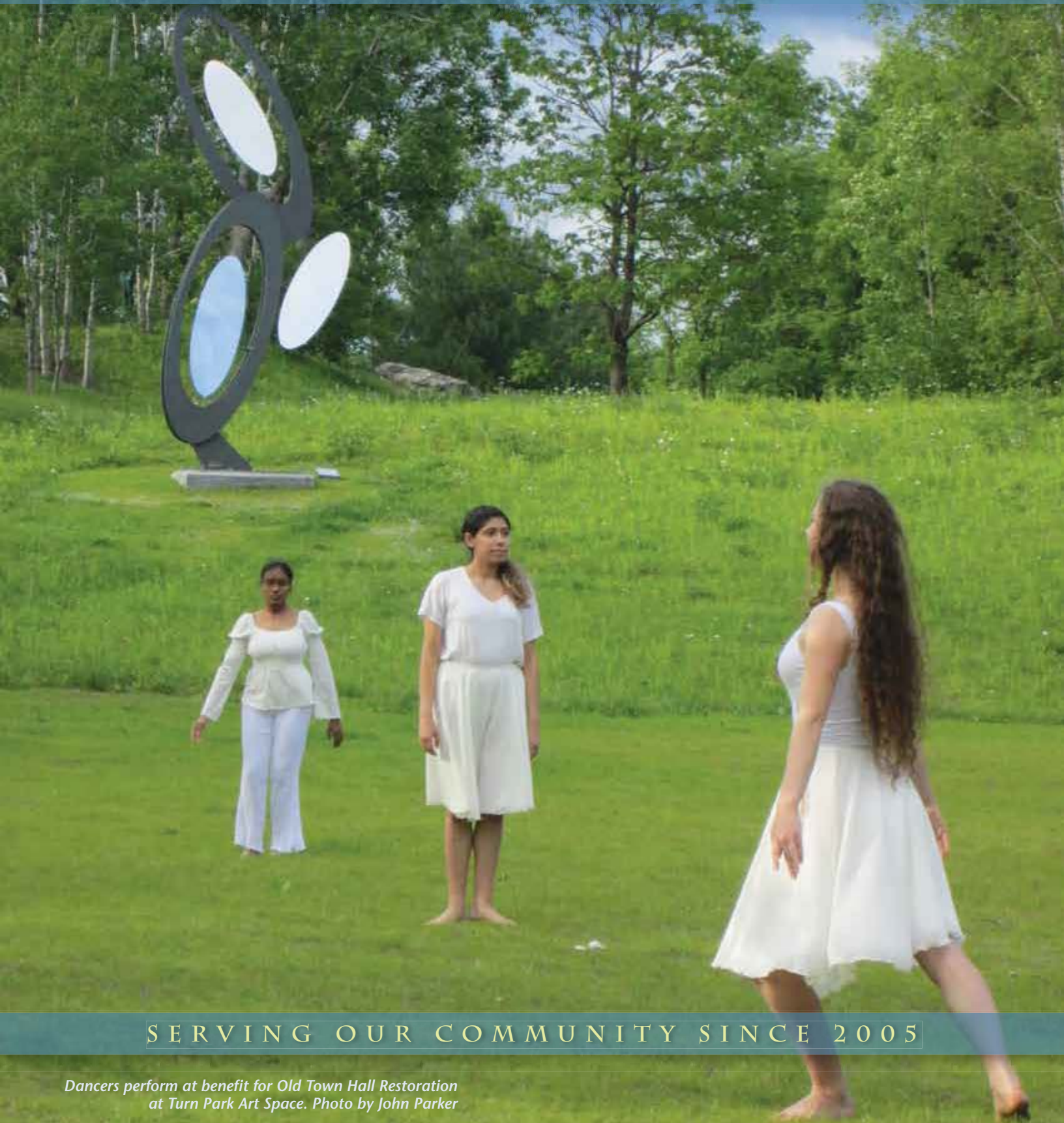


Local yokel

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

West
Stockbridge
July 2017



SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 2005

*Dancers perform at benefit for Old Town Hall Restoration
at Turn Park Art Space. Photo by John Parker*



Hundreds Turn Out for 1854 Town Hall Benefit at Turn Park Art Space

by Liza Bennett

It threatened rain all week, but by 4:30 on Friday, June 2, the sun was shining as the first cars pulled into the parking lot at Turn Park Art Space. After months of planning, the West Stockbridge Historical Society was hosting its first major benefit to kick off the next phase of its campaign to restore the 1854 Town Hall. The sudden change in weather wasn't the only good omen. Just a few days before, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, which funds so many of the area's major cultural institutions, recognized the value of the society's efforts. They approved a \$90,000 matching grant in support of the next phase of the restoration—a remarkable vote of confidence in the society, the town, and the hundreds of people and businesses that have been working together to return the historic 1854 building to its rightful place at the heart of the community.

Robert Salerno, the society's president, welcomed the large festive crowd. Former governor Deval Patrick spoke, recognizing the work of the society and acknowledging how much Igor Gomberg and Katya Brezgunova's new sculpture park adds to the beauty and culture of the town. Katya talked about how happy she and Igor are to be continuing the history of the park that had been a marble quarry worked by immigrants to West Stockbridge. The delicious food was provided by Rouge and the wine by Queensboro Wine & Spirits. The Transmitters with Rob Sanzone offered wonderful jazz. A dance event created by Rozann Kraus was performed in the sculpture park to music by Dan Epstein.

From beginning to end, it was a most enjoyable and successful event!

