

Local Yokel

West Stockbridge

January
2015

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

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 2005



Inside:

How to Be Trendy and Healthy in 2015

The Birth of a Guild

Local Artists and Writers Showcased

*A curious horse checks out the photographer on West Center Road.
Photo by John Parker.*



Artist Stephanie Anderson answers questions at Meet the Artist event.

Artists' Guild Offers Drawing and Painting Sessions

By Karen Carmean

Drawing and Painting Sessions

Join us for drawing and painting, usually with a live model. We have held a number of successful sessions for artists using different media and at different levels of experience. Artists appreciate the positive and supportive

atmosphere, the opportunity to learn from each other, and the quiet meditative sense of focus of attention we share.

We are planning sessions on Wednesday evenings, January 7 and 14, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., in the Community Room at the West Stockbridge Town Hall. The public is invited to participate. We each contribute \$15 toward paying the model. Please RSVP to kcarmean@gmail.com so you can be notified of any changes due to weather or other circumstances.

Positive Critique Sessions

Artists are invited to bring work in progress or work you would like to get feedback and suggestions on from others. Our next sessions will be held on Wednesdays, January 7 and 14, from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. The public is invited. We will be supportive and empowering in our suggestions. We know we can learn a lot from different points of view and experiences. We delight in looking and seeing and sharing. Please RSVP kcarmean@gmail.com.



Watercolor by Stephanie Anderson.



Pencil drawing by Stephanie Anderson.

Meet the Artist

On December 11, 10 of us met with watercolorist Stephanie Anderson at Six Depot Roastery and Café in West Stockbridge where she currently has an exhibition. Stephanie answered dozens of questions about exactly how she works and how she approaches the process of her work. It was inspiring! Stephanie plans the broad placement of the work on the page but spends most of the time painting rather than figuring things out in detail. She uses fine lead pencil and also powdered graphite

that she rubs with a paper-covered tool to get the painterly effect in her drawings. You can see her work at www.stephanieandersonart.com. We look forward to future events like this! If you have ideas of other artists willing to share their process, please send to kcarmean@gmail.com

Artists' Guild Calendar for January

Note: All listed events meet at the Town offices Community Room. RSVP to kcarmean@gmail.com.

- | | |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|
| Wed. 1/7 | Positive Art Critique, 4:30–5:30 pm. |
| Wed. 1/7 | Model Drawing/Painting, 5:30–8:30 pm. |
| Wed. 1/14 | Positive Art Critique, 4:30–5:30 pm. |
| Wed. 1/14 | Model Drawing/Painting, 5:30–8:30 pm. |
| Wed. 1/28 | Artists' Guild, 4:30–9 pm. |

Photos by Doane Perry.

Board of Selectmen Meeting Summaries

By Doane Perry

December 1, 2014

Rent Control Board Hearing: Final Decision

The selectmen unanimously approved a motion to file the Rent Control Board's final decision, setting the rent rate for the Mill Pond Trailer Park at \$241 per month. The cost of water and other factors explained in the footnotes to the final decision explain the rate setting.

High-Speed Internet

Steve Sautman, the town's representative for negotiations with WiredWest and the Massachusetts Broadband Institute [MBI], asked the selectmen to support a resolution making West Stockbridge a "Fiber Town."

MBI will build the system, and WiredWest will handle operations. A detailed engineering study will be completed in the spring of 2015. Service will consist of competitive packages based on fiber optics with Internet speeds of 25 mbps to 1 gbps beginning in the spring of 2017. (The town's Verizon DSL service currently runs at 1 to 5 mbps.)

Steps required include obtaining a letter from the selectmen, passing a general obligation bond with a two-thirds town meeting vote, and at least 40% of the households signing up with a conditional service contract and deposit. The town's risk will be paying a \$1.3 to 1.8 million bond for the system if WiredWest cannot. Cash flow revenue will go first to operations and then to paying back the town. The system portion and bond for West Stockbridge will be \$1.3 to 1.8 million. The system cost for all the towns will be \$100 to 119 million. The system will be financed with \$40 million from the state's IT bond bill.

There will be a meeting between WiredWest and the town's Finance Committee on December 12, 2014, to discuss fea-

sibility. Earl Moffatt expressed concern about utility poles, based on the utility's lack of responsiveness when Charter Cable built its cable television system. Peter Skorput asked for a report from the meeting and promised more discussion at the next selectmen's meeting.

Sewer Connection Issue

The board received a letter from Albany Road resident Richard Squallia regarding his concerns with the Board of Health and the process related to sewer connections for residents along the sewer expansion route. He said that mistakes were made, and he is seeking help from the board of selectmen to correct them. Peter Skorput responded that the matter is under the authority of the Board of Health and the sewer and water commissioners, and that the Board of Health agent will follow up with the Department of Environmental Protection for clarification of the rules and procedures for sewer connections.

Downtown Project

Work is suspended until spring. Ideas for extending the project were discussed.

Old Town Landfill Well Testing

A concern has arisen about the methodology used by the lab performing the tests. Some samples were high in sodium due to water softeners on outside spigots. (Sodium can be associated with heavy metals, which is what the tests are meant to detect.) The lab will cover the cost of getting valid samples and redoing the test.

Piano Donation

The selectmen declined to accept a spinet piano from the Freylingheusens that ended up at the Transfer Station.

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January History Quiz Question:

The dominant architectural style in our town center is typical of New England small towns of the mid-1800s. Many of the iconic homes and commercial buildings that define the look of West Stockbridge are from that era. White wooden clapboard, columns, and pediments are classic features of the Greek Revival style. The Old Town Hall and its neighbors, along with many of the houses on Main Street, are of that generation and style. Some buildings in town, however, don't fit that style or any other architectural type, for that matter, and look different.

