most up to date information and access instructions.



Barbara Patton



Keith Davidson



Dana Goedenwagen

## Summer Celebration an Online Art Show

[www.berkshireartists.org/august20show](http://www.berkshireartists.org/august20show)

**On Display Online:**  
August 12 - October 10, 2020

Visit the show and purchase your favorite directly from the artist. 25% or more of sales to go towards the Berkshire United Way's Covid-19 Emergency Fund.

Visit the show and vote on which piece you think earns "Best in Show"!

## 2020 U.S. CENSUS

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**William Francis Galvin**  
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1-833-MA1-2020 (1-833-621-2020)  
[ma2020census@sec.state.ma.us](mailto:ma2020census@sec.state.ma.us)

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# On the Home Front

By Thom Lipiczky

## An Affinity for Trees

“I think that I shall never see a poem as lovely as a tree.” So said Joyce Kilmer in 1913, before he went off to France and died 5 months before the “war to end all wars” ended.

I’ve always had a strong affinity for trees. Growing up in northern New Jersey, I spent a lot of time exploring the woods near my house. Many years later, when I bought an old wreck of a house in West Stockbridge in 1976, I was especially drawn to the 200-year-old maple tree and the giant willow on the property.

Now, in our not-so-new house (as I write this, it’s the second anniversary of breaking ground), we also share the landscape with lots of trees. Many of these are quick-growing poplars (sp. *Populus*), also known as quaking aspens. And there are also many oaks (red and white), a scattering of different birches, wild cherries, and some wonderful elms that hang on despite the Dutch elm disease that will surely claim them someday.

This episode of your favorite sitcom (“Anne and Thom’s Excellent Adventure”) features a guest appearance from tropical storm Isaias on August 4. Like many in town we lost power for about a day and a half. But at our house we also lost about 15 trees, many uprooted by the ferocious wind gusts. At least five went down across our driveway. We were very fortunate that none hit our house or solar panels. I was able to make a passage through the downed trees and branches with a chainsaw, so we could get out to the road.

Fortunately, several weeks before we had contacted Kevin Holden Tree Trimming & Removal (a longtime advertiser in the *Local Yokel!*) to take down some trees that were in rough shape or dangerously close to the house. Isaias actually anticipated this work, taking down a 60-foot poplar that landed in the driveway, just missing the house and a few small ornamental trees.

Kevin’s crew, including his son Ben, arrived with their crane and giant chipper on August 10. One of Kevin’s crew attached himself to the crane, was lifted to the top of the tree to be removed, and lashed the tree to the crane’s boom. He then rappelled down to the ground, and another crew member cut the tree at its base. The crane lifted the entire tree up and out of the thicket (without disturbing anything else including delicate plantings below) and hoisted it to the waiting chipper below.

The chipper then ground up the *entire* tree—along with one whose calipers (trunks) were more than 12 inches in diameter—and shot the chips into the waiting truck. (The scene at the end of the movie *Fargo* where Steve Buscemi “exits” flashed through my mind.) I was very sorry our grandchildren weren’t on hand to watch. But even at my advanced years I was duly amazed. I was also impressed with the cleanup the crew did. In total, they removed about 25 trees, saving some handsome maples along the way.

Our big project this summer had been to do some landscaping, but several of the areas that we planted with shade plants were no longer so shady after the tree work was done. Other areas were changed as well, and we had to rethink our plans. More shall be revealed.

We are grateful to Kevin’s crew for their expertise. We’re also grateful that our house suffered no damage. And that we even *have* a house. And lots of other trees. And an amazing community to live in.

Questions, comments, rants, etc. can be addressed to [info@localyokel.org](mailto:info@localyokel.org).



Tree being fed into chipper. Photo by Thom Lipiczky



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](mailto:info@thelocalyokel.org), or visit [www.thelocalyokel.org](http://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](mailto:john.j.parker53@gmail.com); Vicki Grayson, 232-6131, [vicki.grayson@rocketmail.com](mailto:vicki.grayson@rocketmail.com); Susan Fisher, 232-4443, [suefish12@gmail.com](mailto:suefish12@gmail.com); Anne Lesser, 717-0277, [anne@annelesserscommunications.com](mailto:anne@annelesserscommunications.com); Designer: **Kim Bradway, [kim@bloominarts.com](mailto:kim@bloominarts.com)**.**

The *Local Yokel* is supported in part by a grant from the West Stockbridge Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

## Community News & Events

Due to the coronavirus health emergency, many meetings and events are being cancelled or postponed. 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 have started up again. Weekly clinics offered by the Community Health Association are by appointment only: 9 to 10 a.m. every Wednesday and Thursday, at the Town Offices, 21 State Line Road, West Stockbridge. Info: Emilie Jarrett, RN, 232-0122 or [Emilie@charws.com](mailto:Emilie@charws.com).

