

Local yokel

West
Stockbridge
June 2019

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



Red Eft at Steven's Glen. Photo by Emily Weiland

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 2005

Curt Wilton, Highway Superintendent

By Bernie Fallon

A body of work is generally viewed looking back over a long time. Career results don't happen in an Instagram time frame. Results take effort each day for years. There is care, adjustment, professionalism, attention to detail, blood, sweat, and, in the case of the West Stockbridge Highway Department (WSHD), lack of sleep! The WSHD is said to be the envy of many highway departments in Berkshire County. Citizens of other towns as well as locals comment on and appreciate the quality of our roads. At the same time, our highway superintendent, Curt Wilton, continually strives to improve.

When Curt, now in his 23rd year as superintendent, is asked about the success of the department, his first response is always the team: John Lyford (18 years), Jamie Boyer (14 years), and Zach Levesque (2 years). Curt has an impressive grasp of management, motivation, and procedure. While he says he's a micromanaging perfectionist, that doesn't elicit a negative feeling toward "a hard-driving boss" from the employees. Quite the opposite. The team has great respect for their boss.

Jamie told me a story that underscores the theme: a member from a neighboring town's highway department attended a seminar. He was dressed shoddily with grease stains. Jamie said that Curt would never accept that. You are representing West Stockbridge: Dress your best and be your best! That's not just a clever slogan. These are actions and demonstrations that extend into other areas. Curt invests wisely and cares for the longevity of the trucks and equipment that are mechanically sound, well maintained, and clean. Curt honors the fact that the equipment is owned by the town of West Stockbridge.

Here's another quick example. A resident named Liz had broken down near Denny's garage. The highway crew saw her, picked her up, and brought her home. When Liz got into the truck, she looked around and asked, "Is this truck new?" Jamie responded that it's a 20-year-old army surplus, its just *clean*.

Honor and respect imbue other areas like employee productivity. Curt understands the value of increased self-esteem. So he puts employees in positions where they excel, grow, and receive the most fulfillment from their work.

When you talk about saving money and investing wisely in the department, he's on it. Take relationships, for example. Curt is friendly, helpful, and welcoming toward people in key positions, from Mass Highway, to contractors like Maxymillian, to neighboring towns, to state representative Smitty Pignatelli. This benefits our town. Dividends through



The WSHD team with some of their many awards. Left to right: Zach Levesque, Jamie Boyer, John Lyford, and Superintendent Curt Wilton. Photo by Bernie Fallon

...continued on page 4

Board of Selectmen 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. Board of Selectmen 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.virtualltownhall.net/subscriber>].

April 17, 2019

Open Meeting. Quorum present: Bernie Fallon, Chair; Peter Skorput; Doane Perry. Also present: Administrator Mark Webber. No press was present.

The board reviewed and approved previous meeting minutes, and they reviewed and signed weekly warrants. Bernie Fallon opened the regular portion of the meeting and requested that background research of new agenda items be distributed to board members before meetings so members would be better informed prior to meetings.

Property Issues

Bernie opened the discussion on 16 State Line Road by reviewing the recent history of the property including tax taking history, current status of property ownership, ongoing issues with unregistered vehicles on the property, and sewer connection status.

He noted that the remaining items needing to be rectified are the three unregistered vehicles; connection to the town

sewer, although the connection fee and deposit to contractor have been paid; and the dilapidated/unkept condition of the property. Bernie added that the town turned off the water service last fall for nonpayment. He said the owner turned the water back on illegally, and it's certainly not the town's responsibility if water/pipe breaking damage occurred over the winter. The electric service is no longer in the town's name. Bernie added that it is time for complaints to be filed with the Board of Health to address apparent health and public safety concerns.

Neighbors George Williams and John Whalen were present and addressed the board with a series of concerns including late-night bonfires on the property that threaten neighboring properties; suspicious late-night activity; witnessing of rats on the property; devaluing of adjacent properties due to the dilapidated condition of the property; an abandoned appliance in the yard; and the unregistered vehicles including a pickup

...continued on page 5

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these relationships appear as paved sidewalks because the state had money to spend, and money saved to the tune of \$80,000 capping the landfill at the old town dump. There are also relationships with boards and committees. Curt is proactive and prepared, with PowerPoint presentations, charts, and graphs, always working to keep his department running well.

An area that saves the town *more* than money is employee retention. Employee hiring can be expensive. Studies show it can cost \$8,000 to \$10,000 for recruiting and hiring. It may take a new employee two years to match the productivity of an existing one. Training is expensive and can take employees away from productive work. The value of tenure brings home the bacon. John knows the history of our equipment inside and out, saving the town money. Jamie remembers things that happened seven years ago and provides quick solutions.

Illustrating the team's talent are the competitions the crew has won. Sure, there are a dozen shiny trophies in the office, but this recognition goes deeper than that. The competition has a difficult written test. Then the guys get into a truck with many defects that they must analyze. Finally, there is the snowplowing competition. We employ a team of winners. Curt has been the president of the Berkshire County Superintendents Association that furthers education, training, and camaraderie, keeping workers sharp with cutting-edge practices that deal with chemicals, road conditions, equipment, and more.

Curt says he's never actually had management training. So is it management by osmosis? Curt watched his mother Helen run a trucking company. She scheduled, managed employees, bid jobs, *and* ran the garbage route—whatever, wherever, and whenever. Most importantly, it was about reliability. It was a family business. Curt said, “She is the driving force behind my work ethic. You watched Mom work and you understood what needed to be done. Those traits are instilled whether you know it or not. You take it for granted at the time, but you get influenced by that.”

Curt was an athlete and spent his youth around coaches, motivation, discipline, and teamwork. He learned a winning way to be. Curt's dad passed away when he was very young. Only positive statements have been heard about Curt, Sr. Curt inherited a natural desire to set a positive example for his sons, Zachary, Travis, and Curt III. Most important may be his marriage to Jennifer, an amazing woman. Each seems aware of setting a positive example, and Curt wants to build a department that will outlive him. He has skin in the game.

