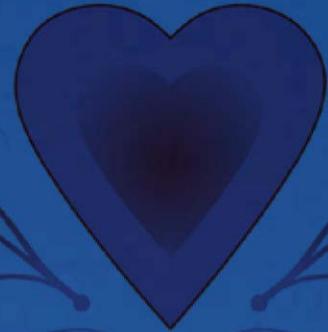


Local yokel

(of) a country folk living in a quaint neighborhood community

West Stockbridge
February
2016

Happy



St. Valentine's Day



SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 2005



Wishful thinking? Photo by John Parker.

Sold-Out Concert by Chamber Players Celebrates Banner Year for Restoration Campaign

By Liza Bennett



The West Stockbridge Congregational Church filled to capacity for the West Stockbridge Chamber Players Winter Concert. Photo by Bob Salerno.

The West Stockbridge Congregational Church was once again filled to capacity on the evening of Wednesday, December 30, for what has become one of the most anticipated musical events of the holiday season: the West Stockbridge Chamber Players Annual Winter Concert. Bob Salerno, president of the West Stockbridge Historical Society, welcomed the crowd and thanked them for the outpouring of support that allowed the Society to restore the exterior of the 1854 Town Hall in 2015 and make it handicapped accessible for the first time in its over 160-year history.

The West Stockbridge Chamber Players, a world-class ensemble of Boston- and Berkshire-based musicians, are led by clarinetist and artistic director Catherine Hudgins, who first conceived of the benefit concerts six years ago to help raise awareness and funds for the Restoration Campaign.

With Daniel Getz on viola and Vytas Baksys on piano, the concert opened with Robert Schumann's *Fantasiestücke*, op. 73. Before the next selection—Mozart's Trio in E-flat major, K. 498, the "*Kegelstatt*"—Boston Symphony Orchestra violist Daniel Getz pointed out how rarely the viola is the only string instrument featured in a trio. He said he believed the "*Kegelstatt*" was the first trio to combine viola, clarinet, and piano and that Mozart himself played the viola when the piece was first performed. Together with Catherine Hudgins on the clarinet and Vytas Baksys on piano, Daniel Getz proceeded to give us a rousing rendition of the "*Kegelstatt*". It would certainly have made Mozart proud.

Catherine Hudgins addressed the audience after the intermission to say that she hoped the music's beautiful harmonies and melodies would serve as an antidote to both the winter chill and the world's currently unharmonious outlook. She also pointed



Violist Daniel Getz, Cellist William Rounds, Artistic Director and Clarinetist Catherine Hudgins, and Pianist Vytas Baksys. Photo by Bob Salerno.

out that the final piece of the evening, Johannes Brahms's Trio in A Minor, was performed at the Chamber Players' very first concert. She decided to offer it again that evening as a way of looking back at how far we have come—and ahead to the work that still needs to be done to restore the 1854 Town Hall.

The Brahms trio, performed by Catherine Hudgins on clarinet, William Rounds on cello, and Vytas Baksys on piano, did indeed attest to the miraculous powers of music to comfort and inspire. A festive reception with the musicians followed the concert at Connie Eagan's home next door to the church, beautifully decorated for the holidays.



Board of Selectmen Meeting Summaries

By Doane Perry

Note: Copies of official board minutes may be read at the West Stockbridge Public Library.

December 21, 2015: Open Meeting

Charter Cable

Carol Kuller informed the selectmen that West Stockbridge representatives negotiating with Charter Cable and WiredWest are working together and are on the same page. They asked the selectmen to keep them informed of their actions and policies. The representatives are Bob Salerno for the Finance Committee, Steve Sautman on WiredWest and Massachusetts Broadband Institute, Jackie Del Rossi advising the Cable Commission, and Carol Kuller representing the Cable Commission.

Their objective is to get the best deal for West Stockbridge and to get the whole town wired. They are open to Charter if it can do a better and cheaper job but are aware that cable companies often offer cheaper initial rates and then raise their rates.

Curt Wilton praised Steve's service on WiredWest and said the town continues to need his services. He commented that Charter claims they are on all town roads, but they are not on private roads. WiredWest plans to wire everyone. Bob Salerno commented, "I can tell you that the current Time Warner cable service is not equal to the proposed WiredWest service in speed, homes covered, or price."

MBI/WiredWest

The MBI/WiredWest meeting was postponed, with a new date in January to be announced.

Steve commented that there is no clear picture of the current situation after MBI made a statement on December 1 threatening to withhold funds from WiredWest. MBI wants the towns to own all of the system, and WiredWest wants towns to own portions of the system. Who owns the wires is an issue because breaking up wire ownership is difficult. Although town residents are upset with MBI's action and negotiations are ongoing, MBI says that the money from the state for the system is still there.

Steve asked the selectmen for a letter of intent to MBI stating that West Stockbridge is a qualified town and would like to move for-

ward, but the selectmen do not want to sign anything binding.

Mark Webber and the selectmen discussed the role of Nextel, which has wired Berkshire Bank to the fiber middle mile system and was reported to be doing the same for Berkshire Medical Center. Nextel has only been working for municipalities recently.

Curt said he is looking forward to hearing from Charter. A Charter/Time Warner collaboration could connect to the Pittsfield Time Warner head end and/or fix the Taconic system that is Charter's base. Curt thanked Steve and said he is glad the town's Charter and WiredWest representatives are on the same team.

Housatonic Water Company Rate Increase

The selectmen have been notified that Housatonic Water has filed with the state for a rate increase for about 25 customers in Williamsville and on High Street for water that comes from Mercer Pond. Housatonic Water customers are charged by fixture with only a few meters. Housatonic wants to raise rates from \$450 to \$680 per year, which is 130% higher than West Stockbridge where \$292 is a comparable bill. Peter Skorput said that Housatonic supplies water to two hydrants. There will be a hearing.