The Wisdom Masonic Lodge on Hotel Street is one of those buildings that leads us to wonder about it. It gives the impression that it might possibly be a recent structure, possibly from the mid-1950s. How old is the building, and what was its original purpose?

(Find the answer somewhere in this issue!)



**West Stockbridge
Historical Society**
Incorporated in 1994

West Stockbridge Takes First Step Toward Becoming a "Fiber Town"

By Steve Sautman

Great news! The Board of Selectmen passed and signed the non-binding resolution letter at the December 15 meeting, stating their intent to continue their support of WiredWest and to seek formal approval to issue general obligation bonds to pay for our town's portion of the construction of the regional fiber network. This is the first step to become a "Fiber Town." Now West Stockbridge will be included in the detailed engineering study starting in January by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) to refine the project cost estimate going to every home and preparing for the make-ready and construction work. Make-ready work will prepare and fix poles by moving the current wires to the correct placement to receive the new fiber cable.

The overall not-to-exceed estimate cost is \$100 to \$120 million for a full regional fiber network connecting all 44 of the "under-served" towns in central and western Massachusetts. This estimate was based on the miles of roads, number of households, number of poles, and make-ready assumptions. The IT bill will cover \$40 million of this cost. The remainder will need to be raised initially through general obligation bonds secured by the towns.

The preliminary allocation for West Stockbridge's portion of the construction of the regional fiber network is between \$1.3 million and \$1.9 million that will need to be raised by a town bond. The plan is for WiredWest only to draw on a portion of the town bonds during the fiber network construction by issuing Bond Anticipation Notes to minimize interest and principal payments for the first five years. Once the network is up and running and has sufficient revenues to cover its operating costs, WiredWest will reimburse the towns in whole or part for their interest and principal payments.

The next step to become a "Fiber Town" is to sign up at least 40% of the households with a conditional service contract and a refundable deposit. WiredWest will be offering Internet, phone, and high-definition TV with a DVR option. Internet speeds will start at 25 mbps, with higher speeds available up to 1 gbps. For comparison, my satellite Internet speed is only 1 to 1.5 mbps. DSL speed is probably 1 to 5 mbps depending on where you are on the line. At 25 mbps, you will be able to do online streaming without buffering and to download HD movies from sites such as Netflix. Watch out for more information from WiredWest on their packages and pricing starting in January during their sign-up campaign.

The third step is to authorize the issuance of the new town bond with a two-thirds vote at the spring town meeting. We need to complete all three of these steps to become a "Fiber Town" and actually get the fiber network built in West Stockbridge. Construction of the fiber network would then start on qualified "Fiber Towns" with make-ready work beginning in 2015 and running fiber in 2016. Service to customers would begin in the spring of 2017 as network segments are completed.

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Town's Health Agent Update

John Olander wants to retire, but his position is expected to be difficult to fill. He does inspections, testing, and advising residents, business owners, and contractors. Peter Skorput said the plan for filling the position is to have a "circuit rider" from a regional planning organization at a cost comparable to the present approach.

Finance Committee

On December 12, the Finance Committee and WiredWest will meet to discuss capital and financing plans. In anticipation there was an informal discussion of plans, questions, and risks. Key points:

- There is pent-up demand for better Internet service.
- The town would have to vote to borrow up to \$2 million.
- The cost of the wire exists for any company.
- Will a Comcast acquisition of Charter lead to a better and/or cheaper upgrade?
- Among the approximately 800 dwellings in West Stockbridge, about 45% are owned by nonresidents who would likely want Internet access.
- Part-time residents largely live outside of the area served by Charter.
- Part-time residents largely cannot vote on a warrant.

Shaker Mill Dam Emergency Action Plan The selectmen plan to work with the Finance Committee to appropriate additional fees to cover the cost of a new assessment, required by the state every two years. Future budgets will be planned to cover the regular required inspection of the dam.

December 15, 2014

Annual Tax Classification Hearing

In 2014, commercial and industrial valuation was flat, although there has been a slight rise in the valuation of expensive properties. In 2015, the property tax valuation will be flat. Towns may choose single or split rates. With a split rate, businesses pay slightly more than residences. Like last year, the assessors have recommended the single tax rate. Because the state has not yet provided the levy number, the hearing was continued until Thursday, December 18, at 6:30 p.m.

WiredWest Update

Steve Sautman, the town's representative to WiredWest, described plans to bring high-speed Internet service to towns in Western Massachusetts, and reported that he and the WiredWest vice chairman and treasurer Jim Drawe had met with Bob Salerno, chair of the town Finance Committee.

The selectmen unanimously approved the resolution letter that is nonbinding but confirms the town's intent to participate. System benefits include fiberoptic wiring to all dwellings to provide voice, television, and high-speed Internet services.

Voters will be asked to vote for the bond bill at the May 2015 town meeting. The cost portion and bond for the West Stockbridge system will be \$1.3 to 1.8 million. Once WiredWest is up and running and has sufficient revenues, it will reimburse the towns in whole or part for their interest and principal payments made on the bonds.

Residents at the selectmen meeting commented, "I can't tell you how important this is," "We can't sell our house," "Six years ago we were told there would be Internet service," "Our real estate values are affected." Previous surveys of demand in West Stockbridge indicate a 54% interest, called the "take rate."

... continued on page 7

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Are You in the Loop?

Subscribe to E-mail Notice About Important Town Events and Deadlines

Did you forget about the annual town meeting or a special town meeting? Did you miss a chance to vote and make your voice heard on an issue important to you? Do you find yourself wondering if or when tax bills are being mailed? Are you tired of paying late charges because you lost track of a due date? The solution to these dilemmas is a couple of mouse clicks away!