Curt knows people will judge his work. He wants that judgment to be spot on, excellent, so he can look back with pride. But his body of work is not complete. He's got about eight years left, more improvement on the agenda, and he wants to leave the department in the best condition he can. With the knowledge and employees as they are, more gets done in shorter periods of time. These are called *increasing returns*.


Curt says, “I am a public servant. I appreciate the opportunity for this position/career.” He never forgets for whom he works and says he will continue, “if the town will have him.” The reliability and value are quantified. A few years ago, Curt looked at his paystub and realized he had been paid \$1 million by the town of West Stockbridge in his 23 years!

I asked Curt about his eventual retirement. With all this knowledge, does he want to be a consultant? He paused and became very relaxed. He said, “I just want to go fishing.” I'm sure he'll also be traveling with Jennifer, but save him a spot on the bench in front of the Public Market. Thanks to the WSHD team: John, Jamie, Zach, and Curt.

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truck loaded with garbage bags. Both neighbors state that they've been very patient with owner Brian Zanconato and aren't seeking to punish him, but they are concerned with the health, safety, and welfare of the neighborhood. Mark Webber offered to have the abandoned appliance removed the following day because it is an immediate public safety concern.

Following further discussion, it was decided that Bernie and one or more of the neighbors will meet with Board of Health Inspector Earl Moffatt on Friday morning and file a complaint and seek the Board of Health's intervention and action, perhaps including condemnation of the property. Bernie added that the West Stockbridge Police Department will be instructed to keep a close eye on the property as well. Bernie said the selectmen have been lenient with Brian over the past year or so, but Mr. Zanconato has not responded positively and no longer deserves the board not coming down on him. Both Mr. Williams and Mr. Whalen thanked the board for responding to their concerns.

Other Business/Action/Discussion Items:

- Mark informed the board that 10 applications for the town administrator have been received to date; the closing date for applications is April 24. Four residents have expressed interest in serving on a search committee for the town administrator, so a fifth person is needed. The names will be provided to the town moderator who is charged with appointing all town committees.
- Board renewed the town's waste hauling and disposal contract for an additional 3 years with Valley Trucking. Mark noted that waste services are exempt from the state's bidding laws, but it is sound practice to conduct periodic reviews. Peter Skorput added that the town has been well served by Valley over the past few years.
- Board welcomed a presentation of a "tree walk" to be scheduled to highlight the town's significant trees and their uniqueness. The walk idea came from discussions from Vision Committee meetings.
- Mark informed the board that he has developed a class II/III auto license application package in the event it is determined that Route 41 Auto LLC needs to apply for new licenses.
- Board approved a sign permit for the Tap House at Shaker Mill. Board had a general discussion on sign permits and agreed the building inspector/zoning enforcement officer should be the authority in charge of sign permitting because that office has to issue a building permit for signs and is responsible for their compliance and enforcement under the town's zoning bylaws. It doesn't make a lot of sense for the selectmen to be involved in the middle of the process. ❖

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New Book Event Date!

Maestro, the Potbellied Pig

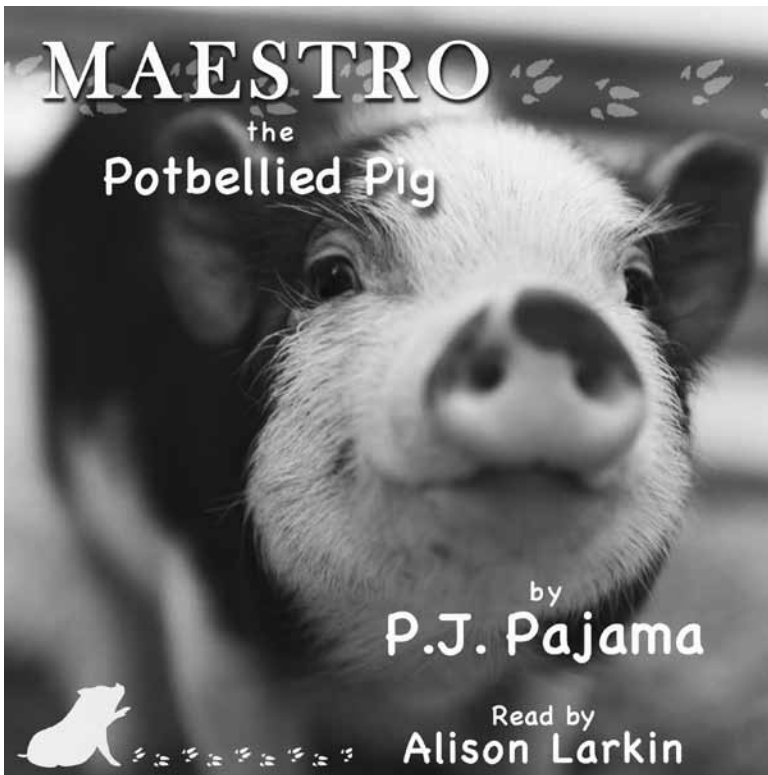


Image courtesy of Gerald Elias

A reading of the children's book, *Maestro, the Potbellied Pig*, by author Gerald Elias, originally planned for last January and postponed due to a snow and ice storm, has been rescheduled for Saturday, July 6, at 2:30 p.m. The event will be held at the Stanmeyer Gallery and Shaker Dam Coffeehouse at 2 Main Street, West Stockbridge.

Maestro, the Potbellied Pig is the story of a young harpist named Cassandra whose loneliness from hours of practicing is cured by a music-loving rambunctious piglet she names Maestro. As Maestro grows—and grows—Cassandra is faced with a difficult decision: must she say goodbye to her companion forever, or can she find a better solution?

As part of the reading, Elias will perform an excerpt of Scheherazade, and harpist Franziska Huhn will join him for a special "Maestro" reenactment.