Driveway Update

Curt reported that town officials have looked at the preexisting nonconforming driveway drainage situation. Mr. Potter understands the difficulties and hopes for a better solution with a new neighbor.

Other Business:

- The town is replacing whole toilet units in the Town Offices rather than replacing sensors because the existing toilets are too old fashioned.
- Chris Vreeland asked for permission to remove a tree that is about to be felled by beavers. The selectmen asked Chris to consult with the tree warden and Mass Turnpike.
- The next Board of Selectmen's meetings will be January 11 and 25.

...continued on page 6



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Truck Stop Solar Project: Green Power from a Brownfield

By Doane Perry

Last August, Kirt Mayland came before the West Stockbridge Board of Selectmen to discuss his electric net metering agreement, an approximately \$11,000 annual cost-saving program for the town using a solar electric power generation site in Cheshire. Although the town has a 64-kilowatt solar power system on the Town Offices building roof, the net metering system will have 10 times that capacity, said Kirt.

In January, Kirt returned seeking approval for his firm, Reservoir Road Holdings, LLC, of Lakeville, Connecticut, operating as Housatonic Solar 1, to build a 2,600-kilowatt solar power generation site on the site of the old truck stop on State Line Road (Route 102) owned by Berkshire Truck Plaza, Inc. The 14-acre site is classified as a brownfield by the commonwealth of Massachusetts because of contamination from gasoline and diesel spills. Reservoir Road Holdings does solar power generation on former abandoned industrial lands and is in the process of constructing other solar power systems including a brownfield in Housatonic near the Rising Paper mill on Route 183.

Kirt commented, “The biggest portion of the electricity bill is the ‘generation charge’ and after that probably the charge associated with distribution. One of the benefits of solar is the idea that it is ‘distributed generation’ and not centralized, so it does not need to get shipped across state or regions via these transmission lines to the ultimate end users.”

At the January 11 meeting, the selectmen explained that three hearings would be required for the so-called truck stop solar project. First, the project must meet the wetland requirements of the Conservation Commission. Then the project must receive two special permits from the Board of Selectmen: one to operate in the business industrial and manufacturing area, and another to be in the floodplain district.

The proposed project will consist of 8,400 photovoltaic modules, stationary and tilted facing south, no more than 12 feet high. Underground electricity collection lines will link modules to a collection house with inverter and transformer equipment needed to transmit electricity through existing



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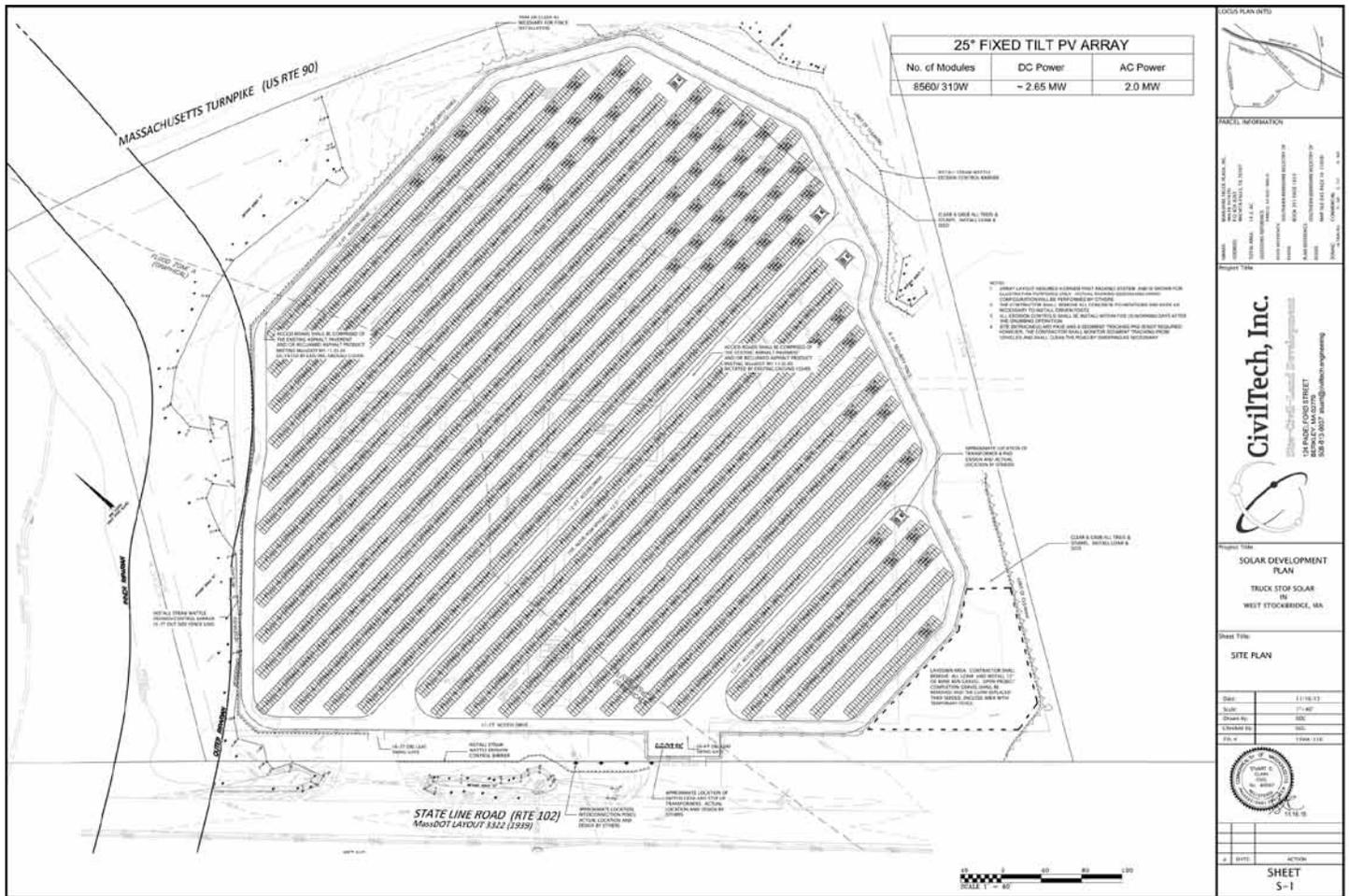
Compost Facility Accepting Yard & Wood Waste



distribution lines along State Line Road. The transformer will contain 302 gallons of biodegradable oil, which in case of a leak would be 98% consumed by microbes and bacteria.