Flu clinics will start on September 28. CHA is offering free flu shots for Richmond and West Stockbridge eligible residents older than age 19. See schedule and details elsewhere in this issue.

### Stockbridge Grange Dinner

The dinners at the Grange have been suspended indefinitely due to the health crisis.

### Council on Aging

Council on Aging meetings are suspended until further notice. The community luncheons ended when the people who were making the meals opened another restaurant and couldn't do both. On behalf of everyone who participated, we thank them very much and appreciate their efforts. All the lunches were delicious!

*Send your notices for Community News & Events to The Local Yokel, P.O. Box 238, West Stockbridge, MA 01266, e-mail [info@thelocalyokel.org](mailto:info@thelocalyokel.org), or visit [thelocalyokel.org](http://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.*



*The Local Yokel, P.O. Box 238, West Stockbridge, MA 01266, e-mail to [info@thelocalyokel.org](mailto:info@thelocalyokel.org), or visit [www.thelocalyokel.org](http://www.thelocalyokel.org)*

# The Community Health Association of Richmond and West Stockbridge

Quality Public Health Services Since 1928

## FLU CLINIC SCHEDULE 2020

Flu clinics will start on September 28. Safety precautions will be in place due to the pandemic. Please remember to wear a short-sleeve shirt and face covering.

The Community Health Association is offering free flu shots for Richmond and West Stockbridge eligible residents who are age 19 and older. For information about influenza, visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's website: [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu).

RICHMOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, State Rd., Richmond,  
**Monday, September 28, 5–7 p.m.**  
**Monday, October 5, noon–2 p.m.**  
**Every Thursday, starting October 1, 10–11 a.m.**

WEST STOCKBRIDGE TOWN OFFICES GYM, 21 State Line Rd., West Stockbridge  
**Tuesday, September 29, 5–7 p.m.**  
**Tuesday, October 6, noon–2 p.m.**  
**Every Monday and Wednesday, starting September 30, 9–10 a.m.**  
**No clinic on Monday, October 12, due to the holiday**

For more information, contact Emilie Jarrett, RN, BSN.  
Tel.: 232-0122; e-mail: [Emilie@charws.com](mailto:Emilie@charws.com)

21 State Line Rd., P.O. Box 368, West Stockbridge, MA 01266 Tel.: 232-0122; Fax: 232.0199;  
Website: [www.rwstcomhealth.com](http://www.rwstcomhealth.com); e-mail: [emilie@charws.com](mailto:emilie@charws.com).

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[thelocalyokel.org](http://thelocalyokel.org)



## History Quiz Answer:

A hundred years ago, education in West Stockbridge was transitioning from an isolated rural system to part of a larger global community (consistent with the rest of town life). The Great War had ended, soldiers had returned, and the economy was starting to come out of a recession. We were a poor farming community, and the lime quarries and iron mines were in decline. Our Italian immigration was increasing, Irish residents were moving out, and the population had dropped to a low of 1,050 residents. We had 200 students in four one-room schoolhouses and the village school in the town center through grade 8. High school students went to Pittsfield or Great Barrington, likely by train.

The reports of the school superintendent during the post-World War I years had a consistent theme. It was very difficult to hire teachers and retain them for the one-room schools. We could not keep teachers in music and art, even with the chance to share the position with Richmond. Teacher pay was low, textbooks out of date, and the buildings were not well heated and lacked indoor toilets. All of the buildings, including the village school, were in need of repairs.

By 1920, things started looking up for education. The state was more active in evaluating and recommending improvements to education for the smaller school districts. Textbooks (particularly geography) and wall maps all had to be replaced after the changes with World War I. A new "modern" curriculum appropriate to rural schools was implemented. Civics, American history, and the 3Rs were now emphasized. Even minimum teacher salaries were mandated by state law.

Significant changes started in 1920 that carry through to contemporary times. The state recommended that a school nurse be retained. Child health and nutrition was a major issue back then, and childhood diseases were rampant. As a result, the town hired a visiting nurse from Pittsfield who worked in the schools and provided home health visits as well.

An inspection report flagged the village school as lacking the basics of sanitation, ventilation, and lighting, and recommended the town build a new school. The Village School, on the lot next to the Congregational Church, was considered the best of all the buildings and the crown in the educational system. It was built in 1877 but by 1920 was woefully out of date and needed major maintenance. It wasn't until 1949 that the town decided to erect the newer modern school.