Elias, a part-time resident of West Stockbridge, has authored the award-winning Daniel Jacobus mystery series set in the world of classical music.

Young readers and their parents are cordially invited to attend this free event and book signing. For more information, contact the Stanmeyer Gallery and Shaker Dam Coffeehouse at 232-7707.

June History Quiz Question:

The Shaker Mill Tavern has had many lives and now will be newly opened as The Tap House at Shaker Mill. The original building started as a private home, one of the many built in the 1830s when the town was moving to the village area from West Center. We know the Mullany family lived there in 1850. Michael Mullany was an Irish immigrant who worked in the quarries, as did most of his neighbors, and six children lived in the house. The neighborhood was surrounded by lime quarries and kilns, so he could easily walk to work.

The Shaker Mill Tavern property has an interesting history beyond the tavern building. Perfectly placed at the bottom of the hill on the main road from Albany, just before crossing the Williams River and sited in the center of town, it is a prime location. One structure on the property had a critical role in the development of our town. What was that structure, when did it exist, and why was it so important to the growth and character of West Stockbridge?

(Find the answer somewhere in this issue!)

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



**West Stockbridge
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Incorporated in 1994

Annual Town Meeting & Election Results Summary

By John Parker

This summary is based on information provided by Town Administrator Mark Webber and Town Clerk Ronni Barrett.

Annual Town Meeting

The West Stockbridge Annual Town Meeting was held on Monday, May 6, attended by approximately 80 registered voters. The meeting lasted just under two hours, and all articles on the warrant were passed except Article 13, calling for the adoption of Robert's Rules of Order to guide the moderator, which was soundly defeated.

Among the measures adopted was Article 12, supporting the renaming of Monument Valley Middle School to the W.E.B. Du Bois Regional Middle School. Article 16, the Community Preservation Act, was passed unanimously, adopting a 2% surcharge on all taxable properties, with an exemption for the first \$100,000 of valuation. Funds generated by the surcharge are to be used for open space, historic preservation, recreational land, and community housing.

Total spending of \$5,669,218 was approved, an increase of 4% over the current fiscal year. The meeting ended with a round of applause for Mark Webber, who is stepping down after 22 meetings as town administrator.

Annual Town Election

Of the town's 1,153 registered voters, 327 cast ballots at the annual town election on May 13. With 289 votes, Eugene Dellea was elected as town moderator for his 52nd consecutive term, making him the longest serving moderator currently holding office.

In the only contested race, Eric Shimelonis defeated incumbent Peter Skorput for a three-year term on the Board of Selectmen, 179 to 145. Running unopposed, June Biggs was reelected to another 3-year term as town collector with 277 votes, Ronni Barrett received 278 votes for another 3-year term as town clerk, Ed Sporn was reelected to another 3-year term on the Board of Assessors with 247 votes, Michael Skorput was reelected for another 3-year term on the Finance Committee with 241 votes, Andrew Fudge received 247 votes for a 5-year term on the Planning Board, Gunnar Gudmundson was elected to a 4-year term on the Planning Board with 248 votes, Scott Sawyer received 252 votes for a 3-year term on the Board of Health, Jayne Benjulian was elected to a 3-year term as library trustee with 252 votes, and Marion Loring received 267 votes for a 3-year term on the Cemetery Commission.



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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, e-mail to info@thelocalyokel.org, or visit www.thelocalyokel.org



Roland Dudney, 1941–2019

The West Stockbridge Farmers Market Committee regrets to announce the death of Roland Llewelyn Dudney, one of its original and most active members.

A retired computer systems designer and an active local citizen in West Stockbridge, Roland passed away on May 6 at age 78. His wife Regina ‘Ginna’ Dudney predeceased him by just 9 weeks. Together, they helped create and operate the West Stockbridge Farmers Market, supported the library and the Historical Society, and served on the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Born in Pontypridd, South Wales, Roland’s family moved to India, where he attended boarding school in the Himalayan foothills. After Indian independence, the Dudneys returned to Wales and then moved to London. Roland became an accountant and earned spending cash playing bridge for money. He joined a construction company that sent him to Jamaica where he met Ginna, who was vacationing nearby, and whom he heard screaming when she found a huge spider in her shower. He rushed in to save her, and after proposing many times, they finally married in 1979. Roland always called the marriage his greatest accomplishment.

Roland brought his accounting skills to the Cunard Line, where he designed accounting systems for the passenger and cargo shipping business. When Cunard transferred their accounting systems to EDS, Roland went with them. He continued to work in the industry until he retired in 2007.

Roland and Ginna first bought property in West Stockbridge in 1979, an 1830s farmhouse/fixer-upper. Later, they purchased another house in town and retired from their day jobs. Looking to bring a little more life to the town they loved, Roland, Ginna, and several other residents created the West Stockbridge Farmers Market, featuring locally grown or made products, now in its eighth year. They were active with the Parks and Recreation Commission, as well as the library and the Historical Society.

A celebration of Roland’s life will be held at 31 Stockbridge Road, West Stockbridge, on Saturday, June 1, from 1 to 5 p.m. In lieu of flowers, those wishing to help continue the work of Roland, Ginna, and the WSFM can make donations online at www.WestStockbridgeFarmersMarket.org/donations. Checks can be mailed to WSFM, PO Box 148, West Stockbridge, MA 01266-0148.



*Ginna and Roland greet a young visitor at the Farmers Market.
Photo courtesy of West Stockbridge Farmers Market*



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"We Remember When . . ."

Growing Up in West Stockbridge in the 1950s

A Series of Recollections by John Bormolini and Friends

School Days



Village Grammar School in downtown West Stockbridge. Photo from E.B. Garnett, West Stockbridge, Massachusetts, 1774-1974

Up until 1950, the journey of life began at the old Village Grammar School in downtown West Stockbridge. In those days, this was the first introduction to a full day of school, never having had the benefit of kindergarten. One day, bam! There we were in school after being in the care of our parents. As an aside, during the war years there were children whose fathers were serving in the Big War. Sadly, some never saw their dads again.