According to state records, the largest releases of gasoline and diesel at the truck stop occurred when a contractor was removing and upgrading underground storage tanks. Other smaller releases occurred when a gasoline supply line was cracked and when a tractor trailer truck fuel tank was overfilled at the pump. Kirt Mayland's application quotes state authorities as concluding, "A Temporary Solution, rather than a Permanent Solution, is only available at this point in time due to gasoline present in the ground water. [On the positive side however] A key element of a Temporary Solution is also that a condition of 'No substantial hazard' exists at the site."

Given the brownfield status of the site, passive power generation seems a most appropriate use. Brownfields in the state are listed by the Department of Environmental Protection. Kirt explained, "It's not an exact definition, but for the most part they are properties that have been contaminated in the past and have an associated 'release tracking number.' I work on these industrially zoned lands and on a lot of old gravel and sand pits. Hampden, Cheshire, Clarksburg, and Sheffield are old pits. Belchertown and one piece in Housatonic are industrially zoned, another in Housatonic is an old brownfield, and the new one in Sheffield being constructed this spring is primarily on an old Lane Construction tar batch facility. I try my best to site these in appropriate (from an environmental perspective) places."



Solar array layout from the Site Plan presented by Housatonic Solar 1.



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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.



January 11, 2016: Open Meeting

Town Meeting Timeline

The annual Town Meeting will be held on April 18.

Annual Audit update

Two audits will be conducted this year, the second “special” audit required because the town spent more than usual due to the sewer project.

Commonwealth Community Compact

Curt Wilton reported on the Compact meeting he attended for the town. The Compact aims to enable towns to enter into shared services such as accountants, treasurers, and school systems. Each town has been asked to present five ideas, which Curt will discuss at the Board of Selectmen meeting on January 25.

Housatonic Water Company Rate Increase

A public hearing will be held at 7 p.m. on January 27 at the Housatonic Community Center. Curt Wilton asked Mark Webber to ensure that abutters and customers are notified about the hearing.

Berkshire Truck Plaza Solar Installation

A public hearing on the Berkshire Truck Plaza solar installation will be held at 7 p.m. on January 25. The proposed project would generate solar electric power on the site, considered a brownfield as a result of gas and diesel spills.

Three hearings will be required for the “Truck Stop Solar” project. The project must meet the wetland requirements of the Conservation Commission and receive two special permits from the Board of Selectmen—one to operate in the business industrial and manufacturing area and the second to be in the floodplain district.

Mark Webber recommended that the selectmen have one hearing before the Conservation Commission and a second if and when the project meets Conservation Commission requirements.

Center, Harris, and Depot Street Concerns

The selectmen are concerned about traffic flow and delivery

parking downtown and are planning a public hearing to generate ideas. For example, making Center Street one way to the west would improve traffic flow and provide delivery parking. At present, cars heading east on Center Street must enter Main Street before they can see if they can proceed. The evolution of Moscow Road also presents a problem because it is a public way on private property owned by the power company.

Conflict of Interest Disclosures

Earl Moffatt and Curt Wilton made routine disclosures of their conflicts of interest, which means holding two or more positions for which they receive compensation, as allowed by law in towns with fewer than 3,500 people. The Board of Selectmen is the town’s appointing agency, and the selectmen cannot appoint themselves.

Earl serves on the Board of Selectmen, the Board of Health, the Sewer Commission, and the Board of Appeals. Curt is employed by the Highway Department and also serves on the Board of Selectmen. Peter Skorput serves on the Board of Selectmen and is chief of the Fire Department.

Other Business:

- Construction has begun on the Turn Park sculpture park along Moscow Road. Brian Turton is the project manager for Allegrone Construction.
- Highway Superintendent Curt Wilton notified the selectmen that a 2010 Ford pickup truck with a snowplow and 44K miles may need a new engine because it has a “small engine skip.” Curt said he is arguing with Johnson Ford about the job.
- Karen Carmean’s request to use the Community Room for Artist Guild activities open to the public on February 4, 11, and 13 was approved.
- The next Board of Selectmen meeting will be January 25.
- The board then went into executive session, concluding the public meeting. *

February History Quiz Question:

Our town library will celebrate the anniversary of its 125th year this May. Formed in the spring of 1891 by local citizens with the sponsorship of the town government, it began as a room above the stores in the Kniffen Block (an earlier building next to the present Queensboro Wine & Spirits store). The collection was 324 volumes with a budget of \$25. Ten years later the library outgrew the one room upstairs and was given the north room in the old Town Hall. From that small start, it developed into the successful institution we have now.

Libraries are usually considered friendly, almost benign, institutions today. Ours, however, was not without its controversy, struggles, and community impact during the early years. What might be some little known factoids about our library?

(Find the answer somewhere in this issue!)



**West Stockbridge
Historical Society**
Incorporated in 1994



Fresh Air Fund Seeks Host Families

By Courtney Rung, Fresh Air Fund Public Relations Coordinator

Since 1877, the Fresh Air Fund, an independent, not-for-profit agency, has provided free, enriching summer experiences and academic programs for more than 1.8 million children from underserved New York City neighborhoods. Each summer, nearly 4,000 children visit volunteer host families in rural, suburban, and small town communities across the East Coast and Ontario, Canada. Through their stories, we hope to recruit more dedicated volunteers and hosts for next summer.

