

Local yokel

West
Stockbridge
July 2019

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



Swan at Card Pond. Photo by Lear Levin

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 2005



In Remembrance of Luy Nguyen

By Peter Dolan

On April 29, 1975, at 10:48 a.m., the American radio network in Vietnam broadcast Irving Berlin's song "White Christmas." Luy Nguyen knew exactly what it meant. The song was the predetermined signal to all American military personnel in Vietnam and their South Vietnamese allies, indicating an immediate emergency evacuation. It was to be broadcast only if the Pentagon's worst case scenario had been realized. For

Academy, granted a waiver of the minimum age requirement after his mother signed a permission form, and had achieved the highest rank, commander, in the South Vietnamese Navy. His wife Trai, with the same vision and commitment to a democratic Vietnam, had worked since 1963 at an American military administration building in her hometown of Nha Trang. She was a valuable resource and had quickly become a confidante of several American general officers. Trai's striking looks also made her popular among younger Ameri-

Luy Nguyen was never daunted by long odds. Looking back at his remarkable life, it seems more likely that he laughed at them, but as always, respectfully.

Nguyen, a 40-year-resident of West Stockbridge who suffered cardiac shock and died this past Christmas while visiting his homeland, the timing could not have been worse.

One week earlier he and his young wife Trai had allowed their eldest son, Lam, six years old at the time, to spend a few days visiting his grandmother in Saigon. The family was at the South Vietnamese naval base located just outside of Saigon. "White Christmas" on the American station presented the couple with an excruciating choice: stay and wait for Lam's return or evacuate with their three younger children and trust that relatives would provide sanctuary to their son. Option 2 meant leaving their child behind, which would seem out of the question until considering the consequence of staying.

Since 1968 it was common knowledge that the Viet Cong, a communist regime backed by China and Russia, ruthlessly hunted down and executed any South Vietnamese citizen who had, even indirectly, worked with the Americans. The North Vietnamese were very well informed, evidenced by the mass reprisal executions that transpired in the city of Hue during the NVA's month-long seizure of that city. Nguyen and his wife now faced mortal danger: Luy was the youngest ever to graduate from South Vietnam's Naval

Academy. One particularly smitten CIA agent, although fluent in Vietnamese, used an interpreter to propose marriage. But Trai had eyes only for Luy, and in 1968 the two were married in the crucible of war.

Luy Nguyen was never daunted by long odds. Looking back at his remarkable life, it seems more likely that he laughed at them, but as always, respectfully. In 1969 his U.S. Navy liaison had informed him that the PT river boat he'd been expecting to receive imminently was stuck in Seattle, delayed for six more months by a shipping container backlog. Deciding they could not wait, Nguyen ordered his crew to prepare to travel to the United States to man the boat and transit to Vietnam. Against the strong advice of alarmed American Navy officials who pointed out that the boat was not designed or intended for open ocean use, Nguyen utilized all his



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*Left: Nguyen, naval officer, refugee, restaurateur, and grandfather, died last Christmas while visiting his homeland.
Right: Luy was the youngest ever to graduate from South Vietnam's Naval Academy.*

Select Board Meeting Minutes

[Editor's note: This is the text of the official minutes of the meetings, lightly edited for clarity, length, and format. Copies of the official board minutes are available at the West Stockbridge Public Library. Select Board meetings can be viewed on the town's Spectrum cable local access channel 190. Residents can receive notification by e-mail of town events and meeting agendas by subscribing at <http://weststockbridgema.virtualtownhall.net/subscriber>].

May 15, 2019

Open Meeting. Quorum present: Bernie Fallon; Doane Perry; Eric Shimelonis. Also present: Administrator Mark Webber. No press present. Meeting broadcast on PEG channel 190.

Board reviewed and approved weekly warrants. No previous meeting minutes were acted on; annual town meeting took place last week and the town clerk develops those meeting minutes.

Board Reorganization

Bernie Fallon opened the regular portion of the meeting and stated that the first order of business was to reorganize the board following the annual town election. Doane Perry made a motion to nominate Bernie as chair. Eric Shimelonis seconded the motion. Vote taken, 3-0 in favor. Bernie made a motion to nominate Doane as board secretary and Eric as board clerk. Motions were seconded. Vote taken, 3-0 in favor.

Bernie congratulated Eric on his election victory. He noted that it was a good election process, and the board is now ready to move the town forward.

Bernie reviewed the typical board meeting process, noting that he chooses to run the meeting perhaps more loosely than some other communities, but these processes should be followed: board chair first addresses a topic, followed by comments/discussion by fellow board members, followed by audience comments/questions, and input from the town administrator along the way.

Following a discussion on enhancing communication and feedback between the board and residents, Eric suggested that the town implement a process similar to a 311 link as used in larger communities. For instance, a comment/feedback box could be installed on the town website.

Other Business/Action/Discussion Items:

- Board had a brief discussion recapping the May 6 annual town meeting. Bernie noted his pleasure with Moderator Gene Dellea's handling of the meeting and his vote of confidence from the voters who were present.
- Mark Webber informed the board that after nearly two years of negotiations between the town and National Grid, a final letter of

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nautical training and acumen to captain the boat and crew safely, first to Hawaii, then all the way back to South Vietnam. Among his many responsibilities during these years of war,



Commander Nguyen earned "a chestful of medals" leading many dangerous missions patrolling the rivers and coastal waters of South Vietnam.