Clockwise from
top left:

*Turn Park Director
Grigori Fateyev, former
Governor Deval Patrick,
and WSHS president
Robert Salerno.
Photo by Joe Roy, Jr.*

*Turn Park founders
Katya Brezgunova
and Igor Gomberg*

Stuart and Carol Kuller

Joe Roy, Jr. and Anne Roy

Susan Fisher and Gary Schieneman

*Attendees listen to remarks by Bob Salerno, former Governor Deval Patrick,
and Turn Park founder Katya Brezgunova*

The Transmitters with Rob Sanzone offered wonderful jazz

All photos by John Parker unless otherwise noted



Board of Selectmen Meeting Summaries

By Doane Perry

Note: Copies of official board minutes are available at the West Stockbridge Public Library. Video recordings of town meetings are broadcast on Charter Cable channel 190 and on the Internet at <http://vimeo.com/channels/weststockbridge>. Residents can be notified by e-mail of town events and meeting agendas by subscribing at <http://weststockbridgema.virtualtownhall.net/subscriber>.

Open Meeting: May 22, 2017

Board of Assessors Vacancy

The selectmen held a joint meeting with the Board of Assessors. Since Ed Schwartz was recommended and there were no other candidates, the selectmen voted to appoint Ed to the Board of Assessors.

National Grid Pole Hearing

A resident at 8 Carlotto Road is asking for permission to install three new poles. The selectmen scheduled a public hearing for June 5 where abutters might raise any issues. Curt Wilton mentioned the selectmen may deny permission for new poles because the town has a problem with shared double poles: new ones are installed, but the old ones are not removed and sit there for years, which is unsightly and can get in the way of snowplows. Curt sees such hearings as a way to "hold the utilities hostage until they catch up on their own sloppiness."

Highway Department Applicants

The selectmen reviewed the five applicants and narrowed them down to three finalists. The selectmen will speak with them on June 5. Qualifications include a commercial driver's license and a hoisting license for using a forklift. The finalists are from Lenox, Becket, and Great Barrington.

Downtown Curbing

The selectmen asked the Highway Department to remove the sharp edge on the curbing where Swamp Road meets Main Street. Great Barrington

has a grinding device that successfully rounded off sharp-edged curbing there, and as Selectman Bernie Fallon put it, "The season is coming when it is good to leave a positive impression among visitors."

Emergency Management Grant

The town has until October to submit an application to the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency's Emergency Management Performance Grant program for \$2,400 for radios, road cones, and slow-down signs. The program supports all-hazards emergency preparedness, with a dollar-for-dollar local match.

Film Location Permission Request

A film company has requested permission to use West Center Road on June 1 to shoot a scene for a film. Mark Webber will notify abutters.

Fire Chief's Monthly Report

Fire Chief Peter Skorput reported that members of the department practiced hosing a ceiling through smoke, heat, and darkness. (The chief noted that Basic Firefighter Training is recommended before entering a burning building. However, training courses may be canceled if there are insufficient applicants. The chief is required to stay outside of a burning building.) One fire engine was picked up for recall repairs, the department responded to fire alarms in Richmond and Alford, maintenance was performed on the Flat Brook dry hydrant (blocked by silt from a beaver dam), and the department has one new member.

...continued on page 5

WANDERING JEWS
WONDERING JEWS
CULTURAL JEWS
MIXED MARRIAGE JEWS
MIXED UP JEWS
NON-JEWS
LGBT JEWS
CREATIVE JEWS
SPIRITUAL JEWS
JEW BU'S
POLITICAL JEWS
APOLITICAL JEWS
YIDDISH SPEAKING JEWS
INTELLECTUAL JEWS
SEARCHING JEWS
OBSERVANT JEWS
NON-HEBREW-READING JEWS
PASSIONATE JEWS
HIGH-HOLY-DAY JEWS
ARTISTIC JEWS
AGNOSTIC JEWS
HAVEN'T-BEEN-IN-SHUL-SINCE-MY-BAR-MITZVAH-JEWS

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July History Quiz Question:



**West Stockbridge
Historical Society**
Incorporated in 1994

Not long after the end of the American Revolution, the country experienced a major civil disruption, Shays' Rebellion (1786–87). Although multiple factors were at play, the root cause of the rebellion was a new country with limited economic systems in place. All imported goods from England required hard currency. Farmers were required to pay for goods and service their debt with hard currency. No banking or credit was in place, and hard coin was limited. Complicating it, soldiers' pay and bonuses were made in unaccepted paper currency. Debtors' courts were biased toward the Boston merchants, and many farmers faced debtors' prison and their farms were seized. Urban/merchant society versus the agrarian/farming counties played as much a part as the economic issues in this first culture war.

Although the rebellion started back east in Pelham, Berkshire County also became a major player in the uprising. "Shayites" seized the debtors' court in Great Barrington and freed farmers from prison. Small skirmishes also occurred in parts of South County. What part did West Stockbridge residents play in this insurrection?

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.

(Find the answer somewhere in this issue!)

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The *Local Yokel* is published monthly. Please send submissions to: the *Local Yokel*, P.O. Box 238, West Stockbridge, MA 01266 or info@thelocalyokel.org. Copy deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the publication. Editors: John Parker, 394-4368, john.j.parker53@gmail.com; Vicki Grayson, 232-6131, vicki.grayson@rocketmail.com; Susan Fisher, 232-4443, suefish12@gmail.com; Anne Lesser, 232-8577, anne@annelessercommunications.com. Contributor: Doane Perry, 617-547-1413, doaneperry@yahoo.com; Design: 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.

Ipswich Pharmaceutical Proposal

Mark reported that Ipswich Pharmaceutical Associates has asked to meet with the Board of Selectmen about the possibility of operating a marijuana dispensary in West Stockbridge. The project would be located in a commercial zone, and the process would be similar to obtaining a building permit. The selectmen requested a presentation, asking as a business opportunity, what is in it for West Stockbridge?

Highway Department

Curt announced that the town will spend \$16,000 (to be reimbursed by the state under Chapter 9) to hire a van that will assess road conditions.