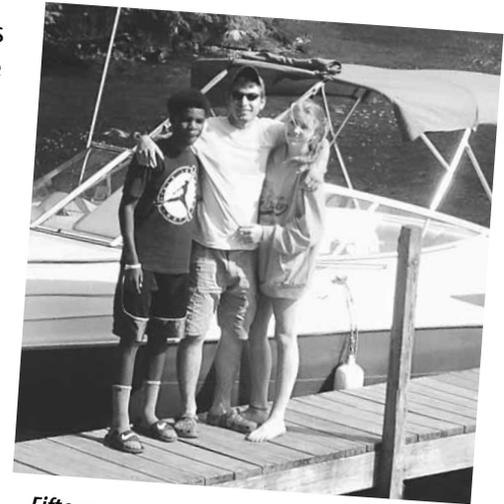
Kristi Farina, of West Stockbridge, has fond memories from her childhood of having a Fresh Air child from New York City visit her family for three summers in a row. Once Kristi became an adult, she wanted her own children to have the same experience that she had as a child. In 2010, Kristi, her husband Mike, and their two children, Brittany and Dawson, welcomed ten-year-old Malik, of Brooklyn, into their home for two weeks, and he has returned every summer since.

During Malik's visits to West Stockbridge, the Farinas and Malik explore all that the Berkshires has to offer. Kristi said, "Sometimes we take for granted all the great outdoor activities in the Berkshires, but when you're sharing it with someone else, it reminds us of what is right at our fingertips." The Farinas love exploring the outdoors, and Malik has happily joined this summer tradition. Kristi said, "Every year, we try to do a few of our favorite things from over the years with Malik, like Jiminy Peak Mountain Coaster, Catamount Tree adventure, kayaking at Stockbridge Bowl, and hiking Mount Greylock. But we try to have some new adventures every summer too."

Brittany and Dawson have grown up with Malik during his two-week summer visits, and even though Brittany now has a place of her own, Malik still makes a point of seeing her every summer. Malik and Dawson even keep in touch during the year through Facebook.

Kristi would recommend that every family sign up to host a Fresh Air child this summer. "Take a chance and open your doors and hearts to these children. It's not only about what the Fresh Air child takes away from the experience; the host family also benefits from it," Kristi said.

The Fresh Air Fund is always seeking host families to enable as many New York City children as possible to benefit from a summer experience outside of the city. To learn more about how to become a host family in Berkshire County, please call Lelia Bruun at (413) 429-7546 or visit www.freshair.org.



Fifteen-year-old Malik, from Brooklyn, with Dawson Farina and Dawson's friend Skyla.

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Santa's Wish List Donations

In our December issue, the "Local Yokel" included an appeal for donations to eight West Stockbridge organizations. The total received was \$7,345 (up from \$6,460 last year). We thank all those who gave so generously to these important community groups that work very hard to make West Stockbridge such a special place to live. Here are the totals by organization:

Community Health Association	\$575
Friends of the Library	\$855
Local Yokel	\$1,500
Pet Partners of the Tri-State Berkshires	\$100
WS Beautification	\$1,230
WS Community Garden (new this year)	\$350
WS Farmers Market	\$575
WS Fire and Rescue Services	\$1,640
WS Historical Society	\$520
TOTAL GIVING.....	\$7,345



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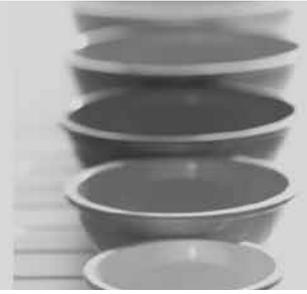


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Mindful Eating: Be Good to Your Heart in February

by Rachel Alves, RD, LDN



In February we celebrate love with chocolate hearts. Thanks to President Obama, February also became American Heart Month last year. According to the American Heart Association's 2016 Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics Update, heart disease is the "leading global cause of death, accounting for more than 17 million deaths per year." In 2013, 1 person every 40 seconds died of heart disease. Stroke kills someone in the United States almost every 4 minutes, and nearly half of all adult African Americans have some form of heart disease. These statistics are staggering, but the good news is that 80% of heart disease is preventable! Adopting some lifestyle changes, albeit not easy, can reduce your risk of developing heart disease.

We've been told if we eat mindfully and exercise, we can maintain a healthy weight, lower blood pressure and cholesterol, and thus reduce heart disease risk. But do these strategies *really* work? A 2016 *Huffington Post* article, "7 Proven Ways to Reduce Heart Disease," discussed the science behind this healthy lifestyle:

- 1. Only 2,000 extra steps every day equals a 10% lower risk.** This is the equivalent of a 20-minute brisk walk *every* day. By exercising moderately for about 150 minutes per week, you will reduce your risk of having a heart attack or stroke in the next six years by 10%. The research, proving the positive effect of exercise on heart disease reduction, is also staggering. The more you exercise, the less likely you are to develop heart disease. Message: Just move more and every day!
- 2. Adding 7 more grams of fiber each day equals a 9% lower risk.** What does that equate to? A medium apple has 5 g of fiber and 1 cup of cooked oatmeal has 4 g. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, and nuts have the most fiber. In general, fiber helps with cholesterol and blood sugar management, creating a healthy digestive tract and potentially reducing inflammation. Message: An apple a day helps keep heart disease away.
- 3. A daily glass of wine equals a 25% lower risk.** Now we're talking! The research shows that no more than one glass for women and two glasses for men a day lowers risk. According to the article, alcohol "relaxes your blood vessels, so you can't form a clot while alcohol's on board." Unlike exercise, drinking more does not lower your risk and may have other potential health risks. Message: Drink responsibly to prevent heart disease.
- 4. In people with heart disease, a flu shot equals a 36% lower risk.** Cardiac patients have a lower risk of a heart attack if they get a flu shot. The flu puts extra stress on the body, which increases the risk of a heart attack. Message: Too late this year for your shot, so keep your



...continued on page 11



CULTURAL COUNCIL ANNOUNCES GRANTS FOR 2016

By Margie Skaggs



The West Stockbridge Cultural Council recently completed its granting process for FY 2016. For this cycle we received 27 applications and provided funds for 18 of them. All of these met our top criteria for funding—supporting local programs that appeal broadly to our diverse West Stockbridge constituency including school and library programs, local music events, theater, arts, and literary programs.