The town's website, currently being reviewed and revised, now not only contains important contact information, selectmen's meeting minutes, a variety of forms, and access to pertinent state websites, it also gives you the opportunity to subscribe and receive e-mail notices about important events and deadlines.


Subscribing is easy. Go to www.weststockbridge-ma.gov and click on the link "Subscribe to News" on the left side of the main page. You will be prompted to provide an e-mail address. Check off the box labeled "News and Announcements," and click on "Send My Request."

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Comments about alternatives to the WiredWest plan included:

- Charter Cable has operated 15 to 20 years in West Stockbridge and will never provide service everywhere in the town.
- Alternatives will charge higher prices because they are for-profit businesses not nonprofit.
- The time frame for the Comcast acquisition of Time Warner and the Charter/Time Warner system swaps is unknown.
- Comcast might not bring service to every home.

Finance Committee to Meet with Berkshire Hills Regional School District

The Finance Committee will meet December 19 with representatives of the Berkshire Hills Regional School District to develop an understanding of district plans in the wake of the recent vote rejecting the high school renovation proposal. Reports in the *Berkshire Eagle* and *Berkshire Record* say that the repairs to Monument Mountain Regional High School will cost \$25 to 34 million.

Fire Truck Note Renewal

The selectmen signed the note renewal document, noting that the interest rate is 0.5%.

Austen Riggs Donation

Following renovation of their property in Stockbridge, Austen Riggs has donated five streetlight poles to the town. Three will be placed in front of the town offices and one each on the sides by the library and the police station. Installation will be in the spring of 2015.

Village School Use

The selectmen approved a request by the Artists' Guild to use the community room on January 7, 14, and 28.

Route 102 Resurfacing

The Department of Transportation has notified the town that it will resurface Route 102 between the Shaker Mill and State Line. Mark Webber said he asked the DOT to also do the sidewalks, but they said sidewalks are not their responsibility.

Card Lake Inn Parking Lot Appraisal

The selectmen approved Mark Webber's plan to hire Mission Reynold of Springfield to do a professional appraisal in about four weeks for a fee of \$1,750. The purpose is for municipal use. The lot has been assessed at \$50,000, but the owner is asking \$350,000. Many factors are involved, and eminent domain is possible.

West Stockbridge Town Flag

The selectmen approved Karen Zick's suggestion that because there is no West Stockbridge town flag at the Massachusetts State House, the Artists' Guild and other artists be asked to donate their time and talent to design a flag. Members of the guild who were present indicated interest and mentioned plans to involve West Stockbridge students in the project.

A Piano for the 1854 Town Hall

In response to a request by the Historical Society, the selectmen reversed the decision made at a previous meeting. The Baldwin spinet, currently in a shed at the Transfer Station, will be stored in the back room of the town offices until the 1854 Town Hall installs a heating system in a few years. Curt Wilton said the Highway Department will provide transportation of the piano. The selectmen asked for help from the *Local Yokel* in disposing of two other pianos stored in the back room at the town offices.

Mill Pond Trailer Park Appeal

Mark Webber told the selectmen that the town has received notice that Mill Pond Trailer Park owner Eric Levesque will appeal the decision by the Rent Control Board.

[Correction: Due to an editing error, our summary of the November 3 meeting in our December issue incorrectly said that the deadline for "hooking up" to the sewer was November 1. As correctly noted in the November 17 meeting summary, the November 1 deadline was to choose whether to hook up to the sewer.]

[Correction: Last month's cover caption said the carved wooden sign pictured is displayed at the Visitor Information Booth. The sign has been moved to the 1854 Town Hall.]



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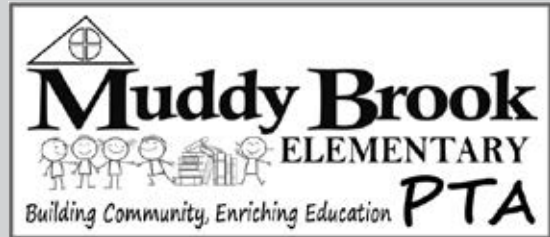
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Grandparents are welcome to become a part of our PTA. If you have grandchildren in our school, we would love to hear from you! Your thoughts and ideas are welcome. If you'd like to find out how you can help, please reach out to Susan Higa at (413) 429-7668 or muddybrookpta@gmail.com.

Our online auction was a great success—we raised over \$10,000! This is our largest fundraiser of the year with funds supporting wonderful enrichment opportunities for our students including class field trips; a variety of music, theater, movement, creative writing, science, and nature programs; and classroom supplies, as well as community-building events for families, all of which could not happen without the PTA's support. Thank you to our generous sponsors, donors, and bidders!

It's never too early to sign up for Mud Day help! We are looking for coordinators at this time and will be starting meetings in February. Perhaps you'd like to help with promotion, organizing the food vendors, coordinating with teachers, or run a project/table for the kids! Please e-mail muddybrookpta@gmail.com with your ideas.

Visit Muddybrookpta.com and be sure to "like" us on Facebook!

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Thank you for your continued support and volunteerism!

How to Be Trendy and Healthy in 2015

by Rachel Alves, RD, LDN



Every year innovative chefs introduce new food and beverages that eventually find their way to our grocery store shelves and into our pantries. Unfortunately, we may not know what to do with these new products, and they end up unused or thrown away. Instead, try embracing these food trends and including them in your meals and snacks.

Food trends are not always healthy (e.g., the 2014 bacon trend that brought us maple bacon ice cream and bacon chocolate bars), but others like kale everything, quinoa, and avocados do have health benefits. According to various online sources and my own observations, 2015 looks to be both trendy and healthy.