Commander Nguyen led riverboat crews and his American advisers during dangerous missions patrolling the narrow rivers and shallow coastal waters of South Vietnam. By 1975, he had amassed a chestful of medals including the U.S. Naval Commendation Medal, significantly, with a V for valor (photo above).

But now, with the dreaded song's doleful melody emanating from his kitchen radio, the odds must have felt impossible. The young family was forced to flee, to leave behind their son and their beloved homeland, where both husband

in Guam to await transit papers to the United States, where they finally arrived, on July 4, 1975. In the two months of uncertain waiting, Luy was a living embodiment of the Buddhist tenet he'd learned many years earlier: never succumb to despair. His stubborn optimism, manifest in his constant smile, encouraged both his family and his comrades throughout their ordeal. Finally granted official passage to the United States, the Nguyens, although they didn't know it, were on the road to the Berkshires.

During the war, Trai's influence with the American military had enabled her to secure employment for several family members, including her sister, Mai, who joined her at the headquarters building in Nha Trang. It was there that Mai met and fell in love with an American serviceman from Hartford named Peter Donahue. He went on to serve several tours in Vietnam, and in 1969 they married and departed for America. When the Nguyen family arrived six years later, the Donahues took them in. Industrious as ever, Luy and Trai each immediately took several jobs. They saved and managed to obtain a loan to buy a small countertop diner in Hartford. Open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, Trai used her family's culinary tradition and mastered American favorites for breakfast and lunch. At dinner she also offered two traditional Vietnamese dishes.

When karma led a Berkshires-based entrepreneur named Gordon Rose into the diner one day for dinner, Trai's food was so delicious and new to American palates that he requested the other Vietnamese menu item that he duly devoured. Rose had business interests in West Stockbridge and was frustrated by the dearth of nearby quality Asian food restaurants. He returned days later to meet with Luy and Trai, and shortly thereafter, the family opened Truc's Orient Express. It was 1978, and if the couple wondered whether or

...if the couple wondered whether or not their classic Vietnamese entrees would be popular with local residents, they didn't have to wait long to find out.

and wife could trace their ancestry back over a thousand years; their home; and every earthly possession they owned. Waiting until the last possible minute, the Nguyens arrived late to their designated evacuation area in Cat Lai. In the desperate chaos, Nguyen was recognized as a highly respected officer and ushered on board with his family.

Although they were safe from Viet Cong death squads, Trai was shattered and inconsolable over the separation from their son. The family's future was unknown. For three weeks they lived on multiple rescue boats, finally reaching Subic Bay in the Philippines and ultimately a refugee camp

not their classic Vietnamese entrees would be popular with local residents, they didn't have to wait long to find out.

Beginning with takeout orders only, customers lined up out the door and around the building. The new business boomed. Truc's became a full service restaurant seating 120, open for lunch and dinner seven days a week. Each day Luy and Trai saw their three children off to school before driving to the market, purchasing the day's food, returning and preparing for the lunch arrivals, and performing the 101 other daily tasks associated

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What is Freemasonry?

Freemasonry is a fraternity which teaches ethics and morality.

Freemasonry distinguishes between patriotism and partisanship. While patriotism is encouraged no partisan or political discussion is allowed within the Lodge.

The essential purpose of Freemasonry is the further development of the individual Mason as an honest, ethical, moral, sincere, caring and charitable man, learning more about his own potential as a human being and developing his intellectual and spiritual character.



Promoting Freemasonry in the
West Stockbridge Community for 216 years"

intent to purchase the approximate 2-acre parcel along Moscow Road has been finalized, and once signed by the board chair, a closing will be scheduled. Mark noted that the acquisition will help both the town and several residents and property owners along Moscow Road by clearing up past ambiguities about property lines and historic uses.

- A 16 State Line Road update: Mark provided the board with a copy of a letter with previous relevant meeting minutes attached that was mailed to the property owner's lending institution and attorney of record. The letter stated that the Board of Health may take condemnation action on the property because of public health and safety issues. Board commented that the town has acted very generously to assist the owner, but the owner has chosen to resist complying with the conditions of the agreement that allowed him to keep his property rather than sell it at a tax title auction.

- Class II and III auto license update: Mark informed the board that the property owner of Route 41 Auto, LLC has requested a two-week extension to meet with the board to discuss past licensing concerns. Bernie noted, after viewing the property this week, that the licensed premises appear to be largely in compliance with the license conditions.

- Mark informed the board that the town administrator search committee has concluded their work and have forwarded the names of three finalists to the board. Those finalists are Kathleen Neal of Southboro, MA; Kevin Rutherford of Marston Mills, MA; and Marie Ryan of Great Barrington, MA. Mark asked that the board keep with the standing schedule and conduct finalists' interviews at their next meeting (May 22). Board agreed. Mark will first contact the finalists to make sure they are still interested and to coordinate the interview schedule.

- In response to a question from Eric, town administrator search committee member Kathleen Kersey reviewed the process the committee took to review and cull the initial list of 20 candidates down to the three finalists. Kathleen stated that the committee thoroughly discussed all 20, conducted their own research on several, and unanimously agreed, over two meetings, on the finalists to be brought to the board.