The selectmen discussed further work on the parking lot by the public restrooms across from the post office. Earl Moffatt cautioned that the lot is owned by other parties including National Grid. Mark said that, in their last conversation, National Grid officials said, "Don't do anything with that property." Curt said that West Stockbridge doesn't own land along Moscow Road until the turnpike bridge. The Highway Department is \$9,500 over budget. W.E. Williams has made a proposal to maximize parking. Bernie said it is not wise to invest without a plan.

Rent Control Board

Speaking for the trailer park tenants, Evie Kerswell said she submitted a petition request to the Rent Control Board (RCB) in November 2016, but town counsel never received it. Evie protested that human health and safety issues make it unjust for the RCB to wait for the Gennaris to respond. Mark said the Board of Selectmen cannot talk in an open meeting about these issues. Bernie got the board's agreement to put a two-week deadline into a letter to the Gennaris and to get the matter on the agenda for the RCB hearing with town counsel on June 26.

Other Business:

- Bob Salerno announced plans for the Historical Society's event to raise funds for an addition to their building for an elevator and restrooms. Mark praised the society's good track record, and Curt thanked the society for their "phenomenal" work.
- Asked about the Route 102 overpass repair, Curt responded that the work involves patching rebar with a "diaper" deployed underneath to catch debris.

Citizens Speak

Richard Squailia asked about finalizing the codification of the town bylaws into a book. Mark replied that the town did not appropriate funds for that purpose and suggested putting the matter on the warrant for town meeting.

Open Meeting: June 5, 2017

Highway Department Applicants

The selectmen interviewed three applicants for employment. The selectmen asked applicants about team work, skills, and their distance from home to work in West Stockbridge.

National Grid Hearing

The selectmen approved a request from National Grid for work on four old poles and three new poles, extending a total of 400 feet, to provide service to a resident at 8 Carlotto Road. A National Grid engineer described a new agreement effective June 1 for National Grid to install new poles and for Verizon to remove old poles. (Curt Wilton commented that Verizon has always been "lazy" about removal.) Charter/Spectrum will use the new poles.

Upcoming Meetings

- The Board of Selectmen will meet on Wednesday, June 14, since the town of Cheshire (where Mark Webber also works) is having its town meeting on Monday, June 12.

- The West Stockbridge special town meeting will take place on June 26.

Special Town Meeting

Warrants are needed for three items: the sewer and water budgets are overspent, and codification of the town bylaws project needs funding through an invoice to a revolving fund.

The Merchants Association's plans for the public restrooms will not be ready for consideration at the special town meeting. Meanwhile, Mark says the restrooms are being maintained. Wayne Cooper has been helpful and is good at providing supplies. Bernie Fallon is working with Bob and Mary Thibeault and will present a chart of maintenance responsibilities at the next meeting.

Ipswich Pharmaceutical Proposal

Representatives of Ipswich Pharmaceutical Associates presented their proposal to operate a marijuana dispensary in West Stockbridge. Joseph F. McCarthy, the founder of Ipswich Pharmaceutical Associates, described his mission as a personal follow-up to the medicinal value that phenobarbital provided to his epileptic sibling during their childhood. Phil Silverman, the firm's lawyer, said there would be three benefits to West Stockbridge: financial, jobs, and access for medical patients. He said research shows that medical marijuana reduces opioid use, has value for patients and tourists, would create eight to ten jobs, and 2.5% of revenue would go to the town.

Ipswich has a cultivation facility in Hinsdale but was turned down by Becket and is seeking an agreement with West Stockbridge for retail and

...continued on page 7



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May 5, 2017

MEMO: Policy update

At a duly posted Board of Health meeting held on May 4, 2017, with a quorum present, the Board amended its policy updated March 2, 2017 pertaining to the Transfer Station to read as follows: "Due to safety concerns, solicitations are not allowed within the vicinity of the operations and equipment on the grounds of the West Stockbridge Transfer Station. Such activity is permitted at the lower level away from said operations." A motion for the amendment was made and seconded with all members in favor. (This action was scheduled for the Board's April meeting, but a quorum was not present at that time.)

Scott W. Sawyer, Chairman

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possibly cultivation. The company is looking at Baker Street for cultivation and State Line for retail. In the statewide referendum on marijuana in which 54% of voters across the state were in favor, West Stockbridge residents voted 60% in favor and 40% against.

Asked about traffic projections, the Ipswich representative said they project five to six visits per hour and seven to eight on weekends. Advertising will be low key and mostly on the Internet. Next steps include discussion with townspeople, dispensary location identification, and a Letter of Non-Obligation voted by the selectmen. The state is expected to issue licenses in July 2018.

Shaker Mill and Card Pond Weed Treatment

Mark described the trade-offs between weeds and treatment that depend on the weather and usually call for repeated treatment for Card Pond. He advised not to drink the water at Shaker Mill Pond.

Other Business:

- The previously scheduled meeting of the Rent Control Board will be continued to July 17.
- A household hazardous waste collection will take place soon.
- The selectmen approved softball pitching and catching in the gymnasium.

Wastewater Treatment Plant

Curt reported that on the Sunday before Memorial Day a malfunction at the wastewater treatment plant requires making new parts and starting the redundant pump system. The plant is at least \$2,000 over budget.

Capping the Former Town Dump

Curt reported that the town has received approval from the Department of Environmental Protection for capping of the former town dump on Oak Street to allow passive recreation after trees and brush are removed.

Citizens Speak:

- Richard Squailia asked how to nominate people for appointment to vacancies. The selectmen said to notify the Board of Selectmen as soon as possible.
- Richard also asked about liability to the town for the public restrooms if privatized. Mark said the town will have insurance on the building, but the issue is coverage for liability. Bernie and Mark will check with the insurer and speak with colleagues in Lenox and Stockbridge. The selectmen recalled a similar issue in the past with hanging flower baskets.
- Evie Kerswell asked about the planned repair of the fallen wall along the Williams River downstream from the dam. Mark and Curt said that the town got funding of \$27,000 on March 27, but that in April the construction season began for Maxymillian, putting the project on the back burner due to labor constraints.
- Bob Thibeault asked about the fence on Oak Street between the garage and the restaurant. Bob wants it changed, but it is on a boundary and was put there by Gordon Rose 35 years ago.