- * **Transparent labeling:** “natural,” “organic,” “free of additives.” These terms have been overused and have become less effective. People want clear simple labels and the ability to access nutrition information immediately using apps like Prep Pad that offer instant nutrition information. **Nutrition Takeaway:** Don’t be fooled by some health claims on labels. Digitalis and opium are natural—I think you get where I’m going.
- * **Convenience foods for foodies:** Even those comfortable in the kitchen long for healthy and gourmet foods that make cooking easier and faster. **Nutrition Takeaway:** Look for more delicious ready-made gourmet choices.
- * **24/7 groceries:** Online ordering and same-day delivery is going mainstream. Having nutritious and even perishable foods delivered to your doorstep is getting easier. **Nutrition Takeaway:** Only order what you can realistically make without throwing food and money away.

... continued on page 11

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The Birth of a Guild

By Carol Kelly, Watercolorist

It was cold and getting dark as I took the right at the mailbox, followed the yellow reflective markers, and parked behind the barn. I knocked at the barn door and heard a friendly voice calling, "Come on up." So up the dark stairway I went, into the warmth and the light. The entire second floor of the barn had been turned into a huge welcoming space for making art. In fact, the live model painting group had already met there several times with great success. Here I was attending the December meeting of a newly formed group of artists. It felt like a birth! (I wasn't there for the conception, but I hear there was quite a crowd with Helen and Mary Jane and Ron and . . .)

It's a guild, and she's beautiful! She's just what I wanted, all shiny pink and new. We're still counting all her fingers and toes and wiping her clean. I confess I smell a hint of manure; she was born in a barn, after all. She doesn't have a name yet, but we're thinking of calling her Richmond or West Stockbridge or the Native American name for the area. That's part of the fun of starting a new artists' guild.

Eleven of us were in attendance, all paying our \$40 yearly dues to make it official. The rest of us, maybe 20 or so, were either down south for the warmth or off in the big cities. Hopefully, we'll be seeing them in March for our next meeting when they will be paying their dues and signing up for their duties at our planned June art show. I signed up to do some hanging and some scheduling, leaving me plenty of time to actually paint something for the show.

Of course Carolyn and Howard were there making sure we started and ended on time, helping us stay on task, and

recording the minutes to post online. I think of them as "the pros" since they've done this before and know all about the fun and joy this new guild will bring once she's a little older. Artist Karen C., I think of her as the pineapple lady, was there with her tireless energy and plans. Photographer Doane was there. I think of him as "Peaches" since the show at the Congregational Church. Artist Ilene was there. She paints BIG, and I want to learn to do that too. Watercolorist Adrian was there. I think of him as "the Wizard." Maybe it's his British accent or the kind way he said, "I can do that, I can make it happen." He has a dream of doing a spectacular, artistic Richmond 250th book.

Watercolorist David was there. I think of him as "the Critic" because of his excellent precise way of looking at things that need to be pared down to their essential elements. I think he wants new venues for the sale of his work, as we all do. Artist Freya was there. I sat next to her because she's the "face lady," and I want to learn to do faces. Her advice was "Just think of them as landscapes." Artist Leon was there. He's so happy to be painting again after a break and wants to explore the use of more muted colors. And finally, artist Karen K. was there. She and her husband are new to the area, but she has definitely found a new home here with us.

I'm so grateful to have been there at the birth and want to help our sweet new baby grow. It looks like her first year will be a great one. All are welcome to join the fun. Contact Karen Carmean (kcarmean@gmail.com) for membership info.

Recycling Tip - January

A Word to the Wise . . .

- To keep personal papers and financial documents that you dispose of secure, shred the papers you would not want others to see, or dispose of them with the regular trash in a tied garbage bag. With the open recycling process for paper, there is always the chance your information could end up in the wrong hands.

Please send your Birthdays & Anniversaries to the Local Yokel.
We are happy to include them in the next issue.

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



- * Foods for the younger generations: The Millennials and Gen Z appear more informed about their food. Young people between 15 and 35 like their food simple and healthy, and food trends help enhance their cooking experience. **Nutrition Takeaway:** Encourage the younger generation to get in the kitchen by preparing and sharing a meal with them.
- * Snacks are the new meals: With fewer people taking time to sit down and eat meals, snacks shine (e.g., convenient and portable snacks like muesli bites and breakfast pockets). **Nutrition Takeaway:** Look for more ready-made, transportable meal snacks at the grocery store.
- * Fats and carbs can be good for you: Nutrition is not absolute, especially when considering fat and carbs. Eat good fats (e.g., salmon, nut butters, olive oils, and avocados) and complex carbohydrates (e.g., wild or brown rice and oats). Full-fat and natural cane sugar are touted as better for you than processed alternatives. **Nutrition Takeaway:** Portion control still matters!
- * Not just 100% whole grains, now local grains: Grain farmers are growing and selling alternative small batch varieties. Even consumers interested in milling these grains into fresh flour for baked goods are buying them. **Nutrition Takeaway:** If you can get it, local is better.
- * Beauty is in the eye of the beholder when it comes to ugly fruit and vegetables: With consumers trying to keep food waste down, less-than-perfect produce has a place in our recipes. Also, ugly root vegetables like celery root and kohlrabi are making their way to our tables. **Nutrition Takeaway:** Don't be fooled by its appearance—take it home and make it into a beautiful recipe.
- * Protein becomes a star: The nutritional value of protein hasn't changed, but the trend is to know your protein sources like from whey or milk, nuts or legumes. New protein sources are on the horizon (e.g., from algae). **Nutrition Takeaway:** Don't overdo protein; just try new sources.
- * Texture, texture, texture: It is becoming as important as taste. Texture receives some well-deserved attention. **Nutrition Takeaway:** Try mixing different textures in one recipe to give it complexity.
- * Whole fruits, not just fruit flavored: Fruits find their way into our diets as fruit-based snacks along with their whole forms. **Nutrition Takeaway:** Increasing fruit consumption is still the trend. Bring along two different kinds of fruit to eat today.