These organizations will receive funding for 2016:

- * Berkshire Children's Chorus: Scholarships
- * Berkshire Human Rights Speaker Series: Black Lives Matter Program
- * Berkshire Lyric Theater: Scholarships
- * Berkshire Playwrights Lab: New Staged Readings
- * Berkshire Pulse: Tuition Assistance
- * Berkshire Theater Group: Muddy Brook Program Support
- * Community Health Programs: Nutshell Playhouse Children's Theater
- * Edith Wharton Restoration: Writing Competition
- * Flying Cloud Institute: Girls' Science Club
- * Friends of the Library: Annual passes to area cultural institutions
- * Scott Jameson: WSPL Summer Reading Program
- * The *Local Yokel*: Local news support
- * Music in Common: FODfest 2016
- * Shakespeare & Company: Fall Festival of Shakespeare
- * Ventfort Hall: Summer Tea and Talk Series
- * WAM Theater: Women's Theater Group Season Seven
- * West Stockbridge Chamber Players: WS Historical Society Concert
- * West Stockbridge Farmers Market: WSFM Music and Entertainment

Current members of the Cultural Council are Marjorie Powell (chair), Ellen Greer, Marshall Fisher, Jackie Moffatt, Margie Skaggs, and Peter Thorne. 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 Local Cultural Councils, then Applicants.

Community News & Events

Stockbridge Grange Dinner

On Sunday, February 14, the Stockbridge Grange will serve a stuffed breast of chicken dinner in the Grange Hall on Church Street from 1 to 2 p.m. Cost for adults is \$12; \$6 for children under 12. Takeout is available; call (413) 298-3185. In case of stormy weather, please call first.

Council on Aging Luncheon

The next Council on Aging Potluck Luncheon will be held at noon on Tuesday, February 9, in the Town Hall Community Room.

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



immune system strong by washing your hands regularly, avoiding sick people, using hand sanitizer, and eating dark, colorful fruit and veggies to increase antioxidants!

- 5. Eating the Mediterranean diet equals a 30% lower risk.** The Mediterranean lifestyle (including diet) is well researched. The findings are extremely positive in regard to heart disease prevention. A major Spanish study found that people age 55 to 80 who ate a Mediterranean diet were 30% less likely to have a heart attack or stroke. The diet is rich in olive oil, fruit, vegetables, beans, nuts, fish more than meat, and a moderate amount of red wine. The lifestyle includes increased physical activity and sharing meals and relaxing with family. Message: When in Rome, and even at home, do as the Mediterranean people do.
- 6. Having a healthy lifestyle equals a 25% less likely chance of dying of heart disease.** According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, here's the bottom line: don't smoke, eat healthy, exercise regularly, maintain a healthy weight, and get regular checkups to manage blood pressure and cholesterol. Deaths from heart disease would reduce by 25% and 200,000 lives would be saved per year! Message: You know what to do; now just do it!

I'm not writing anything new, but the evidence shows that if you are mindful of your health and adopt an overall healthy lifestyle, you are taking care of your heart and overall well-being. February is the perfect time to celebrate with chocolate (dark, of course) hearts, and to honor your physical heart with a healthy lifestyle! Message: Be well, and Happy Heart Month!



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We are happy to include them in the next issue.*



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



Plein Air Exhibit February West Stockbridge Library



*Participating Artists
(clockwise from top
left):*

Adrian Holmes
Anne Auberjonois
Jean Rousseau
Susan Sabino
Harvey Siegel
Doane Perry
Karen Carmean
Nancy Nirenberg
Karen Andrews
Keith Emerling

Closing reception
will include work by:
Carolyn Newberger
Gary Schieneman

Enjoy the summer and fall work of our Plein Air Artists in West Stockbridge and the surrounding areas. Come to the exhibit at the West Stockbridge Library, Town Hall, 21 Stateline Road, Route 102, .2 miles west of where routes 41 and 102 separate.

For more information: kcarmean@gmail.com.

Library Hours:

Tuesdays: 10-5pm
Wednesdays: 1-5pm
Thursday/Fridays: 2-6pm
Saturdays: 10-2pm

Receptions: Th. Feb. 4, 3:30-5; closing to be determined



West Stockbridge Parks & Rec Carries On

By Ginna Dudney

WS Parks & Rec is embarking on plans for the next fiscal year. In the works is a preliminary budget to submit to the selectmen, refining of the work that was begun with the tennis court and we hope will now extend to the basketball court and playing fields, as well as creating a presentation to make the new playground a reality.

If anyone has any ideas about more that could be done to enhance outdoor living in town, drop a note in our mailbox at the Town Hall or e-mail WSparksandrec@gmail.com. The more fresh ideas, the better!

If anyone would like to join the committee, you are most welcome. Drop by on meeting day (our next meeting will be 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 9, in the Town Offices Work Room) or e-mail us. Even if you can only spare a few hours a month, it would be a great help.

Donor Roll Call ~ February

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WiredWest Update: MBI Holding Firm

By Steve Sautman, West Stockbridge Delegate for WiredWest (Sautman@msn.com)

WiredWest has been in negotiations with the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) to resolve differences around ownership, governance, financial and business models, and technology. The target is to present a joint recommendation to the MBI board of directors by the end of February 2016. If MBI and WiredWest cannot agree on solutions, they will both present their separate recommendations to the MBI board for direction. The MBI board consists of secretaries from the governor's administration, gubernatorial appointments, and members from the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative. WiredWest has also been meeting with legislature members including Senators Ben Downing and Stan Rosenberg.