Open Meeting: June 14, 2017

Special Town Meeting

Joe Roy will chair the special town meeting on June 26 because Moderator Gene Dellea will be away. A quorum is 25 voters, which can be hard to reach. There will be three items on the agenda: the first two items, the sewer and water cost overruns, require a town meeting vote. The third is about paying for town bylaw codification.

Highway Department Hiring

The Board of Selectmen voted to offer the Highway Department position to Zachary Levesque at an annual salary of \$21,000. The selectmen agreed that Zachary stood out among the three final applicants for his vision, goals, and the licenses he has attained. Selectman Bernie Fallon

wondered if such a talented employee would stay in the job for five years. Curt Wilton replied that West Stockbridge is a competitive employer and treating employees fairly leads to their longevity.

Route 41 Repaving

Curt asked the selectmen to support his highway construction plans this summer. West Stockbridge qualifies for \$300,000 in aid from the state. Curt plans to use \$240,000 to repave Route 41 from Hoffman Pottery south to the Cobb Road bridge, a distance of 1.2 miles, working from the end of August through the end of September.

Public Restrooms

Bernie raised the issue of insurance for the bathrooms and asked why the town can't clean them, either through an employee or a service. The selectmen said the issue has always been staff reliability and the Board of Selectmen tiring of discussing toilet paper. Bernie and Peter will bring names of candidates to the next meeting.

Other Business:

- The selectmen approved allowing the Artists' Guild to put up temporary signs on Saturdays at five spots inviting visitors to tour artists' studios.
- The selectmen approved Mark's request to welcome the Great Barington Rotary's bike ride.
- Permission was given for signs on the Town Offices lawn and downtown for the Friends of the Library book sale on July 22-23 and an indoor banner on July 21. The selectmen agreed to help with moving tables and books.
- Upcoming meetings: June 26, special town meeting; July 17, Rent Control Board. □

Correction

Regarding an item in the Board of Selectmen meeting summaries in our June issue, former Selectman Earl Moffatt wrote us the following:

"I wish to correct a entry you made in the April 24, 2017, [Board of] Selectmen meeting summary in the June issue of the Local Yokel. Under the third item of 'Other business,' you state that I said, 'Do it' regarding paving the restrooms' parking lot. This was emphatically not the case, as I had raised the concern that the lot was not town property and caution should be used toward making repairs. Please make a correction in your next submission. Of note, when the 'new' post office was built there in the [19]70s, the area of that lot simply became a well-trodden 'swing around' for patrons leaving the building in their vehicles. When the rest rooms were built in the [19]80s, the area was graveled, and eventually in the [19]90s was paved, I think around the same time 'Harris Way' was."

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July Art Calendar

Art Demonstration and Business Meeting. June 28, 4 p.m.: Submit photos and photos of 3D work for Gallery 35 exhibits. Bring titles, size, media for July show. 5:30–6:45 p.m.: Business meeting and planning in small groups. Community Room, West Stockbridge Town Offices, 21 Stateline Road

Plein Air: Paint, Sketch, iPad, or Photograph. 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Lunch and positive critique at end of each session. Sundays on grounds of Norman Rockwell Museum; Mondays at Hancock Shaker Village; Tuesdays and Wednesdays at BNRC locations or Naumkeag or private vistas; Thursdays at The Mount; Fridays at West Stockbridge town center. Hancock and The Mount have fees. See Facebook page: “Berkshires Plein Air” at 8 a.m. for current plans and weather.

Meet the Artist: Denise B. Chandler, Photographer. Wed., July 5, 3–4:30, in Lenox in her studio. RSVP

Lenox Welles Gallery Show. Show hours Fri., July 7–20, 10–5, Mon–Sat; Sun. July 9, 11–3. Reception: Sat., July 8, 2:30–5 p.m. Check in Thurs., July 6, 2–4; Train 3 or 4 p.m. 30 local artists: paintings, sculpture, ceramics, photos

Lenox Town Paint OUT and Photo OUT. July 6–Aug. 2. Sign up and pay \$20 to participate for RWSAG members and residents of Lenox; \$30 for other artists. Debbie Smith, Peg Dotchin. Questions? Carole Quinn (413) 637-3447. Celebrate Lenox’s 250th anniversary. Bring work inspired by Lenox to the Lenox Town Hall on Aug. 3, 3–5 p.m. Show will be August 4 and 5, 10–5, with reception 3–5 p.m.

***Workshops:** Join us in front of Welles Gallery at Lenox Library: Register required but no charge at www.rwsag.org “Our Programs” “Paint-Out: Lenox” **How to Take Better Photos with your iPhone**, Mon., July 10, 11–noon (ages 8–12) and July 17 (ages 13–18). Bring iPhone. RSVP required*/**Green Screen Technology**, Mon., July 10, 2:30–4:30 with Carole Quinn; rain date 7/11, 2:30 RSVP*/**Paint with Painters:** For teenagers, Tues. and Wed., July 11 and 12, 10:30–noon. Bring easel, paints, brushes, or drawing equipment for any media you wish. RSVP*/

Paint and Draw for children 8–12, Wed., July 19, 1:30–3 p.m. Bring smock. **Photographing Historic Lenox**, Mon., July 17, 6:30 p.m. with Carole Quinn

First Fridays Artswalk. July 7, 5–8 p.m., Pittsfield, firstfridaysartwalk.com

Photo Gathering. July 16, 3 p.m., Stanmeyer Gallery. Bring 3–5 photos or on USB or iPhone.