Lots of other food and nutrition trends will emerge in 2015, for example, matcha green tea (finely milled or powered Japanese green tea), coconut sugar, and smoked, fermented, and authentic Asian foods. Don't be afraid to expand your palate. Give some of these foods a try!

Happy New Year, everyone!

Collector's Notes

By the time you read this issue of the *Local Yokel*, your FY15 third quarter tax bill should be on its way to your door. This bill contains the revised 2015 valuation for your real estate.

Please take a moment to verify the information on the bill relating to valuation, acreage, property classification, and exemptions. Be sure to read the *back* of the bill! It clearly outlines the process and timeline to seek correction of faulty data and request an abatement if you question your valuation.


The abatement request forms are available online at the town's website (www.weststockbridge-ma.gov) and in both my office and the assessors' office.

Anyone with delinquent prior year tax and/or delinquent water/sewer charges will also find these bills included in this mailing. All past due bills accrue interest at 14%, and those properties will be placed in tax title if the accounts are not settled promptly.

June Biggs, Collector

Tel.: 232-0300, ext. 302; E-mail: collector@weststockbridge-ma.gov

Office hours: Wednesday: 3–6 p.m.; Thursday and Friday: 10 a.m.–2 p.m.; Saturday: 10 a.m.–1 p.m.

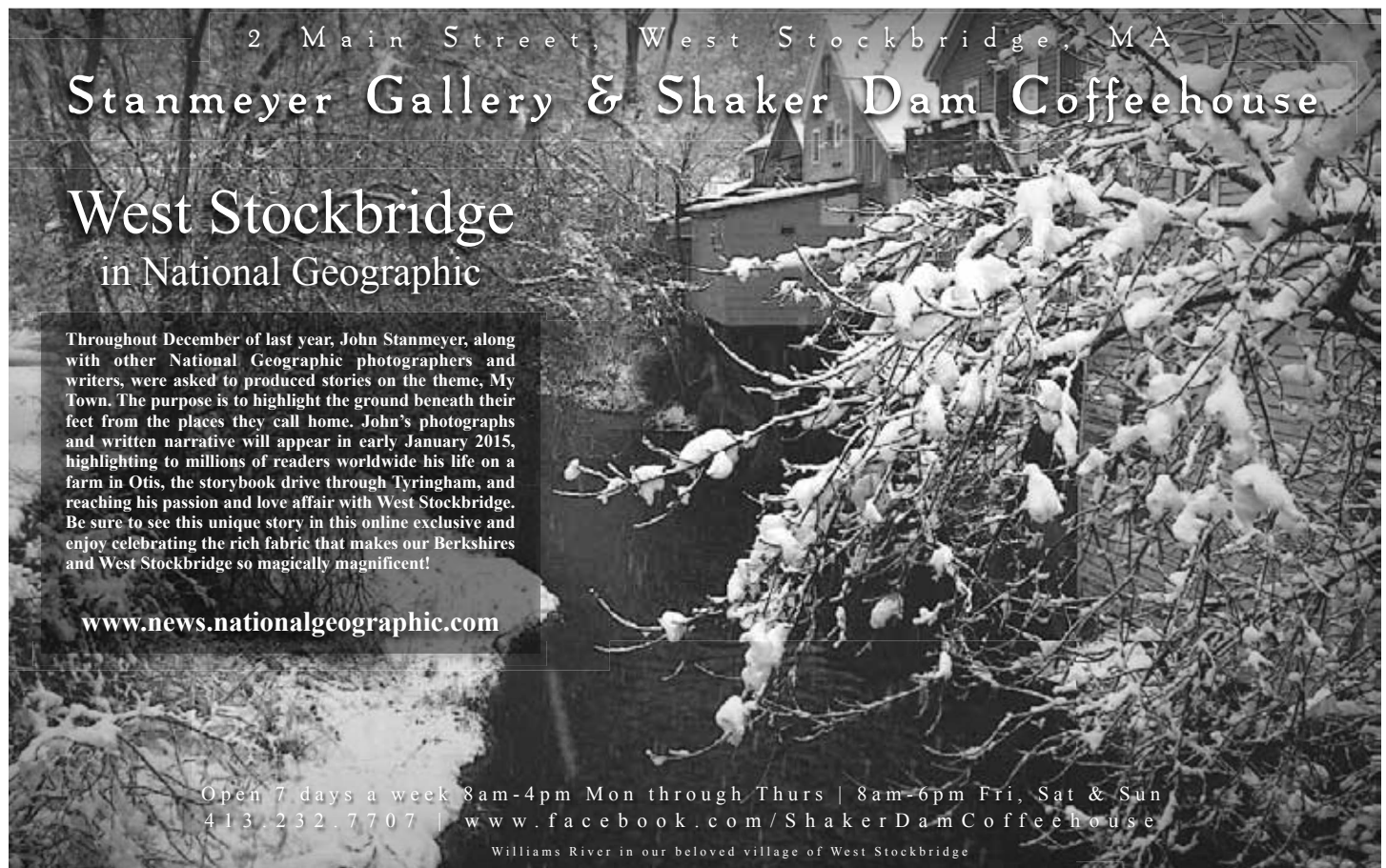


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Stanmeyer Gallery & Shaker Dam Coffeehouse

West Stockbridge in National Geographic

Throughout December of last year, John Stanmeyer, along with other National Geographic photographers and writers, were asked to produce stories on the theme, My Town. The purpose is to highlight the ground beneath their feet from the places they call home. John's photographs and written narrative will appear in early January 2015, highlighting to millions of readers worldwide his life on a farm in Otis, the storybook drive through Tyringham, and reaching his passion and love affair with West Stockbridge. Be sure to see this unique story in this online exclusive and enjoy celebrating the rich fabric that makes our Berkshires and West Stockbridge so magically magnificent!