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Town Announces New and Improved Website

As of June 25, the town website will have a new look. You can find the new site at the same address: www.weststockbridge-ma.gov. We hope all the information on the site is accurate, but for a certain period of time, information will be updating. If you see something on the new website that needs updating, please e-mail to bbiggs@weststockbridge-ma.gov, stating which page needs a change, what information seems to be incorrect, and what the corrected information should say. We will check your concern and make the change if needed. However, please understand that this process may take some time. Thank you for helping us to make the website as good as it can be.

with operating a restaurant. In 1981 the family was joyously reunited when the late Sen. Edward Kennedy's personal intervention allowed the now 12-year-old Lam to rejoin his family in America. Truc's thrived, and the years passed.

In 1985 the couple purchased a second home, two blocks away on Maple Street. Another important Buddhist commandment is to help those in need, and over the next 20 years the Nguyens sponsored dozens of Vietnamese immigrants, many of them family relatives, who were able to live rent free while working at the restaurant and saving to establish a firm foothold on a life of their own elsewhere in America. After graduating from Monument Mountain Regional High School, the four children went on to earn degrees from the nation's finest universities, before boldly striking out into the world, imbued with the unconquerable spirit of their parents.

Finally, at age 82, for the first time in 40 years, last summer Luy semi-retired, giving up his host station at Truc's and limiting his activity to lighting incense candles during a daily prayer for the restaurant's workers and patrons, at the restaurant's small shrine upstairs. Luy thoroughly enjoyed his first and only leisurely summer in the Berkshires, sur-



*Trai and Luy with their grandchildren.
From left to right: Thuy, Ly, Luke, Trai, Luy, and Liam Nguyen*

rounded by his family and doting on his loving grandchildren. It was a vacation well earned.

A sailor from his youth, Luy fought for his country and then fully devoted himself to his family and fellow humans. His life had answered to his principles. So next time you drive by West Stockbridge, give a nod to the red restaurant behind Main Street. Luy Nguyen has passed on.

All photos courtesy of Truc Nguyen

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- Firewood

- Mark provided the board with his proposed work schedule going forward from now through anticipated July 1, 2019, retirement date.
- Board approved a one-day liquor license for Shaker Mill Tap House for a soft opening event on May 19.
- Board approved a Village School use request for the Guild of Berkshire Artists.
- Mark informed the board that a full alcohol liquor license hearing has been scheduled for May 29 at 7 p.m. The applicant is Foundry West Stockbridge, Harris Street.
- Doane discussed improving/enhancing the town's local access cable TV channel (190) and noted that the Cable Commission could use more members because it is down to two. Board had a general discussion; Eric stated that he might be able to assist.
- Resident Karen Carmean recapped a DEP-sponsored wetlands discussion held at the Town Offices on May 14.
- Resident Karen Carmean suggested the board consider changing the title of Board of Selectmen to Select Board. Following a general discussion, Eric made a motion to adopt a gender-neutral policy in town government within a reasonable period. Doane seconded the motion. Vote taken, 3-0 in favor.
- Resident Liz DiGrigoli asked about the status on tree screening for the solar array adjacent to Turnpike Interchange 1. Mark will follow up with MassHighway.

With all business concluded and no additional comments/questions from those present, Doane made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bernie seconded. Vote taken, 3-0 in favor.

May 29, 2019

Open Meeting. Quorum present: Bernie Fallon, Chair; Doane Perry; Eric Shimelonis. Also present: Town Administrator Mark Webber. No press present.

Board reviewed and approved previous meeting minutes and weekly warrants.

Police Update

Chief of Police Marc Portieri provided an update to the board including these items: the Memorial Day Parade went smoothly and seemed to be very well attended; the mobile speed trailer seems to be effective but will be rotated to different parts of town in the future; four-hour shifts will be increasing as summer approaches to provide visible coverage in the downtown area and to address speeding and parking violations. Chief will provide his annual officer appointment list at the end of June for board consideration but noted that he will not be recommending the three current officers for next year's annual reappointment. In the chief's words, they have not worked out as hoped.

Marc recommended the addition of two part-time police officer candidates who were present at the meeting. Both possess the required academy certification and related credentials. The chief introduced Steve Parkington and Henry Cadorette. Following a discussion, Bernie Fallon made a motion to appoint both Officers Parkington and Cadorette as part-time police officers for one-year

terms ending June 30, 2020. Eric seconded the motion. Vote taken, 3-0 in favor.

Board, Chief Portieri, and resident Roger Kavanaugh discussed why the town has a recent track record of being unable to retain its full-time academy-sponsored police officers. Chief stated that retention is a problem statewide, and there seems to be little regard for loyalty and commitment for many young officers made worse by raiding of newly qualified officers by neighboring chiefs. Chief Portieri added that West Stockbridge may be too sleepy for younger officers. Chief and Roger noted that retention employment agreements will not stand up to challenge in Massachusetts. It was agreed to continue the discussion and seek solutions to the problem.