Art Studio Tour. Sat., June 24, July 22, August 12, Sept. 16, and Oct. 7, 11–5 p.m. Hosts: Helen Febbo and Palma Fleck; 30 artists, 20 venues
Still Life Painting. Mon., July 24, 1–3 p.m. RSVP: carolgkelly@hotmail.com

Member Potluck. Mon., July 24, 5–8 p.m., in Richmond. Bring main dish, hors d’oeuvres, or dessert for 10 and what you want to drink.

Meet the Artist: Julie Shapiro. Abstract Painting. Works on Paper. Fri., July 28, 12:15–1:30 p.m., Six Depot, West Stockbridge

Art Book Gathering. Fri., July 28, 3–5 p.m. Share a favorite book: artist, process. Shaker Dam Books, West Stockbridge. Host: Mark Mellinger.

Richmond-West Stockbridge Artists’ Guild
www.rwsag.org and Facebook

RSVP: sign up genius on “Our Programs” at www.rwsag.org or kcarmean@gmail.com

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Paint/Photo-Out: LENOX 250th! July 6–August 5

- July 6, Thursday, through August 2, Wednesday
- July 10, 11, 12, 17, 19 workshops: see left column
- August 3, Thurs., 3–5 p.m. Bring art to Lenox Town Hall
- August 4 and 5, Friday and Saturday, Lenox Town Hall, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Paint and Photo-Out art show

Participants must register at www.rwsag.org at Our Programs, Paint/Photo-Out Lenox. \$20 for Lenox residents and RWSAG members and \$30 for others payable to RWSAG, PO Box 101, West Stockbridge, MA 01266. Forms available at Lenox Library’s Welles Gallery, July 6–20. *Original painting of Lenox Town was for a Rounding Board on the Berkshire Carousel by Debbie Detwiller Smith*



The Joys of July

After waiting so impatiently, it still arrived so suddenly. July is a great month at the market. The fields are bursting with the season's most gorgeous veggies and fruit, and all of the wonderful vendors are offering the very best of their crops.

July 6 is Kids' Day—dedicated to the celebration of the little ones who complete our lives. Surprises and prizes and lots of activities will bring laughter and smiles that will last the whole week. Meet Balloon Ben, have your face painted, experience a Food Adventure with Jenny Schwartz, craft with Cheryle, and lots more!

Also on July 6, be sure to see what that rascal, Chef Tony, will be dreaming up. It's always a surprise, always a taste treat, always comes with a great back story. Expect the unexpected!

The full complement of vendors is now on board—veggies/fruits, baked goods, prepared foods, cheeses, mushrooms, meat, jams and preserves, cut flowers and plants, woodworkers, jewelers, fashion design! It's all there, and right at your doorstep.

Join the fun—dine al fresco, enjoy the music of Mark Fisher, Reinhardt and Ciccarella, Fire Pit, and Dreamaholic, and check out the weekly happenings at Fun for Kids. There's something for everyone, and it's over so very soon. Don't miss it!

From Top: Bring the beauty of the market home with flowers from Danny & Martha at Taft Farms

Alyona Gomberg, one of our youngest musicians

Township Valley's mushrooms are a work of art and beyond delicious

It's always fun to spend time with Molly Comstock

All photos by Robin Schmitt



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Photo by Catherine America*



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By Peter Skorput, Fire Chief

Date	Time	Nature of Call
5/9	6 p.m.	Medical
5/10	8:19 p.m.	Hazmat call
5/12	1:21 p.m.	Medical
5/12	2 p.m.	Auto alarm
5/18	8:36 a.m.	Clothes fire
5/20	3:20 p.m.	Medical
5/21	11:56 p.m.	Carbon monoxide alarm
5/21	11:14 a.m.	Water in basement
5/23	2:46 p.m.	Auto alarm

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ALL THAT GLITTERS IS GUILD

By Ilene Spiewak

Ilene Spiewak is a painter living and working in West Stockbridge. She is currently finishing her MFA at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Ilene was the vice president of the Richmond-West Stockbridge Artists' Guild and has been involved with the organization since its inception in 2014. She is also a founding member of Proximityarts.org. In describing how the Artists' Guild has worked for her, Ilene celebrates the collegial creative culture of the Berkshires.

Eight years ago I came to live, work, and paint in the rural Berkshires, leaving Philadelphia where I had spent most of my life. For the first time I had a studio space separate from my home, and it was located in the lush woods of my backyard. I felt as lucky



Ilene Spiewak on right with guild member Debbie D. Smith holding one of Ilene's paintings. Photo by Karen Carmean

as Norman Rockwell. West Stockbridge is pretty isolated, making for some great “alone” time in the studio spent contemplating paint and mark making. Finally, I had the space I needed to breathe, think, and work, but finding a supportive community of artists was also high on my list of priorities. How does one forge connections in a new place?

Soon after that, in the fall of 2014, I was asked to help chair a show at the Richmond First Congregational Church. The exhibit included about 30 regional artists and drew more than 100 attendees. It gave us the momentum to form an artist group that we named the Richmond-West Stockbridge Artists' Guild. Developing a board of directors helped us to organize, and within the first year we became a nonprofit entity in Massachusetts. Members are full- or part-time residents of Berkshire County or nearby upstate New York who work in a wide range of media.

The guild provides weekly life drawing and painting sessions, small nonscholarly group critiques, informal “meet the artist” events, intimate open studio tours, opportunities to share media, and technique demonstrations. Oh, and let’s not forget the paid members’ potluck dinners! Part of the reason this all works is due to cultivated community support and participation; life drawing is held in a donated space (a member’s barn), critiques happen in the Town Offices, and we partner with local small business like coffee shops for our meet and greets. Finding alternative exhibition spaces for members’ work is both challenging and exciting.

Because of the Berkshires’ naturally beautiful scenery, the group plein-air painting sessions are some of our most popular events. They also give the guild more exposure to our community. No experience necessary! Members work together to share specialized knowledge. Seminars and workshops are always free and usually open to nonmembers. Last month I hosted some people in my studio who wanted to learn how to write an inspiring artist statement, a valuable skill I learned in an artists’ writing course during the first year of graduate school at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

The guild is a great type of organization in so many ways for rural

Part of the reason this all works is due to cultivated
community support and participation.