The biggest educational challenge was cited as immigrant children. They did not speak English, many were behind in their education, and the rural schools were not able to deal properly with the different age and ethnic groups in one room. The only recommendation cited by the school superintendent was to increase training in civics, history, and what it means to be an "American." There was no record of how that was actually done or if it was effective.

The school year a century ago was also shorter than now. The average was 110 days per year, or about five months versus the eight months now. Time was given off for harvest. Winter months made sitting in a one-room schoolhouse, heated by a coal stove, likely close to child abuse. Perhaps with an average class size of more than 35 in the small classrooms, proximity helped share the warmth. Education surely has improved, pandemic or not.



*Williamsville School ca. 1910-1920.  
Photo courtesy of Bob Salerno*

## June Donor Roll Call

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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

9/2 Jenni & Jim Hallock  
anniversary  
9/20 Connor and Chloë Seward

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.

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# 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.

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

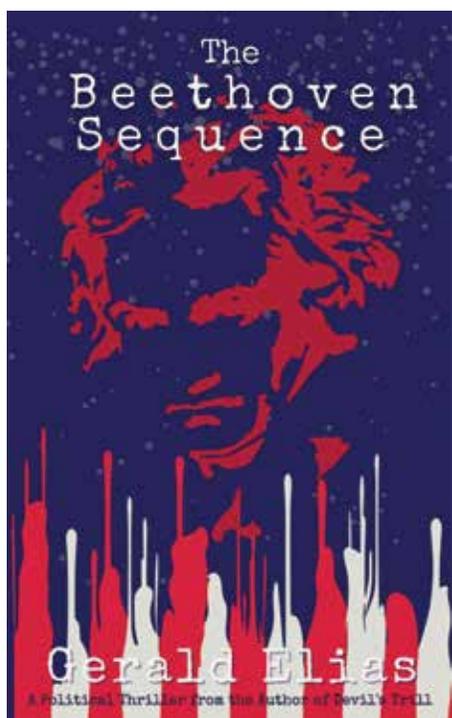
<b>Animal Control</b>	<i>Brian Hoskeer</i>	232-0300	ext. 335	As Needed
<b>Assessors Office</b>	<i>Mary Stodden</i>	232-0300	ext. 303	Tues. 1–5 p.m.; Thurs. 9 a.m.–1 p.m.
<b>Board of Health</b>	<i>Earl Moffatt</i>	232-0300	ext. 314	Fri. 9 a.m.–4 p.m., or by appt.
<b>Select Board</b>	<i>Roger Kavanagh, Kathleen Keresev, Eric Shimelonis</i>	232-0300	ext. 319	Mon.–Thurs. 7 a.m.–3 p.m. Fri. 7 a.m.–11 a.m.
<b>Town Administrator</b>	<i>Marie Ryan</i>			
<b>Building Inspector</b>	<i>Brian Duval</i>	232-0300	ext. 313	Leave Message for Inquiries
<b>Conservation Commission</b>	<i>Jennifer Kujawski, Lori Rose</i>	232-0300	ext. 338	Leave Message for Inquiries
<b>Council on Aging</b>	<i>John Zick</i>	232-0300	ext. 340	Leave Message for Inquiries
<b>Emergency Management</b>	<i>Louis Oggiani</i>	528-2175		
<b>Fire Department</b>	<i>Steve Traver, Acting Chief</i>	911 or 232-4200 (non-emergency)		Mon. 6:30–9 p.m.
<b>Highway Department</b>	<i>Curt G. Wilton</i>	232-0305		Leave Message for Inquiries
<b>Library</b>	<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.
<b>Police Department</b>	<i>Marc Portieri</i>	911 or 232-8500 (non-emergency)		24 hours, 7 days/week
<b>Post Office</b>	<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
<b>Seasonal Lifeguard</b>		232-0315		
<b>Sewer &amp; Water Commission</b>	<i>Michael Buffoni</i>	232-0309		
<b>Town Accountant</b>	<i>Elaine Markham</i>	232-0300	ext. 317	Leave Message for Inquiries
<b>Town Clerk</b>	<i>Ronni Barrett</i>	232-0300	ext. 300	Tues. & Thurs. 1:30–4 p.m.
<b>Town Collector</b>	<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.
<b>Town Historian</b>	<i>Robert Salerno</i>	232-4465		
<b>Town Treasurer</b>	<i>Karen Williams</i>	232-0300	ext. 316	Thurs. 9 a.m.–4 p.m.
<b>Transfer Station</b>	<i>Wayne Cooper</i>	232-0307		Tues. & Thurs. 10 a.m.–6 p.m. and Sat. 8 a.m.–6 p.m.
<b>Tree Warden</b>	<i>Andrew Fudge</i>	232-4322		
<b>Veterans Agency</b>	<i>Laurie Hills</i>	528-1580		
<b>Zoning Board of Appeals</b>	<i>C. Randolph Thunfors</i>	232-0300	ext. 300	