The last class to start and finish at the old Village School began in 1941 and graduated in 1949. The class that entered school in 1942 graduated in June 1950 from the new school. Anita Norton (Zanconato) recently spoke with her uncle Clarence Barrett, who told her, "I went to the old school until December 1949 and started at the new school January 1950. My class was the first to graduate from the new school in June 1950. I remember it like it was yesterday."

Getting to and from school meant walking for most of us. Anita Norton (Zanconato) remembers the exact route to and from her house at the corner of Route 102 and Washington Street to the old school

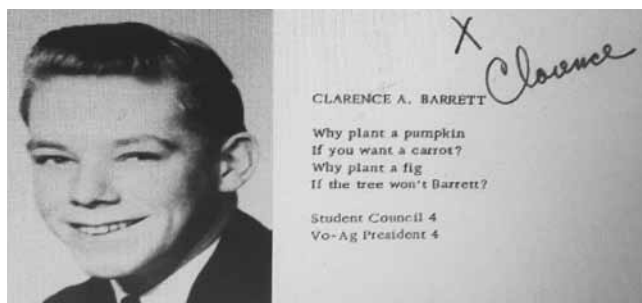
with her younger sisters. It was about a mile. The new school was virtually across the street for Anita.

There was also school bus service. Anita's uncle Clarence recalled, "I was bused from my home at the farm in State Line to both the old and new grammar schools and later to Williams High School in Stockbridge. The bus started its pickup route from Troy's Garage where the bus was kept. Ray Pixley was the usual driver, supplemented by Alio or Aldo Delmolino, Troy's owners, when needed."

The new grammar school officially opened on Tuesday, January 3, 1950. The *Berkshire Evening Eagle* ran an article on January 4 with a picture of Mr. Reddington and his 7th and 8th grade class. The building cost \$160,000 to build, and it was state of the art at that time and certainly a quantum upgrade from the venerable old school.

For us kids, stepping into it was a "wow" moment. Everything at the new school was "squeaky clean." There was even a cafeteria, and hot lunches were available. Tables were set up in the "gigantic" gymnasium where we could eat! The gymnasium was also used for recess and school events. There was also a massive playground with new swing sets and lots of open space.

Peter Angelini remembered, "One day I was talking during class, and Miss Doty said, "Where are your manners, young man?" Smart me said, "Out in the hall in my lunchbox." With that, Miss Doty sent me to stand out in the hall until Mr. Reddington, our principal, came and scolded me. I remember someone in our class having their behind paddled in front of the class by Mr. Reddington. I don't remember who it was or the offense, but I remember the incident well and was happy that it wasn't me.



Clarence Barrett, Williams High School 1954, now 82 years young. He was in the first class to graduate from New School in 1950. Notice the poem!

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Volunteers Clean Up West Stockbridge

By John Parker



Some of the more than 35 participants in the cleanup. Photo by John Parker

Continuing an annual tradition started by Peter Thorne, this year Monument Mountain Regional High School junior and local resident Olivia Thiemann brought new energy into organizing a successful Clean Up West Stockbridge Day held on May 11. Over 35 people participated in the town-wide cleanup effort, collecting about 50 bags of trash from our roadsides.

Olivia says she was inspired to undertake the National Honor Society service project after living for a time in Vermont that has a statewide cleanup day. She adds, "Thanks to Peter Thorne for helping me organize this wonderful event, the town for coming out and supporting environmental health by cleaning up, the Highway Department for supplying bags, and the Fire Department for allowing us to park at the firehouse."



Clean Up Day organizers Olivia Thiemann and Peter Thorne. Photo by John Parker

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West Stockbridge Vision Committee

By Joe Roy, Jr.

The West Stockbridge Vision Committee was established by the Select Board in July 2018. We usually meet once or twice a month on Wednesdays at the Town Offices. Meetings last about 60 to 90 minutes. We observe the Open Meeting Law and have had 19 meetings to date. All meetings are posted in the main entrance window of the Town Offices, and everyone is welcome to attend.

Current members of the committee are Bill Barth, Karen Carmean, Wayne Cooper, Steve Dixon, Lois Ferguson, Stephen Graham, Kim Hubbard, Kathleen Keresey, Karden Rabin, Joe Roy, Jr., Dick Shechtman, Eric Shimelonis, Peter Thorne, Sarah Thorne, and Randy Thunfors.

The committee has been charged with establishing a Vision Statement that will help guide our town in the coming years. The purpose is to nurture the development of West Stockbridge by providing visionary guidance toward building our future while recognizing our history and celebrating our present through a program of collaborative dialogue, innovative planning, and creative public outreach.

We established some basic rules of operation and began a conversation to discover and enhance what's great in West Stockbridge while also focusing on how aspects of our town can be improved. Working with the Select Board, we help promote the town and develop ideas to improve West Stockbridge, acknowledging we are part of a bigger picture in our region and attempting to recognize and enhance what makes us special.

Having unearthed the town's original Master Plan, which evolved into what is now our zoning bylaw, we hope to create a new Comprehensive Plan that preserves our original attributes while applying them to today's realities.

Some of the goals we seek to promote are listed in our zoning bylaw [Section 1: Title, Authority & Purpose]:

- Prevent overcrowding of land; safety from fire and other dangers; conserve health; and lessen congestion in the streets.
- Provide adequate transportation, water supply, drainage, schools, parks, and open space.
- Conserve land value, conserve natural resources, prevent pollution.
- Protect floodplains, wetlands, water resources, woodland, scenic beauty, and historical structures and features in the community.
- Preserve the town's existing small-town character, open spaces, and low-density population.
- Observe the town's orderly growth at a deliberate pace.