The Berkshires are a popular destination for many people from New York and Boston. They come to relax and enjoy the landscape and culture in a place where we read the *Local Yokel*, *Richmond Record*, and the *Berkshire Eagle*, a place where there are more livestock than there are people. Forging an artistic community was going to take some work. One of my first opportunities to show came by invitation from the West Stockbridge Library. It was a small show with no formal opening, but the exposure afforded me the opportunity to make new connections with some local folks.

artists with common goals. The combination of exposure to other art makers, opportunities to show work, and finally a heightened dialogue about studio processes is invaluable for artists who might otherwise come to feel isolated. I will finish my MFA in the summer of 2017 with the flourish of a final thesis show. Looking ahead to the loss of my now rigorous academic schedule, I am glad to have the backstop of the Richmond-West Stockbridge Artists Guild to cushion my fall. I suppose it’s fine to be a “guilded” local yokel and a lifelong student of the fine arts.

Julie Shapiro

*Julie
Shapiro*

*Abstract Paintings
Work on Paper*

*"The work is strongly
inspired by the geography
that surrounds me, the
variety of experiences and
perceptual relationships."*

Friday, July 28
12:15–1:30 p.m.

Six Depot
West Stockbridge

Richmond-West Stockbridge
Artists' Guild
www.rwsag.org and Facebook

To reserve: rwsag.org "our programs"



Join Julie Shapiro on Friday, July 28, at Six Depot West Stockbridge from 12:15 to 1:30 p.m. for an informal discussion over lunch. Her work is currently in the Gallery at No. Six Depot. You will be able to ask her questions. RSVP: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090544a5a72ca7fa7-meet> or if necessary kcarmean@gmail.com.

"The work is strongly inspired by the geography that surrounds me, the variety of experiences and perceptual relationships. I find in the landscape visual occurrences of the new within the familiar, the irregular within the regular, the unexpected within the assumed. Along with natural phenomena, the gathering of information and experience is broad and varied with parts and pieces entering the work in different ways."

Julie Shapiro, MFA from the Yale University School of Art, has received numerous awards including a Pollock/Krasner Foundation Grant and has been a fellow at artist residencies including VCCA and Yaddo. She has taught as an associate professor at Hampshire College and has been a visiting artist at institutions across the country. In 2010 Shapiro helped establish the Knox Gallery at the Monterey Public Library, and she continues to be involved as codirector.

Come see what's happening at the Old Town Hall!



**July 15th
11a.m. to 2 p.m.**

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Main Street
West Stockbridge

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-- Learn about the the next stage of the building's restoration
(thanks in part to the matching Mass Cultural Council Grant

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Poet's Corner

Do you live or work in West Stockbridge and love poetry? Karen Carmean and Mary Howard will be considering original poems for publication in our latest feature, the Poet's Corner. If you know other poets, please pass the word along. Kids are also invited to participate. Adults, please encourage any budding poets you know! Poetry can offer a sense of wonder, joy, surprise, and a new way of looking at the world. All topics and styles by West Stockbridge poets of any age are welcome! Please send submissions to info@thelocalyokel.org.

Jiyuritsu Haiku

Jiyuritsu haiku was founded by Shoichi Taneda, better known as Santoka. I read his poems in "Mountain Tasting" and was taken by their version of haiku, so I wrote these haiku in that style. It departs from the standard 5-7-5 syllable pattern.

—Mary Howard

It takes courage
to walk the mountain path
alone.

Light falls
through yellow leaves.

The gate is shut
by a passing wind.

A warm puppy
sleeps on my chest,
heart thumping.

I breathe quietly
as sleep enters my body.

On moonless nights,
the winter sky
breaks my heart.

Mary Howard

Two Seasons

One summer night,
looking through my window screen
beyond the little piece of scotch tape
which mends the black grid,
I feel like I am sitting with the curious owl
on a branch of thick green
above the bears and coyotes,
protected from the bite of mosquitoes
and the wings of bats.

One winter night,
I latch the wood-framed window,
touching small square panes of mottled glass
made before machines or thermo-pane,
which fend off sharp spiraling winds,
rain and snow,
now crackling with frost patterns
illuminated by the lone light above the icy path.
My fingertips are warm and sleep beckons.

Mary Howard



WEST STOCKBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY

21 State Line Rd | West Stockbridge, MA 01266 | In the new Town Hall
weststockbridgelibrary.org | 413-232-0300 ext. 308

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



Is there anything better than a Friends of the Library book sale *and* free ice cream sundaes? We're celebrating a belated grand opening of our entrance vestibule with an ice cream sundae party catered by The Scoop on July 22, 12-3.

Stock up on books, DVDs, and CDs, and enjoy a summertime treat on us!



BUILD A BETTER WORLD SUMMER READING PROGRAM July 5-AUGUST 5

For readers up to grade 6

- ❖ Learn about birds/decorate a birdhouse: Wed., July 12, 3:15-4:15
- ❖ All about gardens/help with a raised bed garden: Tues., July 18, 10:30-11:30
- ❖ It's buildings and cities/design your own: Wed., July 26, 3:15-4:15



For all our young readers! "Turn a Library Book into Lemonade" every Thursday in July at the West Stockbridge Farmers Market.
Check out a book. Get a bookmark for a free glass of lemonade!