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Williams River in our beloved village of West Stockbridge



West Stockbridge Sparkles Again!

On Friday, December 5, the village of West Stockbridge was once again ablaze with lights as the annual Holiday Tree Lighting and Holiday Farmers Market drew residents together to celebrate the season.

In a heartwarming display of community spirit, a good number of village groups joined together to create a magical night. Parks and Recreation organized; the Village Association promoted; village merchants stayed open late to tempt shoppers; the Cultural Council made music possible; the Police Department kept pedestrians and drivers safe; the Fire Department delivered Santa to his sleigh. Joe Roy delivered the sleigh.

Much appreciated financial assistance was provided by Matt Merritt, Barbara Nelson, Ruth and Ken Hanley, Rosemary and James Dellea, Eugene Dellea, and the Friends of the West Stockbridge Library.

Special thanks also go to Henry Baldwin for contributing the sand to keep the luminaria that outlined the village glowing all night. The Stanmeyer family, Mary and Bob Thibeault, and Anthony Voudren built and lit all those lights. Bob also lit many buildings and the bridge. Helen Nolan was the best elf ever! Peter Skorput was born to wear red! Terri Jo Dixon created songbooks for caroling and orchestrated the layout of the market. Earl Moffat hung the holiday tree lights. Paula Farrell kept everyone on track and the goodie bags coming! The *Local Yokel* kept everyone informed.

Finally, warm thanks, yet again, to the Merritt family for so generously allowing the use of their building and village green for the Holiday Farmers Market and Santa's sleigh.

Community News & Events

Stockbridge Grange Dinner

On Sunday, January 11, the Stockbridge Grange will serve a baked ham and bean dinner in the Grange Hall on Church Street from 1 to 2 p.m. Cost for adults is \$12; \$6 for children under 12. Takeout is available; please call (413) 298-3185. If the weather is bad, call first to make sure we're having it.

Council on Aging

The COA monthly potluck luncheon will be held at noon on Tuesday, January 13, in the Community Room at the Town Hall. Hope to see you all there!

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.

"A big thank you to Bill Biggs for helping get our photo booth up and running again for the Holiday Season!"



— Your friends at
Baldwin Extracts

West Stockbridge History Quiz Answer:

The Masonic Lodge building is not what it seems. The building was originally associated with a former hotel, the West Stockbridge R.R. House. The hotel occupied the space that is now the parking lot next to the Old Town Hall, on the corner of Main and Hotel streets. The Lodge building shows up on the 1855 Woodford map attached to the hotel structure. By the time of the 1904 map, it is a separate structure from the hotel.

Two-level structures were common for barns and carriage houses, with feed on top and animals on the lower level. Many inns and hotels had a place for travelers to keep their carriages and horses, and the form of this building suggests that was its purpose.

It was likely built before 1855, if the structure on the 1855 map is correct. It probably served as the carriage house and outbuilding for the adjacent hotel.

The hotel ceased to be a hotel before 1904 and was converted into retail stores. The structure burned down in the 1930s fire that took out the Battastoni furniture store. The Wisdom Lodge acquired the Masonic building in May 1942, and its first meeting was held in January 1943. The asbestos shingled siding and roof were probably added at that time.

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.



Masonic Lodge. Photo courtesy of Bob Salerno.



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Recipe Corner

by Lynn Ryan

BROWN RICE SALAD

Yield: 4 servings

2 Tbsp. olive oil, divided
2 cups uncooked instant brown rice*
1½ cups apple cider
½ tsp. salt
⅓ cup dried cranberries
1 Tbsp. melted butter
1 medium baking apple such as a Jonathan
2 Tbsp. cinnamon sugar
1 large head radicchio
5 stalks celery
3 Tbsp. chopped fresh chives
½ cup toasted walnuts or pecans†
2 oz. goat cheese

* For special occasions I use a wild rice medley. Cook the rice according to the directions. Add the cider and salt near the end of the cook time.

† To toast the nuts, melt 1 Tbsp. butter in a pan over medium heat. Add nuts, stir continuously, and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar if desired until nuts are coated and begin to brown. Remove from heat immediately and place on parchment paper or on a wooden cutting board to prevent sticking.

1. For the rice mixture, add 1 Tbsp. of the oil to a medium saucepan and heat until shimmering. Add the rice and stir well until coated. Stir in the cider and salt and bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat to low, and simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in the cranberries. Cover and let stand for 5 minutes.
2. Heat a grill pan or regular pan over medium-high heat for 5 minutes. Melt the butter, core the apple, and slice crosswise into rings. Brush both sides with the butter and sprinkle with the cinnamon sugar, pressing gently to adhere to the apple.
3. Spray a grill pan with olive/vegetable oil. Grill the apple rings to a light brown. Set aside six apple rings for garnish. Cut the remaining apples into quarters and add to the rice mixture.
4. Set aside four large outer radicchio leaves. Thinly slice the remaining radicchio and thinly slice the celery on a bias. Chop the chives. Toss the vegetables and the remaining 1 Tbsp. oil with the rice mixture.
5. To serve, spoon the salad into the reserved radicchio leaves and garnish with the nuts and reserved apple rings. Sprinkle with the goat cheese.

This will not only look colorful on your dinner party table, but the slightly bitter flavor of the radicchio is balanced by the sweetness of the cinnamon sugar, cider, apples, and cranberries. Happy New Year!