Other Business/Action/Discussion Items:

- Bernie read a note received from an unhappy person regarding the condition of the West Stockbridge Cemetery, citing disregard for monuments, broken stones, poor mowing, and general neglect. A handful of other people were in attendance and expressed similar concerns. Mark Webber stated that he had met with Cemetery Commissioner Marion Loring several times in the past week and with Highway Superintendent Curt Wilton to discuss placing the daily oversight of the town cemeteries under an expanded Department of Public Works. Doing so would improve accountability, response to issues, and efficiency. It was agreed to call Curt into an upcoming board meeting to begin the discussion.

- Doane Perry recognized Roland and Ginna Dudney for their rich service to the town over the past several years, specifically with the Parks and Rec Department and the Farmers Market. The Dudneys both recently passed away.

- Mark informed the board that a hazardous waste remediation contractor is now on the job to address last winter's diesel fuel spill on Route 41 south.

- The Finance Committee will be meeting this Friday to discuss future capital needs.

- The board will meet next on June 12.

- Mark informed the board that a special town meeting might have to be scheduled for the last Wednesday of June to correct some fiscal year end account deficits. The town accountant will advise before the required posting date of June 12.

- Board held a scheduled public hearing to hear and act on an all-alcohol liquor license as submitted by Foundry West Stockbridge, LLC, dba The Foundry, with Adam Weinberg as manager. Board reviewed the application package presented by the applicant's attorney. The application appeared to be in order. Following a discussion and hearing no objections either written or by those present, Bernie made a motion to approve the license application. Eric seconded the motion. Vote taken, 3-0 in favor. Board signed the Form 43 acceptance that would be sent to the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission the following day.

With no additional business to come before the town, Bernie made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Doane seconded the motion. Vote taken, 3-0 in favor.

Community News & Events

Community Health Association

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

Council on Aging Potluck

The Council on Aging will have their next potluck luncheon in the Community Room at the Town Offices at noon on Tuesday, July 9. Please come join us for some good food and fellowship with other West Stockbridge seniors. We'll be looking for you.

Stockbridge Grange Dinner

No public dinners will be served at the Stockbridge Grange during July and August. The dinners will resume in September.

West Stockbridge Congregational Church

The West Stockbridge Congregational Church will hold a bake sale in front of Baldwin's Extracts, 1 Center Street in West Stockbridge, on Saturday, July 20, from 10 a.m. until noon.

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

We are pleased to award
The 31th Annual Stone House Properties LLC Scholarship to
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Lily Michaels

Shawna Norton
Keegan Baldwin
Anna Campetti
Dylan Cole-Kink
Candice Slosek
Peter Oggiani
Juri Kiin
Brianna Davis
Hannah Korte
Tristan Alston
Robert Baldwin

Police Chief Marc Portieri: Community Policing in West Stockbridge

By Eric Shimelonis

West Stockbridge has long been defined by its distinctive small-town charm. Despite the many changes our ever-evolving world throws our way, most of us do our best to maintain this charm any way we can—all the way down to demonstrating care and kindness in our everyday interactions. You might be pleased to learn that your local police department is as committed to the small-town ideal as the rest of us are.

Marc Portieri is entering his fourth year as the police chief of West Stockbridge. After 22 years in the Becket Police Department, Portieri saw an exciting opportunity in our town's 2016 job posting for a new chief, and the Select Board (and their four-person search committee) saw an equally exciting opportunity in him. They were especially impressed by his dedication to the ideals of community policing.

This policing style, which involves working closely and building ties with the members of a community, was named and formalized in the early 1980s. But the basics of this approach have been a natural feature of our small-town police force since its humble beginnings. “The community aspect works well here,” says Chief Portieri, who describes the ultimate goal of community policing as “making residents happy and giving them the service they deserve.”

Portieri says building the right team to support his vision of a community police force has been no small task. “You’ve got to have the right players, and everything works,” he explains. “But it seems that police these days are on a different level or wave than when I started.”

West Stockbridge has lost some trainees to job openings in neighboring towns that they feel offer the potential for more action. The chief has learned from these losses, and he concludes that “a real good fit here is a police officer who’s got 10 to 15 years on the job, someone who has already experienced running around for eight hours at a time.” Portieri adds that this brand of candidate would also arrive with most of the necessary training.

Fortuitously, Chief Portieri has found such a veteran—and an effective deputy—in full-time sergeant Rosario Messina, who has spent the past 18 years working for a number of Berkshire County police departments. Sgt. Messina preceded his police career with 20 years in banking, so he brings to the field an extraordinary gift for numbers and a strong community policing mindset. A self-described “people person” whose work as police officer is a lifetime dream come true, Sgt. Messina explains that “residents are like customers, so I treat them the same way.”

Chief Portieri is optimistic about the future of his department. “Along with Sgt. Messina and myself, both full time, we have five part-time officers who I feel are very good officers. They fit in our community well. Down the road, I’d like to get another full-time officer or two, and then it would be a complete full-time operation. Then we could bring our K9 aboard.”

Chief Portieri prioritizes the safety and the security of the town, and he considers community policing to be the most effective means to that end. “If you’re one on one with the people, you’re going to get the answers you need,” he says. Sgt. Messina agrees. “In this town, people come and help you,” he points out. “It’s community around here. You can just see it.”



*Sergeant Rosario Messina (left) and Chief Marc Portieri (right).
Photo by Eric Shimelonis*



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



Greetings to all from all of us at the library! We have heard that folks are not always finding us when they want to visit:

The library is located at the Town Offices

21 State Line Road

PLENTY OF PARKING IN BACK!