NEW DVDs: *Get Out*, *The Lost City of Z*,
A United Kingdom
JUST FOR KIDS: *My Life as a Zucchini*

NEW ADULT FICTION
Benford, *Berlin Project*
Brown, *Price of Duty*
Corlett, *The Space Between the Stars*
Grisham, *Camino Island* (also LP)
Hawkins, *Into the Water* (also LP)
Honeyman, *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine*
Lepucki, *Woman No. 17: A Novel*
Theroux, *Mother Land*

NEW NONFICTION
Allen, *Shattered: Inside Hillary Clinton's Doomed Campaign*
Schmidt, *Novel Destinations: A Travel Guide to Literary Landmarks*

NEW YOUNG ADULT FICTION
Pon, *Want*
Werlin, *And Then There Were Four*

Ongoing

- 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 keep track of checkouts, requests, overdues and fees, pickup locations, renewals, and more. Can't find it in our C/WMARS network? Click on the Commonwealth Catalog to borrow any item statewide.
- If you use an e-reader, explore the new statewide Commonwealth e-book Collections (CEC) at eBooks.masslibsystem.org.
- Library Trustees board meetings take place the third Tuesdays of the month with the next meeting on July 18, 4:20, in the Community Room. All meetings are open to the public.
- Students entering grades 7-10 are wanted to help in the library assisting patrons, shelving books, and more. Pick up an application at the library.

As always, we welcome suggestions on just about anything to improve our library.

Lee Appelbaum and Jodi Magner



**2017 Cultural Admission
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*Now Available at
The West Stockbridge Library*

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Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 7/1 Anne Lesser & Thom Lipiczky anniversary
- 7/1 Gary Schiengman
- 7/3 Kate O'Brien
- 7/4 Steve & Melissa Seward anniversary
- 7/24 Joe & Anne Roy anniversary
- 7/27 Colby Parker
- 7/28 Loretta Mikolajczyk
- 7/30 Gianna Piztrafesa
- 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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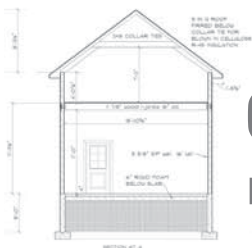
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On the Home Front

By Thom Lipiczky

Hiring a Contractor

First of all, don't make eye contact. They can sense fear and will attack if provoked.

OK, maybe that's not a good way to start a column advising you how to handle the process of hiring a professional to work on your house. But I've heard the stories—you know, about contractors who take the deposit money and disappear. Or make a huge mess of your flower beds and carpets. Or “nickel and dime” you to death. Or the endless delays . . .

As a (pretty much) retired general contractor who ran a design/build company for over 30 years, here are a few suggestions about how to hire and deal with contractors who work on your home.

1. Make sure prospective contractors provide the following:
 - a. A state-issued Construction Supervisor's License (CSL) or at least have a Home Improvement Contractor (HIC) registration
 - b. A certificate of insurance for both liability and workers' compensation
 - c. A current list of several references of former or current clients to call
2. Depending on the level of the project, ask *no more than three* contractors to bid on your job.
 - a. Asking more than three is unfair to the contractors, who sometimes put in considerable uncompensated time preparing estimates.
 - b. Make sure you call the references and—important!—ask to see in person some recent projects or a current project! You can learn a lot from seeing the job site or the completed project.
 - c. Remember that you're often soliciting complex information from busy professionals, so set a *reasonable* deadline for proposals to be provided.
3. Be very clear about what you're asking contractors to prepare proposals for.
 - a. If you have plans drawn by an architect or designer who is not a bidder, make sure all pertinent information is clearly provided.
 - b. Ask for the proposal to be detailed—a number scribbled on a napkin is not a serious proposal.
 - c. Be aware that you will rarely be comparing apples to apples. Each proposal will approach the project differently, and just looking at bottom-line prices doesn't necessarily predict final costs or your experience working with the contractor.
 - d. If you're new at this, ask for help from a knowledgeable third party to compare the proposals. Don't forget that you're not only buying the services provided by the contractor, but also the *experience* of working with her (or him). Trust your gut about whether, after checking out references, seeing projects, and so on, you feel comfortable having this person and her crew in your life for a substantial amount of time.
4. Contractors should provide *contracts*! Once you've decided on a contractor, expect the following information in the contract:
 - a. All pertinent contact information for both you and the contractor
 - b. Clear payment arrangements: when and how often—and how much—payments are required to keep the job moving along smoothly. Depending on whether the project is to be done on a cost-plus or fixed arrangement, the amounts will vary.
 - c. Start and projected completion dates
 - d. A *detailed* description of the scope of the work including specifications for items like doors and windows, trim, finishes, etc.
 - e. A clear statement of what happens if you are late on a payment or renege on the agreement and a statement about how changes to the scope of work or disagreements are handled.
 - f. A clear statement about guarantees for workmanship and materials—how long they're good for, etc.
 - g. Written assurances about cleanups and protection of your property, especially if the project is a remodel or addition on your house while you're living there. Also, what time of day work starts and stops.

Another effective way to decide on a contractor is to interview several people in a general way, soliciting only very preliminary non-binding proposals. You can often have a clear sense about a contractor this way, and if you choose a person *before* the final proposal is developed, you and the contractor can *collaborate* on the details of the work. This eliminates any adversarial quality to the relationship, and likely the contractor, knowing the work is definitely forthcoming, will provide more attention to the project.

Please e-mail your questions to info@thelocalyokel.org.

West Stockbridge History Quiz Answer:

West Stockbridge, and most of Berkshire County, was an agricultural society with many of its prominent citizens Revolutionary War veterans. The communities relied on imported goods and an export market to survive. With the constrained hard currency economy, and with overdue debts being chased down by the courts, it was tough times. The merchants back east had little sympathy, and since they controlled the Boston legislature, they provided no relief.

When the Great Barrington Debtors' Court was attacked in 1786, it is likely that West Stockbridge farmers were active participants. In February 1787, Perez Hamlin of Stockbridge launched an attack that raided Stockbridge and ended with the final battle in Sheffield. It is likely that they marched through West Stockbridge on their way from New Lebanon. Given our close position to New York, a safe haven for the rebels, people passed back and forth regularly.