In mid-September 2018, we produced our initial Vision Statement. It will likely be modified as we get more specific information and input from the public and our Select Board. It states, "The town of West Stockbridge is defined by a rich history, scenic beauty, and industrious work ethic. We aspire to further develop our foundation of craftsmanship, entrepreneurship, and the arts while continuing to beautify our landscapes and architecture, preserve our natural resources, and build, advance, and diversify our community." Soon after, Stephen Graham began construction of our Vision Committee website.

The committee held a well-attended public input meeting and gathered information from West Stockbridge citizens. We discussed topics like enhancing our river exposure and waterways, preserving our resources, promoting the arts, keeping our small town character, keeping young people (and older adults) in town, closing zoning loopholes, using social media better, studying affordable housing, creating more parks and parking, focusing on our rich history, maximizing our open spaces, promoting West Stockbridge, reducing congestion, promoting public health, controlling traffic, updating appropriate directional signs in town, improving playgrounds and public recreation venues, structuring positive growth, and more. Focusing on these ideas helps as we discuss the vision for our town.

Once we had these great ideas to work with, we focused on various ways to fund them. We worked with the Select Board to develop the idea of adopting the Community Preservation Act at the annual town meeting. This provides a way to procure a small (2%) surcharge on property taxes in town. After certain exemptions including those for people who qualify for low-income benefits, an average property valued at \$300,000 would be surcharged about \$50 a year. These funds could only be used for specific goals including open space, recreational uses, historic resources, and affordable housing. The measure passed easily at the annual town meeting.

As the Vision Committee moves forward, we hope to work closely with the Select Board to move forward with positive values for slow, controlled growth while improving public access to our town's rural character and making all areas of West Stockbridge more attractive and welcoming to visitors and residents. All 15 members of the Vision Committee hope to continue our mission and gain the support and participation of everyone in town!



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- Picnic at Hanging Rock*
- Red Sparrow*
- The Wife*

McEwan, *Machines Like Me*

- Rooney, *Normal People*
- Sandford, *Neon Prey*
- Smith, *Department of Sensitive Crimes*

NEW ADULT FICTION

- Cussler, *Celtic Empire*
- Kelly, *Lost Roses*
- Martin, *Fire & Blood: 300 Years Before a Game of Thrones*

NEW ADULT NONFICTION

Sacks, *Everything in Its Place*

NEW YOUNG ADULT AND CHILDREN'S DVDs

- Bernie the Dolphin*
- Sgt. Stubby: An American Hero*



Ongoing

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- 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



2019 BOOK DONATION REQUEST



DONATE YOUR GENTLY USED BOOKS/CDs/DVDs

The Friends of the West Stockbridge Library are requesting donations for their July 27 and 28 book sale, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Books (no textbooks or magazines; no VCR tapes) may be provided to the library during regular library hours. Please do *not* leave donated books in the library book return box.

We can only accept books in good condition.

THANK YOU

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF BOOKS: SATURDAY, JULY 6

The West Stockbridge Library
Town Hall
21 State Line Road



Scrapbook June 2019: TEST YOUR TRIVIA KNOWLEDGE!

1. Which of the Wilton twins excelled in rugby and baseball?
2. Which West Stockbridge resident was ordained as deacon on May 21, 2011?
3. What do deacons do?

Answers: 1. Travis Wilton; 2. John Zick; 3. Their primary focus is one of service to the church in practical ways.

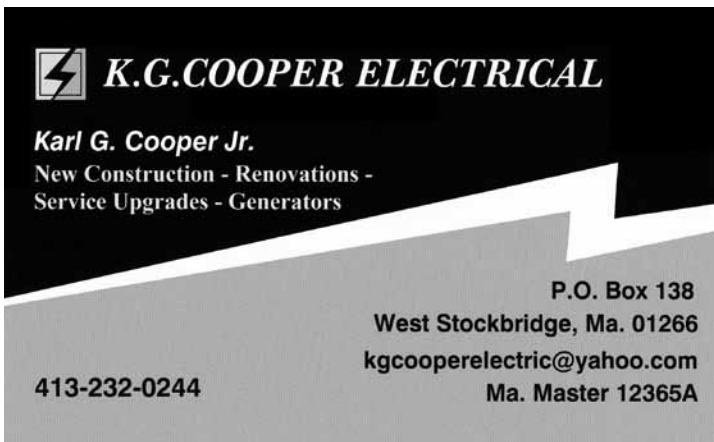


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Monument Girls Write On Celebrates Young Women Writers

By Claudia Maurino, MMRHS Senior

Friday, April 26, marked the seventh annual Monument Mountain Girls Write On. Hosted for the past five years by the West Stockbridge Historical Society at the Old Town Hall, Girls Write On is a beloved celebration of young women writers at Monument Mountain Regional High School. English teachers nominate and choose nine or ten writers to share their work—from fiction to poetry, to creative nonfiction—before family and friends.

This year, the writing ranged in topics from nature and its relationship to coming of age, to coffee and grilled cheese as vessels for passion and love, to rising above the effects of the absence of fathers. After the readings, English teacher and event organizer Lisken Van Pelt Dus presented the writers with an anthology of their work, entitled *Fathers, Angels & Other Allegiances*. Additional copies were for sale to members of the audience.

Although Dus is retiring at the end of this year, the legacy she leaves behind, both in this event and countless other ways, lives on in the minds and hearts of the countless writers (women and otherwise) she has inspired, encouraged, and uplifted in her years at Monument Mountain. The well-attended event was a moving reminder of the power that writing—and writers—has, and that, to quote Dus's preface to the anthology, "We're in good hands if these girls write on."