A lot is happening at the library this summer, and we hope you can join us for some great events, and also whenever you need something new to read or watch, or a place to sit and read.

All kids are invited to sign up for the Massachusetts Libraries summer reading program, “A Universe of Stories” with the theme of space exploration and astronomy. The program launches on June 29, Saturday, at 11 a.m., right here, with a *spacecraft workshop!* All kinds of recycled material will be here for you to make a rockin’ rocket or any other craft you can dream up.

Then on July 12, Friday, at 3 p.m., please join us for a word game day.

Our very own unstoppable Miss Vicky is also working on a visit—to the grounds out behind the library—from a small herd of small horses. Yes, miniature ponies! Please keep an eye on our Facebook page and website for the date and time for this exciting event.

AND we plan to bring our summer universe of stories back to earth with a new book party on Saturday, August 24, at 11 a.m.

Finally, all kids are invited to search for our little library friend, Pete the Cat, who is staying at the library for his second summer. Pete will be hiding somewhere new each week, dressed in a NASA suit in honor of this summer’s theme. If you locate Pete, show a librarian where he is and pick out an award from the treasure chest.

NEW DVDs

Daddy’s Home 2, First Man, Galveston, Mary Poppins Returns, Mile 22, The Upside

NEW ADULT FICTION

Baldacci, *Redemption*
Escoria, *Juliet The Maniac*
Goldberg, *Feast Your Eyes*
Guran, *Mythic Journeys: Retold Myths and Legends*
Lalami, *Other Americans*
Link, *Magic for Beginners*
Mathews, *This Is Not a Love Song*
Michaelides, *Silent Patient*
Patterson, *18th Abduction*

Ramos, *Farm*
Scottoline, *Someone Knows*

NEW ADULT NONFICTION

Cep, *Furious Hours: Murder, Fraud, and the Last Trial of Harper Lee*
Gilder, *Age of Entanglement*
McCabe, *Threat: How The FBI Protects America in the Age of Terror and Trump*
Wiking, *The Little Book of Hygge*

NEW YOUNG ADULT AND CHILDREN'S DVDs

Nature: Super Cats, Wrinkle In Time, Ralph Breaks the Internet

NEW CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Lee, *Ask Me*
Goodrich, *Nobody Hugs a Cactus*



Ongoing

- Story time with Miss Vicky on Saturdays at 11 a.m.
- Set up a CW/MARS online account by going to weststockbridgelibrary.org and clicking on the card catalog picture. Your personal account allows you to ask us to hold books or movies for you, and keep track of checkouts, overdues and fees, pickup locations, renewals, and more. If you can't find it in our C/WMARS network, click on the Commonwealth Catalog to borrow items from libraries across the state.
- For everyone with an online CW/MARS account, we hope you will take advantage of the app called Libby (image of a reader with a bow in their hair!) to listen to audiobooks and read eBooks on your phone or tablet. Librarians are very happy to help you set this up; if you would like some help with this, please bring in your phone or tablet.
- All library trustees board meetings are open to the public. Please check the library website for our next meeting.
- We have day passes for many of our local attractions, available at the library, thanks to the Friends of the Library and the West Stockbridge Cultural Council.
- As always, we welcome suggestions on just about anything to improve our library.

Rachel Alter, Vicky Cooper, and Brad Havill

 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, or visit www.thelocalyokel.org



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SCRAPBOOK JULY 2019 : TEST YOUR TRIVIA KNOWLEDGE!

1. How many acres is the land preserve in West Stockbridge?
2. Where is the land preserve located?
3. Most of the land is accessible from where?
4. A number of roads were either damaged or flooded from what natural disaster in August 2011?

Answers: 1. 290; 2. In the southwest corner of town;
3. The north side of route 102 and Baker Street;
4. Tropical Storm Irene



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A Series of Recollections by John Bormolini and Friends

Crane Lake Camp

Until 1954, Crane Lake Camp (CLC), one of the many camps in the Berkshire, was owned and operated by George Kaplan. Then it was sold to Ed Ulanoff, his wife Barbara, and his brother Stan. The camp flourished under Ed’s leadership. Ed used his love of physical education as the foundation for camp life. Ed and Barbara were loved by all who came into contact with them. To help homesick campers, Ed would buy dogs and bring them to camp. By the end of summer, all of the dogs were adopted by campers’ families or staff members. In 1998, CLC was sold to the Union for Reform Judaism where it has continued to flourish.



Crane Lake Camp waterfront in the 1950s.



*Crane Lake Camp Waterfront in 2018.
Photos courtesy of John Bormolini*

To many West Stockbridge residents, the camp presented an opportunity to earn some money. Some off-season work was also done by residents Jim Salvi and John Capelli. Preparation for the July opening of camp began in mid-May and continued into June. Docks were moved from winter storage on shore into the lake. Back then, the only swimming location was the lake. In the 1990s, a pool was built at the upper portion of the camp.

Steve Salvi, who worked there in the mid-1950s, said, “During those days it was hard to find a summer job in West Stockbridge. CLC was good money—the work wasn’t too hard and filled up the whole summer. I mostly worked in maintenance.”