The *Duke of Stockbridge*, a 19th-century romance novel by Edward Bellamy, embellishes the role of West Stockbridge in the final battle. It names a character, Paul Hubbard from Williamsville, as the ringleader of an encounter in Stockbridge on the "road to West Stockbridge." Theodore Sedgwick, Stockbridge lawyer and leader in the Boston legislature, defused the skirmish with skillful rhetoric. None of this has been found to be true, but it's a story that has been often repeated as fact.

What we do know is when the rebellion was over, 16 people from West Stockbridge signed the request to be excluded from the Act of Disqualification, essentially a clemency plea from the local rebels. Names included Woodruff, Beebe, Minkler, and Baker, all prominent West Stockbridge families. Their actions in the rebellion helped force the Continental Congress to drop the Articles of Confederation and create the new U.S. Constitution.



Engraving depicting Daniel Shays (left) and Job Shattuck, another rebel leader, from Wikipedia

Donor Roll Call ~ July

Liz Foulser & Richard Svoboda
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Community News & Events

Stockbridge Grange Dinner

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

Council on Aging

There will be no COA luncheon for the month of July.

Congregational Church Bake Sale

The West Stockbridge Congregational Church will hold its third 2017 bake sale on Saturday, July 15. As usual, the sale will be held in front of Baldwin's Extracts, 1 Center Street, from 9:30 to noon.

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

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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>Bernie Fallon, Peter Skorput, Curt G. Wilton</i>			
Administrative Assistant	<i>Mark Webber</i>	232-0300	ext. 319	Mon., Wed., Thurs., Fri. 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
Building Inspector	<i>Brian Duval</i>	232-0300	ext. 313	Sat. 10 a.m.–1 p.m.
Conservation Commission	<i>Jennifer Kujawski, Lori Rose</i>	232-0300	ext. 338	Leave Message for Inquiries
Council on Aging	<i>John Zick</i>	232-0300	ext. 340	Leave Message for Inquiries
Emergency Management	<i>Louis Oggiani</i>	528-2175		
Fire Department	<i>Peter Skorput</i>	232-4200 (non-emergency)		Mon. 6:30–9 p.m.
Highway Department	<i>Curt G. Wilton</i>	232-0305		Leave Message for Inquiries
Library	<i>Lee Appelbaum</i>	232-0300	ext. 308	Tues. 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Wed., Thurs., and Fri. 2–6 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m.–2 p.m.; closed Sun. & Mon.
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Sewer & Water Commission	<i>Michael Buffoni</i>	232-0309		
Town Accountant	<i>Elaine Markham</i>	232-0300	ext. 317	Leave Message for Inquiries
Town Clerk	<i>Ronni Barrett</i>	232-0300	ext. 300	Tues. & Thurs. 1:30–4 p.m.
Town Collector	<i>June A. Biggs</i>	232-0300	ext. 302	Wed. 3–6 p.m.; Thurs. and Fri. 10 a.m.–2 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m.–1 p.m.
Town Historian	<i>Robert Salerno</i>	232-4465		
Town Treasurer	<i>Karen Williams</i>	232-0300	ext. 316	Thurs. 9 a.m.–4 p.m.
Transfer Station	<i>Attendant</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: weststockbridgetown.com				

Every issue costs us about \$1,000 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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Parks & Recreation News

By Ginna Dudney

Summer is here, and it's time to kick back and enjoy.

Thanks to our fabulous Highway Department, the beach is ready for play-time: the swans are swimming; the dock is in place; new grills are waiting for hot dogs; and buoys are keeping geese out of the swimming area. Even the weeds have been tangled with, thanks to the Board of Selectmen and Conservation Committee, and will be again in a few weeks if necessary.

At the playing fields, new benches have been installed, and the courts both boast refinished surfaces and brand-new fences.

There are lots of fun things to do during the summer in West Stockbridge—make the most of them!

Watch out geese! Thanks to the kindness of a mystery donor, Card Pond is now under these watchful eyes of an eagle. Whoever you are, thank you—we need all the help we can get!



Eagle protects pond.
Photo by Roland Dudney

Scott Wilton

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Summer Fun at Card Pond Opening Day Party



Photo by Lois Ferguson

The opening day celebration at Card Pond on June 25 was the perfect test run for all the improvements (see Parks & Recreation news on previous page).

Sponsored by the West Stockbridge Police Department, it was a major hit! The approximately 80 residents who attended enjoyed the games, treasure hunt, barbeque, music, and of course the pond.



The day was perfect for playing, although just as folks were beginning to leave, it started to rain. It doesn't get much better than that when even the weather cooperates!



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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25	26	27	28	29	30	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	31	1	2	3	4	5



July 2017 Calendar of Events

7/2	Felix (the cat) memorial	4 p.m.	Phoenix Courtyard Garden, 12 Main Street
7/3	Board of Selectmen meeting	7 p.m.	Town Offices
7/4	Independence Day		
7/5	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
7/6	Farmers Market	3-7 p.m.	Merritt Green on Harris Street
7/6	Board of Health Meeting	6:30 p.m.	Town Offices
7/11	American Legion	7 p.m.	Town Offices
7/12	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
7/13	Farmers Market	3-7 p.m.	Merritt Green on Harris Street
7/15	*** Deadline for the next Local Yokel ***		send to info@thelocalyokel.org
7/15	W.S. Congregational Church Bake Sale	9:30-noon	In front of Baldwin's Extracts, 1 Center St.
7/15	Old Town Hall Open House	11 a.m.-2 p.m.	Old Town Hall, Main Street
7/18	Library Trustees meeting	4:20 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
7/19	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
7/20	Farmers Market	3-7 p.m.	Merritt Green on Harris Street
7/22-23	Friends of the Library Annual Book Sale	10 a.m.-3 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
7/26	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
7/27	Farmers Market	3-7 p.m.	Merritt Green on Harris Street