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

# Prize-Winning Mystery Author Gerald Elias Serves Up a Taut Political Thriller

From the pen of novelist Gerald Elias, author of the critically acclaimed Daniel Jacobus mystery series, comes his first thriller. *The Beethoven Sequence*, the story of a mentally unbalanced political outsider who makes an improbable ascent to the presidency of the United States, is scheduled for a September 8 release by Level Best Books.

A rural Colorado machine shop mechanic, Layton Stolz is obsessed with the music of Beethoven and its message of freedom for humankind. Building a cult-like empire of acolytes, by the time he is elected president his message has metastasized into a cancerous ideology, and his political machine is bent on eliminating his opponents. One of them is Ballard Whitmore, a graduate of Brigham Young University who was imprisoned on trumped-up sexual misconduct charges. Whitmore and female reporter Sandy Duckworthy, the only person who believes his story, risk their lives in their quest for his exoneration and the downfall of President Layton Stolz.



Cover art courtesy of the author



Author Gerald Elias.  
Photo courtesy of the author

*The Beethoven Sequence* is truly a novel suited to our turbulent times. Conceived well before the current White House administration, it contains prescient parallels of what could happen when political power, supported by a critical mass of indoctrinated acolytes, goes unchecked. In its starred review of Elias's mystery, *Death and Transfiguration*, Booklist wrote, "Brilliant and captivating on every level." Level Best executive editor Shawn Simmons added, "I'm confident the same will be said about *The Beethoven Sequence*. Working on this book with Jerry has been very exciting!"

Gerald Elias leads a double life as a world-class musician and prize-winning author. A former violinist with the Boston Symphony and associate concertmaster of the Utah Symphony, Elias has been music director of Salt Lake City's popular Vivaldi by Candlelight chamber orchestra series since 2004.

Elias's award-winning Daniel Jacobus mystery series takes place in the dark corners of the classical music world. His debut novel, *Devil's Trill*, was a Barnes & Noble *Discover: Great New Writers* selection. Elias's memoir, *Symphonies & Scorpions*, includes his essay *War & Peace. And Music*, the subject of his TEDxSaltLakeCity 2019 presentation. Many of his short stories and essays have appeared in journals ranging from *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine* to *The Strad*.

Gerald Elias divides his time between Salt Lake City and West Stockbridge, Massachusetts. He maintains a vibrant concert career while continuing to expand his literary horizons. For more information, visit [www.gerald-elias-man-of-mystery.wordpress.com](http://www.gerald-elias-man-of-mystery.wordpress.com).

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**September 2020**

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			

**September 2020 Calendar of Events**

Due to the coronavirus health emergency, many meetings and events are being canceled, postponed, or held online. 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.			
9/3	Farmers Market	3-6 p.m.	The Foundry Green, Harris Street
9/7	Labor Day (Town Offices closed)		
9/9	Select Board meeting	6 p.m.	Town Offices in the Gym
9/10	Farmers Market	3-6 p.m.	The Foundry Green, Harris Street
9/13	National Grandparents' Day		
9/14	Select Board joint meeting with Richmond Selectmen		Town Offices in the Gym
9/15	*** Deadline for the next Local Yokel ***		Send to <a href="mailto:info@thelocalyokel.org">info@thelocalyokel.org</a>
9/15	Vision Committee meeting	6 p.m.	See agenda on town website for details
9/16	Select Board joint meeting with Finance Committee	6 p.m.	Town Offices in the Gym
9/17	Farmers Market	6 p.m.	The Foundry Green, Harris Street
9/18	Rosh Hashana (begins at sundown)		
9/21	Select Board meeting	6 p.m.	Town Offices in the Gym
9/22	First day of Autumn		
9/24	Farmers Market	3-6 p.m.	The Foundry Green, Harris Street
9/27	Yom Kippur (begins at sundown)		
9/29	Fall flu shot clinic	5-7 p.m.	Town Offices in the Gym
9/30	Fall flu shot clinic	9-10 a.m.	Town Offices in the Gym