Additional staff arrived after Memorial Day. To many, it was an opportunity to get out of the sweltering city heat and enjoy the slower pace of the Berkshires and the tranquility of beautiful CLC.

Campers arrived around July 4, many driven by their parents. In the 1950s, campers could take a special passenger train from New York City to West Stockbridge. The arrival of the campers was a festive event for our town. Campers got off the train enthusiastically and transferred to vans while their luggage was loaded on trucks for the short trip to CLC. Many residents came to the depot to watch the train arrive and off-load the campers. In many ways, it was a celebratory event welcoming the campers to “Our Hometown.”

From Peter Angelini comes a remembrance with a twist: “The year was 1957. I worked in June helping open the camp. I agreed to the following pay with the Ulanoffs: \$60 for June, \$65 for July, and \$70 for August. When the third monthly payday came, the amount was \$65. To compensate for the shortage, I suggested I be given a defunct rowboat by the lake

...continued on page 15

July History Quiz Question:

The Europeans who settled on the western border of the Commonwealth and founded West Stockbridge were characters. You had to be somewhat independent with an adventurous spirit to go into the "wild and howling wilderness" in the mid-18th century. Dutch traders from the Hudson River towns and farmers from the Connecticut River Valley looking for free land were the first here. The accepted founder of West Stockbridge was Elijah Williams, originally from Newton and more recently of the other Stockbridge.

In the list of unique special characters, Elijah probably ranks up there with the best (or worst?). What made him so special?

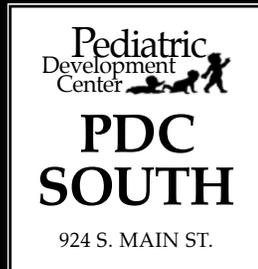
(Find the answer somewhere in this issue!)

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.



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The *Local Yokel* is published monthly. Please mail submissions to: *The Local Yokel*, P.O. Box 238, West Stockbridge, MA 01266, e-mail info@thelocalyokel.org, or visit www.thelocalyokel.org. Copy deadline is the 5th of the month prior to the publication. Editors: John Parker, 394-4368, john.j.parker53@gmail.com; Vicki Grayson, 232-6131, vicki.grayson@rocketmail.com; Susan Fisher, 232-4443, suefish12@gmail.com; Anne Lesser, 717-0277, anne@annelessercommunications.com; Designer: Kim Bradway, kim@bloominarts.com.

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.

[which] I saw before camp opened. They agreed, along with two paddles. Somehow, I got it to my house using my wagon. I completely resealed and re-varnished the bottom of the boat following instructions in my *Boy's Life* magazine. When I finished the repairs, I took it to Mill Pond behind Josie Maserio's variety store, using my wagon. When I launched the boat, it sank like a rock before I ever got on board. I should have known I wasn't going to beat Stan and Ed out of anything. At least I still had the two paddles!"

From Louise Faggioni (Pericolosi): "I worked there at age 15. I had no transportation, so the camp sent someone to pick me up and take me home daily. I always worked in the kitchen. I did food prep, cutting up all kinds of foods, lots of vegetables and fruits. My buddy in the kitchen was Rosie Delmolino, Bob Romeo's grandmother. Anna Bormolini and Lorenza Panzeri also worked there. It was actually a good place to work."

From Anita Norton (Zanconato): "In 1956, I babysat for Stan Ulanoff's youngest daughter, Dory. She was about 2 years old. A girl named Betsy babysat the older ones. Betsy and I became good friends, and at the end of camp we became pen pals. We wrote for many years."

During the summer, a few campers would venture into town as part of a special outing. From Judie Bodnar (Masiero): "A bunch of us kids were regularly hanging out. One early summer evening, a few campers came down to Main Street. We all must have been preteen or young teenagers. I remember being embarrassed. They made us feel like such a bunch of dummies because these city kids were way beyond us country bumpkins. They were making fun of us because not one of us could name the boroughs in New York City. I didn't even know what that word meant. We were teased pretty badly, but thinking back on it now I think the campers were just showing off as young people do at that age."

Today, CLC is alive and thriving every summer as it has done for over a century. For many of us, CLC played a memorable role in our lives in the 1950s in West Stockbridge, our hometown!

Watch for remembrances of summer swimming by Peter Angelini in our August issue!

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.



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July Art Calendar

Lenox Library Welles Gallery Shows, Monday July 1-14 and 15-28. 18 Main Street, Lenox. Open daily 10-5pm except Sundays 10-1pm and 4th of July. **Free and open to the Public!** 25+ local artists show paintings, sculpture, photographs, ceramics. Receptions Sat. July 6 and 20, 3-5pm.

Meet the Artist: Lucy MacGillis, oil painter using raw earth homemade colors. Friday July 5, 1:15pm Gallery Talk at Hoadley Gallery, 21 Church St., Lenox followed by lunch.

First Fridays Artswalk. Fri. July 5, 5-8pm. Pittsfield, North and South Streets. www.firstfridaysartwalk.com Robert Goldstein, painter, and Jill Gustavis, plein air watercolor, have openings at 137 No. St. Pittsfield.

Stockbridge Second Thursday Art Walk. Art Opening and Reception. Thurs. July 11, 4-7pm Guild artists in Artist Studio Tours on July 13 at TKG Real Estate, 10 Elm Street, Stockbridge, Artists bring plate of hors d'oeuvres, pick up June work at 7 p.m. and August Artist studio artists deliver art by 7 p.m.