Monument Girls 2019. Front row from the left: Antonia Taylor, Yazuri Bourdon, Rosemary Snyder, Cora Hanlin; middle row: Michael Mooney (faculty), Anna Rubino, Olivia Rubino, Autumn Parker, Ameilya Hadsell, Talia Caine, Emery Gagnon (faculty), Michael Rosenthal (faculty); back row: Meghan St. John (faculty), Lisken Van Pelt Dus (faculty), Jolyn Unruh (faculty). Photo by Claudia Maurino

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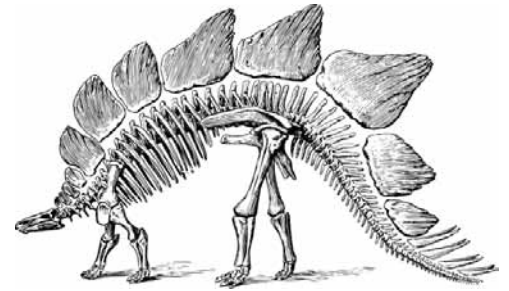
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Dr. Jack Horner Dinosaur Talk, Exhibit and Reception

Renowned paleontologist Dr. Jack Horner, former curator of paleontology at the Museum of the Rockies, MacArthur Genius, and technical advisor to the *Jurassic Park* movies, will speak at the West Stockbridge Historical Society on Saturday, June 15, at 6:30 p.m., about his groundbreaking new research. Tickets for the talk will be available for \$20 at Shaker Dam Coffeehouse and the Historical Society.



After the presentation, please join us at Shaker Dam Coffeehouse for a reception celebrating Dr. Horner's new exhibit of dinosaur micrographs. And there will be a big surprise! Photographs, cards, and books by Dr. Horner will be available for purchase.

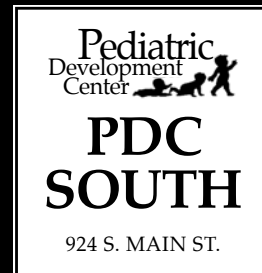


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WEST STOCKBRIDGE JAZZ SERIES

Benefit Concert for the Old Town Hall Restoration

Saturday, August 3, 2019, at 8 p.m.
Old Town Hall, 9 Main St., West Stockbridge, MA

On Saturday, August 3, the West Stockbridge Historical Society (WSHS) kicks off its new jazz concert series to benefit the continued restoration of the Old Town Hall, with its inaugural concert featuring Larry Grenadier, one of the most accomplished jazz bassists working today. His body of work includes collaborations with sax icons Joe Henderson and Stan Getz, decades performing alongside pianist Brad Mehldau, extended experiences working with Paul Motian and Pat Metheny, and co-leading the cooperative trio Fly (with Mark Turner and Jeff Ballard) and the quartet Hudson (with John Scofield, John Medeski, and Jack DeJohnette). The concert will feature selections from Grenadier's recently released solo bass album *The Gleaners*.

A reception will follow the concert. The audience will have an opportunity to chat with the Mr. Grenadier and enjoy light refreshments.

Additional WSHS jazz concerts are being planned for the fall of 2019 and spring of 2020. More information on those programs will be announced as it becomes available.

Concert tickets are \$35 and available for purchase online at www.weststockbridgehistory.org or call 232-5055. Seating is limited, so order today!



Larry Grenadier. Photo courtesy of Larry Grenadier

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Judie Masiero (Bodnar) shared these beautiful remembrances from the old school and growing up in West Stockbridge:

“I have such great memories of the old school on the hill at the end of Main Street. I remember how I looked forward to being in the upper class so you could get to ring the bell by pulling the big long rope. That never happened because my upper class years were in the new school. I used to walk or ride my bike, so I could go home for lunch. I also remember my first-grade teacher asking me to bring her an ice cream cone on my return from lunch at home.



Pin given to the 8th grade class by school principal Mr. Reddington. Picture from Marryann Hamlin (Raspuzzi)

“My happiest memories are of the little library on Main Street. I spent many, many hours there. I vividly remember sitting in the window, watching for the bookmobile to come from the big city of Pittsfield with the week’s newest books. How I loved that library!

“Another fun memory which I tell the young techies at the cell phone store is that I remember when I would go to the house where the town telephone switchboard was on Main Street (I can picture the house but cannot bring up the name). I intently watched the operator as she used her headset and plugs to ask, “Number, please?” when someone in town wanted to make or receive a call. The young people look at me and say, “You’ve got to be kidding me!”

“Growing up at that time in West Stockbridge was wonderful—hours and hours of playing outside with no one worrying about us or having to check on us. It feels like we had the run of the entire town. I also remember sledding under the barbed wire fence [see February 2019 *Local Yokel*], as well as down the entire road that is the way to Tanglewood right into the town. They are great memories.”

An anonymous contributor recalled school discipline: “Some of us boys were wise guys—not in the positive sense! I remember getting cuffed by Mr. Reddington with a gloved hand (it was a cold day). He grabbed me by the collar, and I pulled away. Not so fast, Mr. Wise Guy. Bam! The only hurt was my feelings. I knew I had done wrong.” When there was a disciplinary event, the recipient knew enough to not tell his or her parents because you were sure to get it again twice as hard at home. All of this is to affirm that the teachers were highly respected by the parents, and they insisted we respect the teachers.

Watch for more “School Days” in our September issue, with flashbacks and the giant step from grade school to high school. Our July theme will be Crane Lake Camp in the 1950s.

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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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.

Stockbridge Grange Dinner

On Sunday, June 9, the Stockbridge Grange will serve a stuffed breast of chicken dinner in the Grange Hall at 51 Church Street, Stockbridge, from 1 to 2 p.m. Cost: \$12 adults, \$6 under 12, and under 5 free. Takeouts are available.

Council on Aging Potluck

In a change from our usual schedule, we will hold our potluck luncheon at noon on Tuesday, June 4, in the Community Room at the Town Offices. We look forward to seeing you then!