WiredWest has been proposing a regional fiber network design to bring high-speed Internet, digital phone, and HDTV video services to each and every home. In this regional fiber network design, the towns will share common equipment like the cable head-end, regional huts serving multiple towns, and the network fiber cables connecting towns in a multi-ring design and providing additional reliability and redundancy. WiredWest has proposed that each town will own a percentage of the overall network equal to the amount of money they contributed through their debt authorizations. As a cooperative, each of the member towns would then have a town representative on the WiredWest board of directors to manage and vote in proportion to their ownership. You can think of the regional network as a regional school building that each of the towns contribute money to have built. All of the towns share the school building and benefit from it. None of the towns have direct ownership of particular rooms or facilities, and they cannot remove them from the school building. If they did, the school building would not be complete or as effective. Likewise, the fiber network would not be complete and would not have the same capabilities and reliabilities if a town removes its wires and equipment from the shared network.

MBI has been critical of the WiredWest's governance plan and operating agreement and its financial and business plans. WiredWest has developed its plans over the last three years reviewing them with MBI and vetting them by independent industry experts. MBI is still requiring that each of the towns directly own the network infrastructure in their town (wires, network equipment, huts, etc.) with the capability of disconnecting from the regional network to be operated as a separate entity. MBI has not addressed how shared common equipment would then be owned. To meet this requirement from MBI, the network will have to be designed differently including more equipment in each town that could increase the installation cost by 10 to 20% and increase operating costs to run the network as well as having the towns take on the responsibility for maintaining, repairing, and upgrading their equipment. It would be like every town building its own school for just one room with walkways in between the buildings to connect the rooms instead of having all of the schoolrooms in one common building.

MBI has held firm to its requirements, presenting limited alternatives to resolve these differences. MBI's alternatives have not been completely developed or vetted with the same scrutiny as they have imposed on WiredWest. It is unclear how towns could build and operate their own stand-alone systems for less money and with less risk. In the draft Design and Engineering Support Services Request-For-Proposal (RFP) issued from MBI, it does not mention WiredWest as the agent representing a majority of the towns. In meetings, MBI cites the Leverett model as an example that uses private companies to build and operate their town Internet system. Leverett's debt service is paid for through an added fee to their users. In contrast, WiredWest as a cooperative will use its profits to pay back the towns for their debt authorizations. A multi-town cooperative system will share the costs and lower the risks to have a successful regional fiber network to bring broadband to western MA.

With everything going on between MBI and WiredWest, we are also watching the proposed acquisition of Time-Warner Cable by Charter Communications. The FCC is expected to make a ruling on this merger in the spring of 2016. Stay tuned for more to come.

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West Stockbridge History Quiz Answer:

A group of prominent local citizens with the support of the town government formed the West Stockbridge Library. Within the first few years, not everyone was as enthusiastic, and there might have been some questions about it. By 1895, the Town Reports contained a strong statement of support from the Library Board: "No one wish it discontinued!" The exact issue wasn't revealed but could easily have been the level of town funding, \$125 per year. This was one of the larger expenditures in those years. Funding continued to be an issue, with the local librarian providing "entertainment" to raise monies for the collection every year.

By 1901, the annual circulation of books and magazines borrowed reached 3,000, about twice the town population. The collection had grown considerably, and in 1902 the library moved into the north room of the old Town Hall. One of the largest contributors to the collection was the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). There is no record of what titles were donated or why West Stockbridge was a recipient. The WCTU was very active during that period and perhaps our library benefited.

Throughout the early 1900s, the library grew in its circulation and collections. There was talk of closing the library in the summer to save money; however, one large group of users were the "summer residents." They strongly supported the library with money and book donations. In 1904, someone even donated the *Cyclopedia of Engineering* (no longer in the collection). There was also a plea for more fiction titles that year.

20 years after its founding, the library was on solid footing, to the point where the annual town report praised it: "Our library is in excellent condition and may well be referred to as the pride of every voter in town." This era of good feeling and appreciation was not to last long, but that's for another History Question.



*Library in the old Town Hall, ca. 1950s.
Photo courtesy of Bob Salerno.*

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

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

Or would you like to lend a hand a few hours each month to help with distribution, mailing, and other projects?

Call John Parker at (413) 298-0052 or e-mail info@thelocalyokel.org for more information.





Recipe Corner

by Lynn Ryan

CREAMY CAULIFLOWER SOUP WITH CRISPY CAPERS AND CHIVE OIL

I found this recipe and made it for a friend's birthday a few weeks ago. Everyone absolutely *loved* it. I served it with garlic bread and an arugula salad with feta, onion, and blueberries drizzled with blueberry-infused balsamic vinegar and olive oil. This recipe serves 4 people. You will definitely want to double it. Enjoy!

1 Tbsp. olive oil
3 Tbsp. unsalted butter, divided
1 sweet onion, finely diced
1 large head of cauliflower, chopped into small florets
3 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
1 cup water
¼ cup capers, patted completely dry
½ cup light cream
Salt and pepper to taste
Additional cauliflower for topping (I roasted it at 425°F with olive oil, salt and pepper for about 40 minutes, tossing it periodically)

CHIVE OIL

¼ cup chopped chives
3–4 Tbsp. olive oil

Heat a large pot over medium heat. Add olive oil and 1 Tbsp. butter, and then add the onions with a pinch of salt. Stir to coat and cook until softened and translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the chopped cauliflower and vegetable stock. Cover and cook 20 to 25 minutes until softened. A few times during cooking use your spoon to press down and mash the cauliflower.