The Far Far Away Art Exhibition Colonial Theatre. July 16-Sept. 9.

Members' Potluck. Friday July 12, 5:30-8pm at Tanglewood. Berkshire Night. Enter main gate. Bring main dish, hors d'oeuvres or dessert for ten and what YOU want to drink. Partners welcome. RSVP: BerkshireArtists@gmail.com.

Artists' Studio Tour. Saturday, July 13, 11 – 5 p.m. See BerkshireArtists.org for updates.

Creating Art Outdoors Show. Lenox Library 18 Main Street. 10-5pm July 29, 30 and 31. Plein Air painters!

Art Book Gathering Fri. July 26, 2-4 p.m. Share a book: artist, process. Shaker Mill Books, West Stockbridge

Berkshire Photo Gathering. Sun. July 28, 2-4 p.m. \$5. Berkshire So. Regional Comm. Center, 15 Crissey Road, Great Barrington. Put Photos on website to share.

Guild of Berkshire Artists

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Figure Painting, Open Studio Tuesdays 2-5pm. IS 183, Stockbridge. \$20 members, \$25 nonmembers. Bring your supplies. RSVP 413-298-5252x100

Local Author to Present Reading of New Historical Novel

Local author Carolyn Kay Brancato will present a reading of her historical novel, *The Circus Pig and the Kaiser*, on Friday, July 26, at 6 p.m. in the Old Town Hall in West Stockbridge. The novel is laced with satire dealing with freedom of expression under an authoritarian regime. The story is based on a true event: in 1907 a Russian circus performer dressed his prized pig as the war-mongering Kaiser. The *Berkshire Eagle* called the book “a wonderfully entertaining, but seriously messaged historical fiction about a band of circus characters defending the ideals of freedom of expression.”

The wide-ranging research that Brancato brings to the novel draws on skills developed in her day job as a Ph.D. economist and expert in corporate governance. She has also authored two nonfiction investment books, but her first love has always been the arts. Her plays have been mounted at Steppenwolf in Chicago, the John Houseman Theatre in New York City, and the Church Street Theatre in Washington, D.C. She created the play *Censored* to celebrate the First Amendment, bringing to life banned books, art, and other cultural institutions that have been repressed in the United States. Her novel is available through Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

Courtesy of Carolyn Kay Brancato



Old Town Hall, 9 Main Street
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Friday July 26th 6 to 7:30 pm
reception following

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- 7/1 Anne Lesser and Thom Lipiczky anniversary
- 7/3 Kate O'Brien
- 7/4 Melissa & Steve Seward anniversary
- 7/19 Liz York and Connor Epstein Kraus wedding
- 7/24 Anne & Joe Roy anniversary
- 7/27 Colby Parker
- 7/28 Wozzta Mikolajczyk
- 7/30 Giannę Pietrafesa
- 7/31 Violet McGuane

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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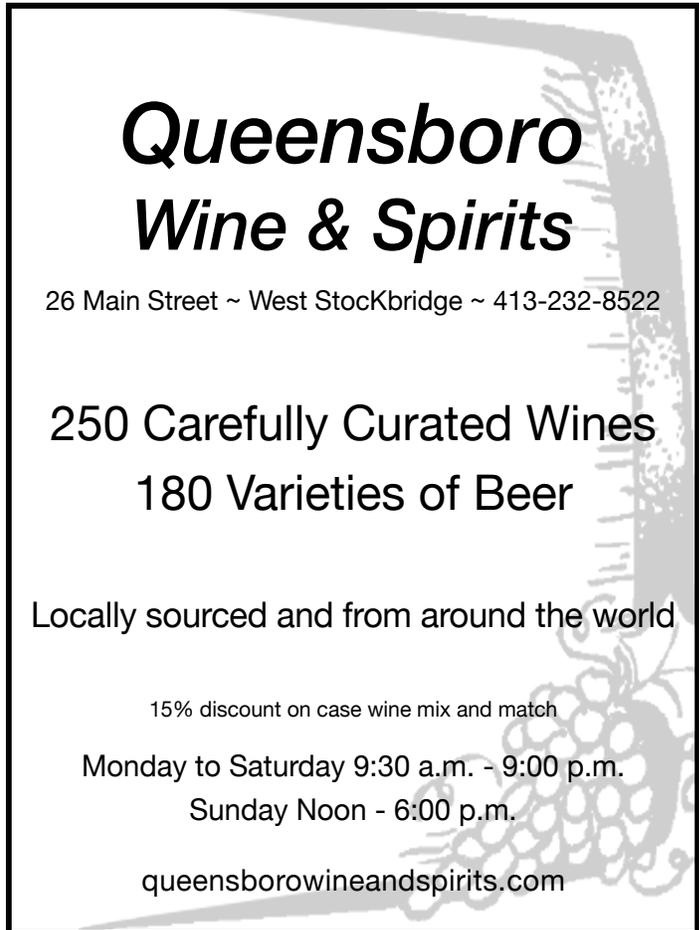
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Did You Attend Williams High School?