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

@West Stockbridge Library

Last month, an enthusiastic crowd of children and adults decorated traditional Yule logs as we enjoyed a delicious bûche de Noël created by Chef Merelle at Rouge. Visit weststockbridgelibrary.org for more photos of our creations.

Need a cure for cabin fever? We welcome back award-winning pastel artist Greg Maichack for "Regatta," a hands-on pastel workshop, on Saturday, February 7, 10-noon, in the community room. "Regatta" focuses on the golden age of impressionism and Monet's *The Regatta at Argenteuil*. Beginners to advanced artists are invited to learn about pastel art and create an original work under Greg's direction. This workshop is free and open to the public, thanks to the West Stockbridge Cultural Council. Please call the library at 223-0300, ext. 308 to sign up.

Thanks to a generous donor, we now have the Sunday *New York Times* (on Tuesday) to add to our new newspaper rack. We also have approved minutes of the West Stockbridge board of selectmen meetings. Reminder: Please leave our library copy of the monthly *Richmond Record* in the rack after you've read it.

DVDs: *22 Jump Street*, *Calvary*, *The Giver*, *Magic in the Moonlight*, *Merry Friggin' Christmas*
Just for Kids: *Guardians of the Galaxy*

FICTION

Flanagan, *Narrow Road to the Deep North*
King, *Revival* (LP)
Scottoline, *Betrayed*
Stein, *Sudden Light*
Zweig, *Post Office Girl*

For young readers

Curtis, *Madman of Piney Woods*
Pinckney, *The Red Pencil*
Van Allsburg, *Misadventures of Sweetie Pie*

NONFICTION

Cavett, *Brief Encounters: Conversations, Magic Moments And Assorted Hijinks*
Chase, *Polio Boulevard*
Choquette, *Walking Home: A Pilgrimage from Humbled to Healed*
Miles, *Superstorm: Nine Days Inside Hurricane Sandy*
Schmidt, *How Google Works*
Seager, *Behind the Gates of Gomorrah: A Year with the Criminally Insane*

Ongoing

- Call or stop at the library to sign up for January computer introductory or Windows 8 classes taught by Bill Biggs. Please indicate your availability.
- Don't forget to set up a CW/MARS online account by going to weststockbridgelibrary.org and clicking on the card catalog picture. Your account allows you to keep track of check-outs, requests, pickup locations, renewals, and more.
- Library trustee meetings are open to the public and take place the third Thursday of the month. Next meeting is January 22, 2015, at 4:30 p.m. in the community room.

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

Lee Appelbaum and Jodi Magner



An artistic group of all ages decorates holiday Yule logs. Photo courtesy of Lee Appelbaum.

WEST STOCKBRIDGE LIBRARY HOURS

TUES. 10-5 p.m. WED. 1-5 p.m. THURS. & FRI. 2-6 p.m. SAT. 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

413-232-0300 ext. 308 weststockbridgelibrary@gmail.com weststockbridgelibrary.org





The Friends of the West Stockbridge Library thank the following Artists/Authors/Speakers for their participation in our 2014 events.

ARTISTS

Marji Baldwin	Basketry
Lucy Bellville	Penny rugs
Karen Carmean	Painting
Barbara Dowling	Scanography
Doane Perry	Photography
Dorothy Skorput	Photography
Ilene Spiewak	Painting
Ira Wasserberg	Painting/Sculpture

AUTHORS

Liza Gyllenhaal	<i>Bleeding Heart</i>
Gary Leveille	<i>Legendary Locals of the Southern Berkshires</i>

SPEAKERS

Steve Dixon	Queensboro Wines & Spirits
Donald McGrory	Donald McGrory
	Oriental Rugs
Eric Wilska	Shaker Mill Books

All events sponsored by the Friends are free and open to the public. Watch the *Local Yokel* for 2015 events!

Art at the West Stockbridge Library
January/February Artist

SHARON VIDAL:

"PAINTERLY PHOTOS"



"STORM WARNING" ITALY

Sharon lives in West Stockbridge with her rescued black lab Lucca. She has a BFA in art education and was an advertising executive for 40 years. She specializes in hand-painted Polaroid photos that give her pictures a painted look.

Now retired, Sharon loves to spend her spare time with her grandson Edward, encouraging him in the "arts" of the kitchen and the lens.

The picture here was one of 22 of 500 submissions chosen for the Sohn Fine Art Gallery's 3rd Annual Community Exhibition to raise money for the Berkshire Museum.

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The West Stockbridge Chamber Players: A Local Band of Angels

By Liza Gyllenhaal Bennett



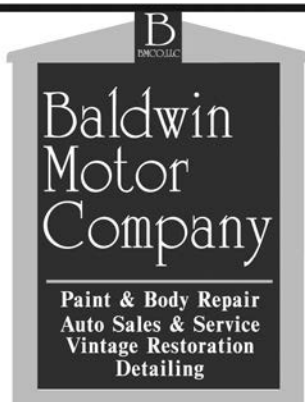
Clarinetist Catherine Hudgins leads the ensemble at last year's Winter Concert. Photo by Bob Salerno.

The West Stockbridge Chamber Players, led by clarinetist Catherine Hudgins, have been helping to raise funds—and awareness—for the restoration of the 1854 Town Hall in West Stockbridge. The world-class ensemble is made up of Boston- and Berkshire-based musicians who regularly perform with the Boston Symphony, Boston Pops, Spoleto Festival, and Portland Symphony, and who teach at the Tanglewood Music Center. Many have homes and close ties to our area.

Sheila Fiekowsky, a violinist for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, remembers the day when she and William Hudgins, the Boston Symphony Orchestra's principal clarinetist, "were chatting during intermission and Bill mentioned what they were doing to support the restoration by the West Stockbridge Historical Society." Fiekowsky, who has lived in West Stockbridge for more than 20 years, told him that she'd be willing to get involved and has since joined the group that routinely sells out whenever it performs.