While the cauliflower is cooking, make the chive oil. Combine the chives and olive oil in a blender or food processor and blend until totally smooth.

To fry the capers, heat a small skillet over medium-high heat and add 1 to 2 tsp. of olive oil. Add the dry capers and shake the pan or stir, tossing for 1 to 2 minutes until crispy and fried. Set aside to drain on a paper towel.

Once the cauliflower is soft, scoop it (and all the remaining broth) into a large bowl. Add half of the mixture to a blender with a half cup of water and purée until smooth. Once smooth, add back to the pot and purée the remaining cauliflower mixture with the other half cup of water. Add to the rest and stir.

Heat over low heat, stirring in the cream and remaining 2 Tbsp. butter. Taste and season with salt and pepper. Ladle into bowls and garnish with the additional roasted cauliflower and the capers and chive oil.

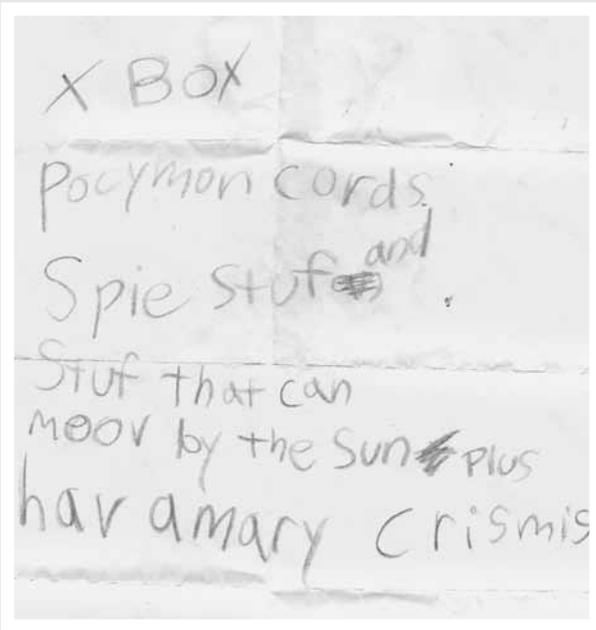
Take the time to make this on a cold Saturday or Sunday. You won't be sorry!

Happy Valentine's Day, Happy President's Day, Happy Chinese New Year,
Happy Groundhog Day, and Happy Birthday to me!

Lynn Ryan 232-7758 E-mail: waxonwheels2655@yahoo.com Web: www.partylite.biz/waxonwheels



West Stockbridge Sparkles: The Last Word



2015 holiday lights letter to Santa.

Shhhhh! Santa shared a letter he was given during the holiday lights celebration. The annual tree lighting was a wonderful community event with music and events for the whole family. Graphic courtesy of Ginna Dudney.



Andrew stringing 2015 lights.

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's Andrew Fudge stringing the holiday lights on Main Street the old-fashioned way! Andrew and his family joined forces with unofficial village lamp-lighter Bob Thibeault, and together they generously donated an enormous amount of time and effort to make West Stockbridge sparkle. Photo by Anthony Voudren.

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The West Stockbridge Farmers Market would like to thank everyone who contributed to Santa's Wish List in December.

The Farmers Market is funded only by vendor fees and outside donations, and every penny received is used to pay expenses and improve the market.

All members of the committee and all of the vendors look forward to welcoming you all back to Merritt Green in May!

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Outdoor distribution boxes: Baldwin Hardware, The Floor Store, & the Shaker Dam Coffeehouse and Stanmeyer Gallery



JOIN US FOR VISUAL ART EVENTS

February Art Calendar

Business Meeting: Wed. Feb. 3, 3-5pm. West Stockbridge (WS) Town Hall 21 Stateline Rd. Rt. 102. ilenespiewak@gmail.com.

Opening February Plein Air Artists show .Th. Feb. 4, 3:30-5pm. WS Library, 21 Stateline Rd. Rt. 102. RSVP: kcarmean@gmail.com

Clark Art Museum.Sun. Feb. 7, 10am- 5pm First Sundays free admission. To carpool with others, see our FaceBook page or kcarmean@gmail.com

First Friday Artswalk Pittsfield, North and South Streets. Fri. Feb. 5, 5-8pm.

Meet the Artist: James Bleecker, Photographer. Wed. Feb. 10, 12:15-1:30pm. Six Depot, WS. kcarmean@gmail.com

10"x10" Entries: Feb. 7, 1-4pm.or Feb. 8, 3-5pm. Berkshire Museum. Email before to 10x10@berkshireartassociation.org. RealArtParty 5:30 -7+Th. Feb. 18. \$25 Art

Positive Critique:Th. Feb. 11, 4-6pm Bring 2 -3 pieces of your art. WS, 21 Stateline Rd. Rt. 41. For required reading & RSVP: carolgkelly@hotmail.com

How to Take Better Photos with your iPhone: Sat. Feb. 13 1-3pm. WS Town Hall, 21 Stateline Rd. Rt. 102 west of Rt. 41. RSVP: kcarmean@gmail.com

Photo Gathering: Sun. Feb. 14, 3-5pm Stanmeyer Gallery. 2 Main St. WS. Bring 3-5 photographs: <http://www.edgemaster.com/Photo-Gathering>

Meet the Artist: Sarah Horne: Painter, Wed. Feb. 17 12:15-1:30pm. Six Depot, WS RSVP: kcarmean@gmail.com

Model Session:Fri. Feb. 19, 6-9pm. Sessions for beginners to experts with a live model. \$15. RSVP: carolgkelly@hotmail.com

Art Book Gathering Fri. Feb. 26 4-5:30pm Stanmeyer Gallery, 2 Main St., WS. RSVP

**Richmond-West Stockbridge
Artists Guild www.rwsag.org**

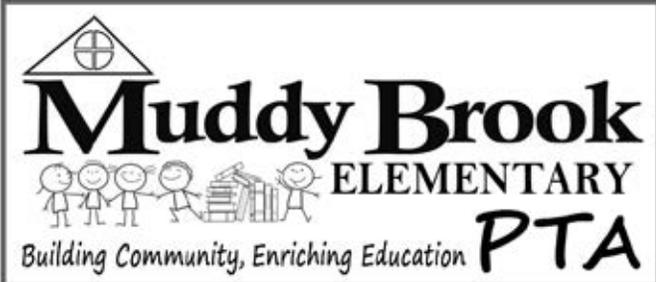


Join James Bleecker on Wednesday, February 10 at Six Depot West Stockbridge from 12:15-1:30 pm for an informal discussion over lunch. You will be able to ask him questions. RSVP: kcarmean@gmail.com.