West Stockbridge Congregational Church

Community Meet 'n Greet and Ice Cream Social: The West Stockbridge Congregational Church is hosting this free event on Sunday, June 9, from 2-4 p.m., to introduce and welcome Pastor Patty Fox to our neighbors, friends, and guests. We invite everyone to stop by and meet her while enjoying a delicious ice cream sundae. Bring a friend! On the lawn by the church at 45 Main Street. In the event of inclement weather, we will gather inside the church social hall.

The West Stockbridge Congregational Church will hold a bake sale in front of Baldwin's Extracts, 1 Center Street, on Saturday, June 15, from 9:30 a.m. until noon.

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

Celebrate the Visual Arts in June 2019

June Art Calendar

Members' Potluck. Sun. June 2, 5-8pm in Richmond. Bring main dish, hors d'oeuvres or dessert for ten and what YOU want to drink. Partners welcome. RSVP:

Meet the Artist: Katherine Oakes, Monday June 3, 12:15-1:30pm. Gallery walk and talk and lunch with the artist. TKG Real Estate, 137 North St. Pittsfield.

Shaker Mill Inn Art Exhibit Reception: Tues. June 4, 5-7pm. Local artists. A rare chance to see the works and nine beautiful rooms. Light refreshments served. 2 Oak St. near 7 Albany Rd. (Rt. 41 and 102) West Stockbridge.

Art seminars, Demonstration, and Business Meeting. Wed. June 5, 4:00pm. Demonstration of HOW TO WORK OUTDOORS: Jill Gustavis and Karen Carmean arranged by Adrian Holmes. 5-6:00. Guild meeting. Community Room Town Hall, 21 Stateline Road (Route 102) West Stockbridge (WS) and Wed. June 19

First Fridays Artswalk Fri. June 7, 5-8pm. Pittsfield, North and South Streets. Joan Gluck, painter, and John Mancia, photographer, have openings at 137 No. St. www.firstfridaysartwalk.com

Meet the Artist: Peg Dotchin, painter. Wed. May 12, 10:30-12pm. Discussion and gallery walk. Litchenstein Center, 22 Renne Avenue, Pittsfield.

Art Opening and reception. June 13, 4-7pm opening of show of Guild artists at TKG Real Estate, 10 Elm Street, Stockbridge. Artists bring plate of hors d'oeuvres, pick up May and June work at 7pm and July Artist studio artists deliver art by 7pm.

Stockbridge Art Walk! Thursday June 13, 4-7p.m. Second Thursdays in Stockbridge. Meet at 10 Elm St.

Meet the Artist: Janet Pumphrey, photographer. **Photos of Eastern Europe.** Friday June 28, 1-2:15 p.m. Stanmeyer Gallery 2 Main Street, W. Stockbridge

Art Book Gathering Friday, June 28, 2-4 p.m. Share a favorite book: artist, process. Shaker Mill Books, West Stockbridge

Guild of Berkshire Artists

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ART in Stockbridge June, 2019

Local Artists

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Long pose Figure/Portrait Painting and Drawing: Open Studio. Tuesday afternoons. 15 183, Stockbridge. \$20 members, \$25 nonmembers. Bring your supplies. RSVP 413-298-5252x100.

Photo Explorers. Join Carole Quinn on Fri. June 21, 8:30am Shaker Dam Coffeehouse and Stanmeyer Gallery for coffee/breakfast. Explore the area.



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Chamber Players' Concert Provides Uplifting Start to the Summer Music Season

By Liza Bennett

At another standing-room-only concert by the West Stockbridge Chamber Players on Friday, May 24, many in the audience reached Vaber Hall on the second floor of the Old Town Hall via the newly installed ADA-compliant elevator. Robert Salerno, president of the West Stockbridge Historical Society, greeted those assembled and thanked them for their help in completing this major step forward in the Restoration Campaign as well as for their much-needed contributions to the Emergency Oil Spill appeal. He also noted that this was the 10th Memorial Day Concert so generously performed by the West Stockbridge Chamber Players, led by artistic director Catherine Hudgins, to benefit the West Stockbridge Historical Society's efforts to restore the acoustically beautiful Old Town Hall.

The world-renowned players for this concert were Amanda Hardy, oboe; Sheila Fiekowsky, violin; Lisa Kim, violin; Daniel Getz, viola; and Oliver Aldort, cello, and each had numerous opportunities to shine during the performances. The program started with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Oboe Quartet in F major, K. 370/368b, which Mozart had written to show off the virtuosity of his oboist friend Friedrich Ramm, a role that Amanda Hardy stepped into beautifully.



Clockwise from top: Lisa Kim, violin; Catherine Hudgins, clarinet; Sheila Fiekowsky, violin; Oliver Aldort, cello; Daniel Getz, viola; (in center) Amanda Hardy, oboe.

Catherine Hudgins addressed the audience before the next piece, explaining that she had created the program to feature three Austrian composers: two universally known (Mozart and Schubert) along with the far more obscure Hans Gál. In fact, when Hudgins asked for a show of hands, no one in the audience had heard of the composer whose life and career were disrupted by the rise of Nazism and World War II. But the stirring performance of his Serenade for Clarinet, Violin, and Cello, Op. 93, did much to affirm his status as a leading composer in the Austro-Germanic classical tradition.

After the intermission, Sheila Fiekowsky introduced the final piece: Franz Schubert's String Quartet No. 13 in A minor (the Rosamunde quartet), D. 804, Op. 29. She noted that, although the piece was written during a time when Schubert was deeply depressed, the quartet nevertheless has moments of great spirit and even joy. The only work of Schubert's ever published, at the time of its first performance a critic wrote that the audience had applauded most enthusiastically after the minuet movement. Given license by Fiekowsky to express their appreciation, the members of the audience for this performance applauded not only after the minuet movement but after the first and final movements as well.

A reception followed the concert downstairs in the Old Town Hall where the audience mingled with the musicians and enjoyed light refreshments.