If you attended Williams High School in Stockbridge for any length of time, please come to the annual alumni dinner on September 21, 2019, at the Stockbridge Sportsmen's Club. The social hour will start at 5 p.m. and the dinner at 6 p.m. One advantage of being a small school is that all classes participate at the dinner. You will visit with fellow classmates and friends from adjoining classes, and you will also get to know alums from much earlier or later classes (depending on how old you are!).

Reservations are required. If you are already on the Williams High School Alumni Association mailing list, you'll be getting the annual newsletter soon and a dinner reservation form in August. If you are not currently on the mailing list, please contact WHSAA secretary Pat Flinn at (413) 298-5595 or e-mail pflinn@roadrunner.com.

The alumni dinner is a fun time, as shown by the smiles in the accompanying picture from the 2018 dinner. Please come! Here's to the green and gold!

58th Anniversary of the Class of 1960



(L to R) Edward Johnston, John Bormolini, Louise Pericolosi Faggioni, Judith Frana Linscott, William Fagin (rear), Robert Romeo. Photo by Maria Kickery Carr '62

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History Quiz Answer:



The oldest house in West Stockbridge. Photo by Bob Salerno

Elijah Williams was a son of Ephraim Williams, patriarch of the Williams family that controlled/owned most of Stockbridge in the 1750s. At that time, the missionaries were losing their influence as the land was being settled and real estate speculators were moving in. Elijah inherited part of his father's land in the Stockbridge area and used that to strike out on his own further west (now West Stockbridge).

Elijah became high sheriff of Berkshire County in 1761, putting him in a prominent position with the General Court in Boston. He then "purchased" 75 acres along the Williams River from the Native Americans, even though the General Court had put a stop to all of those types of land sales. The court ruled against Elijah, so he waited two years, to 1766, and repeated the same transaction. This time he paid about 1 pound per acre instead of the one peppercorn offered in the first transaction, and he was not challenged by the court. Influence helps.

Elijah built a dam and mill on the river where the Shaker Mill now stands. He set up an iron mining operation in the Leete ore bed and used the waterpower from the dam to operate a forge. To have a place to supervise his businesses, in 1766 he built what is now the oldest house in West Stockbridge (pictured here). It is located at the intersection of Route 41 and 102, across from the cannon. He also opened the first store in town (1773). When Elijah actually settled in West Stockbridge is in question because he had a habit of changing the dates on deeds and bills of sale for his convenience.

Not a popular person before the war, Elijah lost his sheriff position in 1771. He also was a strong royalist, and when the Revolution began, he was arrested for being a Tory and jailed in Boston. After the war, Elijah went back to haggling land from the few Indians who remained and fighting with other local residents. Even though he had once served as high sheriff, he didn't always follow the law. For example, Elijah owned two slaves through the 1790s, even though slavery was illegal in Massachusetts. He called them "indentured servants" to skirt that technicality.

Other dubious events and activities after the war through the 1780s and 1790s meant that Elijah eventually wore out his welcome. He sold his business and land holdings and moved back to the family home in Stockbridge in 1801. Even then, his so-called deals wound up in court. Shady and illegal land transactions, abuse of sheriff power, Tory sympathies, and even a 1771 paternity suit, Elijah could definitely be considered one of our early local characters.

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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Farmers Market Features New Vendors for 2019

The West Stockbridge Farmers Market has some exciting new vendors this year, offering a wider range of produce and products to tempt the eye and the palate. Cricket Creek Farm brings its artisanal farmstead cheeses, grass-fed beef, and whey-fed pork to the WFSM. The Sweetish Baker features pies, cakes, galettes, rugelach, and more. Dandelion Hill Farm has goat cheese and meat, lamb, eggs, chicken, and produce. Great Cape Baking offers donuts, tea cakes, gourmet breads, and jams and preserves. Square Roots Farms specialties include organically grown produce, free-range poultry, pork, and grass-fed beef.

You'll find them and all your favorite vendors every Thursday from 3 to 7 p.m., at The Green at the Foundry on Harris Street, in the heart of West Stockbridge.

Photos courtesy of WFSM



Square Roots Farm



Dandelion Hill Farm



The Sweetish Baker



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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

July 2019 Calendar of Events

7/3	Knitters & More	2–4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
7/4	Independence Day		
7/4	Farmers Market	3–7 p.m.	The Green at the Foundry on Harris
7/6	<i>Maestro, the Potbellied Pig</i> reading	2:30 p.m.	Stanmeyer Gallery and Shaker Dam Coffeehouse
7/9	COA luncheon	12 noon	Town Offices Community Room
7/9	American Legion meeting	7 p.m.	Town Offices
7/10	Knitters & More	2–4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
7/11	Farmers Market	3–7 p.m.	The Green at the Foundry on Harris
7/15	*** Deadline for the next Local Yokel ***	***	Send to info@thelocalyokel.org
7/17	Knitters & More	2–4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
7/18	Farmers Market	3–7 p.m.	The Green at the Foundry on Harris
7/20	Congregational Church Bake Sale	10 a.m.–12 noon	Baldwin’s Extracts, 1 Center Street
7/24	Knitters & More	2–4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
7/25	Farmers Market	3–7 p.m.	The Green at the Foundry on Harris
7/26	<i>The Circus Pig</i> reading	6 p.m.	Old Town Hall
7/31	Knitters & More	2–4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room