“I have a warm feeling for these photographs of cold places because they remind me of weekends. At those times my professional camera blandly recharges itself while I take my boxy old-fashioned field camera out for a walk. In wet snow or stinging wind "Ol' Bessie" inspires patience, as I slow to her one-sheet-at-a-time pace. View cameras connect photographers to the history of their medium. We think our photos can do the same for our viewers. Imperfect and unforgiving, the view camera grudgingly yields an image so lifelike that it can make your knees go weak. Victorians regarded the new medium not as art or science, but as a conjuring trick.”

“In these seven photographs printed with pigments on watercolor paper, I've left intact two signatures of 19th century prints: a warm sepia tone and a soft border. Through those minor distortions and an image so silky it almost slides off the paper, I hope to connect viewers with the original miracle of photography.”

Bleecker has received commissions from Hudson River Heritage, New York State Council on the Arts, Scenic Hudson, Historic Hudson Valley, Hudson River Valley Greenway, and lately The Frick Collection and The Morgan Library, both of which have exhibited his photographs of their historic buildings. .



The next **PTA meeting** will be held on **Wednesday, February 10, 5:30 p.m.**, at Muddy Brook. Remember: school vacation week is February 15–19.

PTA Treasurer Position Open

Are you good with numbers and keeping books? We are looking for a treasurer for the current school year. We are an energized team committed to making a difference in our community. Please consider or encourage a friend. Thank you in advance!

2nd Grade Potluck

On Tuesday, February 23, 5–6:30 p.m., at the Elementary School Cafeteria, the Muddy Brook PTA is trying something new! As an opportunity for families to connect, we are offering potluck dinners for each grade. Join us for a fun evening with your school community. Your whole family is welcome. If you are able, please bring a dish to share. The PTA will provide plates, utensils, cups, and water. Please e-mail muddybrookpta@gmail.com with any questions.

Wednesday Walkers

On Wednesdays from 8:40 to 9:30 a.m., when school is in session, drop in for an invigorating walk, connecting with each other and with our surrounding land. Younger kids are always welcome. Meet in the school lobby.

Thank you for your continued support. Please “like” us on Facebook, and visit muddybrookpta.com.

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

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

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



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MEET THE ARTIST

Birthdays & Anniversaries

2/6 Lynn Ryan

2/11 Anne Lesser

2/22 JoAnne Ellis

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

The *Local Yokel*, P.O. Box 238,
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Sarah Horne

Sarah Horne:
Mark Making with
Charcoal, Graphite
and Paint



Wednesday, Feb. 17.

12:15-1:30 pm

Six Depot
West Stockbridge

RSVP: kcarmean@gmail.com

Richmond-West Stockbridge
Artists Guild www.rwsag.org

Join Sarah Horne on Wednesday, February 17 at Six Depot West Stockbridge from 12:15-1:30pm for an informal discussion over lunch. You will be able to ask her questions. RSVP: kcarmean@gmail.com.

"The lines and forms I draw communicate my experience of daily walks in the country. The starkness, the decay and fragility of what I see is at once marvelous and alive, then ruinous and dying. These lines, like the forms on the land, do not have a beginning or end; they start from the ground and become part of the space of the page at hand."

"My process starts with my daily, meditative walk and the images I gather. I take photographs and in the winter the clarity of the land becomes bold with black and white values. Fragments of grasses, stone walls, broken, bent trees, weary, frost-bitten plants. These are the things that I look at and the things with which, once I am back in the studio, I begin to bring line to the page. I start with pencil and then move the lines, erase them, and redraw them. Sometimes with charcoal, sometimes with pencil or eraser. I draw until the form, the feel of what I saw, comes into the page. I make these drawings as a way to hold on to the fragility of nature. Time, seasons, the wear and tear of life on land make me know how important it is to really look at what is at hand. These pastoral drawings at once capture moments of calm, of frenzy and of time passing."



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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31	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	1	2	3	4	5



February 2016 Calendar of Events

2/2	Groundhog Day		
2/3	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
2/4	Conservation Commission: hearing on Truck Stop Solar project	7 p.m.	Town Offices
2/8	Board of Selectmen: includes informational meeting on downtown traffic flow	7 p.m.	Town Offices
2/8	Planning Board meeting	7 p.m.	Town Offices
2/9	COA Potluck Luncheon	12 noon	Town Offices Community Room
2/9	Parks & Recreation Committee meeting	5:30 p.m.	Town Offices Work Room
2/9	American Legion	7 p.m.	Town Offices
2/10	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
2/10	Friends of the Library meeting	3:30 p.m.	Town Offices Board Room
2/10	Muddy Brook PTA meeting	5:30 p.m.	Muddy Brook Elementary
2/14	Valentine's Day		
2/14	Grange Dinner	1-2 p.m.	Stockbridge Grange
2/14	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
2/15	*** Deadline for the Next Local Yokel ***		send to info@thelocalyokel.org
2/15	Presidents' Day		
2/17	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
2/22	Board of Selectmen meeting	7 p.m.	Town Offices
2/22	Planning Board meeting	7 p.m.	Town Offices
2/24	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room