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6/24 Doane Perry
6/26 Mary Agnes McMahon
6/27 Leo Mikolajczyk

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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History Quiz Answer:

In 1838, entrepreneurs from Hudson constructed a rail line from Hudson to the Baker Street area and then into the town center. The purpose of that early railroad was to bring lime, iron, and marble over to Hudson for transport to markets. The rails and roadbed were very rudimentary. Travel was slow, maybe 5 to 10 miles per hour at best. The trains only ran in one direction at a time, so it was likely a daily round trip, hence the need to store the engine at the end of the line overnight.

The parking lot and patio area of the Shaker Mill Tavern was the perfect spot, and the owners built at that location what became the oldest "roundhouse" in the state.

This roundhouse wasn't round, more like a garage, and it wasn't very big. The walls were made of marble, our common stone in town, so it was quite a substantial building. Locomotives at that time were small, basically enhanced farm wagons with steam engines on them. The building couldn't hold the tender that contained the wood fuel, only the little engine. In the morning, the engine had to be pulled out of the building by a team of horses before it could be fired up.

The exact footprint of the roundhouse is unclear, but it is shown on railroad maps as just south of the original house (where the tavern is now). It was likely in the current patio and parking lot area. Built in 1838, the roundhouse lasted 100 years until it was dismantled in March 1939. It was vital in those early years, enabling West Stockbridge to become a rail center. It established the town as a real destination, a place to visit and do business. This is a case where the parking lot played a bigger role in the commercial development of the town than the tavern itself.



A railroad roundhouse stood near the site of the Shaker Mill Tavern. Photo courtesy of Bob Salerno

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 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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Assessors Office	<i>Mary Stodden</i>	232-0300	ext. 303	Tues. 1–5 p.m.; Thurs. 9 a.m.–1 p.m.
Board of Health	<i>Earl Moffatt</i>	232-0300	ext. 314	Fri. 9 a.m.–4 p.m., or by appt.
Board of Selectmen	<i>Eric Shimelonis, Peter Skorput, Doane Perry</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
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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>Rachel Alter</i>	232-0300	ext. 308	Tues. 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Wed., Thurs., and Fri. 2–6 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m.–2 p.m.; closed Sun. & Mon.
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Town Historian	<i>Robert Salerno</i>	232-4465		
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Transfer Station	<i>Wayne Cooper</i>	232-0307		Tues. & Thurs. 10 a.m.–6 p.m. and Sat. 8 a.m.–6 p.m.
Tree Warden	<i>Andrew Fudge</i>	232-4322		
Veterans Agency	<i>Laurie Hills</i>	528-1580		
Zoning Board of Appeals	<i>C. Randolph Thunfors</i>	232-0300	ext. 300	

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

“Run for Fun” Raises Funds for Playground Renovation

By John Parker

Twenty-two runners participated in the West Stockbridge Run for Fun 5K race on May 18, organized by Adam Boscarino, a student at Monument Mountain Regional High School. The event raised \$900 for Parks and Recreation to help fund a new playground at the “old Village School,” now the Town Offices.

Asked what gave him the idea to organize the Run for Fun, Adam responded, “This project was part of my National Honors Society service project, and I had the idea to raise money for a new playground because I have a little brother who would greatly benefit from the construction of a new one.”

According to Adam, “There were many racers from West Stockbridge who came to support the event, including friends, teachers, and parents who are passionate about the construction of a new playground.” In addition to locals, a few people from out of town came to run including a fellow from Boston looking to run a race in every town in Massachusetts, as well as a man from Pittsfield running his first 5K.

The top finishers in the men’s division were 1st, Kevin Robertson; 2nd, Luke Breslin; and 3rd, Adam Boscarino. In the women’s division, top finishers were 1st, Sylwia Ketchen; 2nd, Jennifer Kujawski; and 3rd, Julie Medeiros.

Adam thanks the sponsors (Flourish Market, SoMa Catering, Maple House Designs, Wisdom Lodge A.F. and A.M., A. W. Baldwin True Value, The Floor Store, Public Market, and Ski Butternut), along with the Board of Selectmen, the Fire and Police Departments, and the runners, of course, for supporting the event.



Run for Fun runners and cheering section gather at the starting line.



Race organizer Adam Boscarino and his dad, John Boscarino.

Photos courtesy of Adam Boscarino



Do you enjoy writing or photography?



The *Local Yokel* needs regular and occasional contributors.

Please call John Parker at (413) 394-4368, e-mail info@thelocalyokel.org,
or visit www.thelocalyokel.org for more information.

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June 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						



June 2019 Calendar of Events

6/3	Eid al-Fitr (begins at sundown)		
6/4	COA luncheon	12 noon	Town Offices Community Room
6/5	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
6/6	Farmers Market	3-7 p.m.	The Green at the Foundry on Harris Street
6/6	Board of Health meeting	6:30 p.m.	Town Offices
6/8	Shavuot (begins at sundown)		
6/9	Grange dinner	1-2 p.m.	Grange Hall, 51 Church St., Stockbridge
6/9	Community Meet 'n' Greet / Ice Cream Social	2-4 p.m.	On the lawn, Congregational Church, 45 Main Street
6/11	American Legion meeting	7 p.m.	Town Offices
6/12	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
6/12	Board of Selectmen meeting	6 p.m.	Town Offices
6/13	Farmers Market	3-7 p.m.	The Green at the Foundry on Harris Street
6/14	Flag Day		
6/15	*** Deadline for the next Local Yokel ***		Send to info@thelocalyokel.org
6/15	Congregational Church Bake Sale	9:30-12 noon	Baldwin's Extracts, 1 Center Street
6/15	Dinosaur Talk, Exhibit, and Reception	6:30 p.m.	Old Town Hall
6/19	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
6/20	Farmers Market	3-7 p.m.	The Green at the Foundry on Harris Street
6/20	Board of Selectmen meeting	6 p.m.	Town Offices
6/21	First Day of Summer		
6/26	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
6/27	Farmers Market	3-7 p.m.	The Green at the Foundry on Harris Street