The Chamber Players, who have mounted benefit concerts for the West Stockbridge Historical Society twice a year since the start of the Campaign to Restore the 1854 Town Hall, have played an instrumental role (no pun intended) in the great progress made over the course of the last 12 months. In what has become one of the musical high notes of the holiday season, the group (including William Rounds on cello and Vytas Baksys on piano in addition to Hudgins and Fiekowsky) performed a sold out benefit concert on December 30 to an appreciative audience at the West Stockbridge Congregational Church.

With the musicians' generous support, the society is now a third of the way to its goal of turning the 1854 Town Hall, which anchors West Stockbridge's downtown, into a community gathering place, history museum, and a permanent home for the West Stockbridge Chamber Players.



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Birthdays & Anniversaries

1/1 Ada Masiero
 1/12 Anne Roy
 1/13 Jim Hallock
 1/13 Abby Hallock
 1/19 Emma Seward
 1/24 John Parker

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, West Stockbridge MA 01266
 or by e-mail to info@thelocalyokel.org



Thank You!

...for your gifts to these local organizations through Santa's Wish List:

- ❖ Community Health Association
- ❖ Friends of the West Stockbridge Library
- ❖ Pet Partners of the Tri-State Berkshires
- ❖ *The Local Yokel*
- ❖ West Stockbridge Beautification
- ❖ West Stockbridge Farmers Market
- ❖ West Stockbridge Fire and Rescue Services
- ❖ West Stockbridge Historical Society

Gift totals will be reported in our February 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 232-4123, jandlparker49@verizon.net; Vicki Grayson 232-6131, vicki.grayson@rocketmail.com; Susan Fisher 232-4443, suefish12@gmail.com; Anne Lesser 232-8577, anne@annelessercommunications.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.

The *Local Yokel* Needs You!

Would you enjoy being part of the team that produces this free monthly newsletter serving our community, now in its 10th year of publication?

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

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Call John Parker at 232-4123 or e-mail info@thelocalyokel.org for more information.



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Local Artists and Writers Showcased at Holiday Sale and Exhibit

By Karen Carmean

Ten local artists and writers created the first annual holiday sale and exhibit at the historic 1854 Town Hall in West Stockbridge on December 13 and 14. Buyers came from as far away as the Virgin Islands and South Carolina, and as near as Housatonic, Austerlitz, and, of course, West Stockbridge.

"We are adding to the creative spirit of the West Stockbridge area that boasts dozens of talented artists and writers. The Berkshires has always strongly supported music and dance, and we'd like to make visual and literary arts more visible here in our community," remarked watercolorist and photographer Karen Andrews. "It's wonderful to meet my neighbors and make new friends! Maybe we could take advantage of this wonderful resource in West Stockbridge and find more ways to inspire ourselves and others."

Nancy Trionfo, so involved in our wonderful West Stockbridge Library, organized writers to "promote local authors and sell their books." Jill Pixley and Madeline Litz, Friends of the Library, assisted. Five participating authors (Marshall Jon Fisher, Richard Hoebel, Jennifer and Ron Kujawski, and Gary Leveille) spent time signing their books. Other authors who participated include Liza Gyllenhaal and Gerald Elias. Photographer Doane Perry remarked, "The old West Stockbridge Library is bookended by ceramics and decorated with paintings, photographs, jewelry, and of course beautiful books!"

We look forward to upcoming events at the 1854 Town Hall. Keep your eye out for the next exhibit of the Artists' Guild of West Stockbridge and Richmond area, which will be held the first two weekends in June. If you are a local artist and would like to participate in the exhibit, contact Karen Carmean at kcarmean@gmail.com.



Watercolor portrait by Adrian Holmes. Photo by the artist.



Barbara Dowling makes pictures and cards on her scanner. Photo by Doane Perry.



Jess Fitzgerald makes jewelry in Richmond. Photo by Doane Perry.



*Gary Leveille wrote *Legendary Locals of the Southern Berkshires*. Photo by Doane Perry.*



Ten artists and writers sold in the 1854 Town Hall.



Marge Skaggs makes pottery in West Stockbridge. Photo by Doane Perry.



Yellow Light, oil painting by Karen Carmean. Photo by the artist.



Ben Evans lives in Richmond and teaches pottery at IS183 and BCD. Photo by Doane Perry.



West Stockbridge artist Karen Andrews sold watercolors as placemats, trays, and cards. Photo by Doane Perry.

West Stockbridge
Local Yokel
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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



January 2014 Calendar of Events

1/1	New Year's Day		
1/5	Planning Board	7 p.m.	Town Offices
1/7	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	W.S. Library
1/7	West Stockbridge/Richmond Artists' Guild	4:30-8:30 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
1/11	Grange Dinner	1 p.m.	Grange Hall, Church St., Stockbridge
1/12	Board of Selectmen	7 p.m.	Town Offices
1/13	COA Luncheon	Noon	Town Offices Community Room
1/13	American Legion	7 p.m.	Town Offices
1/14	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	W.S. Library
1/14	Friends of the Library meeting	3:30 p.m.	W.S. Library
1/14	West Stockbridge/Richmond Artists' Guild	4:30-8:30 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
1/15	*** Deadline for the Next Local Yokel ***		send to info@thelocalyokel.org
1/19	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day		
1/21	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	W.S. Library
1/22	Library Trustees meeting	4:30 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
1/26	Planning Board	7 p.m.	Town Offices
1/26	Board of Selectmen	7 p.m.	Town Offices
1/28	Knitters & More	2-4 p.m.	W.S. Library
1/28	West Stockbridge/Richmond Artists' Guild	4:30-9:00 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room