

Local yokel

West
Stockbridge
December 2019

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


S E R V I N G O U R C O M M U N I T Y S I N C E 2 0 0 5



Happy
HOLIDAYS

Milkweed pods glow in the winter sunlight. Photo by Doane Perry


JOIN US FOR OUR
ANNUAL WINTER CELEBRATION



West Stockbridge Sparkles

Friday, December 6th . 5-7pm
West Stockbridge Congregational Church, UCC
45 Main Street, West Stockbridge

5pm - Cookie Decorating with Mrs. Claus
6pm - Caroling with the North Pole Elves
6:15pm - Santa arrives & meets the kids!



This is a FREE community event, brought to you by the cooperative efforts of the West Stockbridge Congregational Church, West Stockbridge Police Association, West Stockbridge Fire Department, and West Stockbridge Village Association

West Stockbridge Sparkles Schedule

The annual West Stockbridge Sparkles will take place on Friday, December 6, from 5 to 7 p.m. at the West Stockbridge Congregational Church (WSCC), 45 Main Street. This is a *free* community event, and everyone is invited to attend!

-  5-6 p.m. Cookie decorating with Mrs. Claus at WSCC
-  6 p.m. Tree lighting and caroling with the North Pole elves outside the WSCC
-  6:15 p.m. Santa Claus arrives by fire truck at the WSCC
-  6:15-7 p.m. Santa Claus meets everyone, takes photos, and gives gifts to the children

Join us for some delicious snacks, warm drinks, and plenty of holiday cheer to go around!

Anyone with questions or wishing to volunteer should contact Cait at wscongregationalchurch@gmail.com or (413) 329-6095.

WEST STOCKBRIDGE
HOLIDAY WEEKEND

Christmas in the VILLAGE

DECEMBER
6, 7 & 8



FRIDAY
West Stockbridge Sparkles at the WS Congregational Church, UCC

SATURDAY
Stockbridge's Main Street at Christmas extends into West Stockbridge with a tour of the Old Town Hall, the Kniffen House, and the WS Congregational Church

SATURDAY & SUNDAY
Many shops open late
Restaurant specials

Performance at The Foundry

VISITWESTSTOCKBRIDGE.COM

DECEMBER 6, 7 & 8
SHOP SMALL
SHOP LOCAL

WEST STOCKBRIDGE
HOLIDAY WEEKEND
Christmas in the
VILLAGE

ON SATURDAY
HOUSE TOURS 
BUSINESSES OPEN LATE *in red*



1. Rouge Restaurant
2. Six Depot Coffee Roastery, Cafe + Gallery
3. SoMa Catering
4. Truc Orient Express Restaurant & Out of Vietnam Shop
5. The Tap House at Shaker Mill
6. R & R West Stockbridge
7. Watchies Mobiles Gallery
8. Hoffman Pottery
9. Flourish Market
10. Shaker Mill Books
11. Stanmeyer Gallery and Shaker Dam Coffeehouse
12. 31 Stockbridge Road
13. Berkshire Riverside Rental
14. Shaker Mill Inn
15. Anderson & Sons Shaker Tree
16. Sandy Klemmner @Home
17. The Floor Store
18. TurnPark Art Space
20. The Foundry
21. Crane Lake Camp
22. Friends of the West Stockbridge Library
23. Pet Partners of the Tri-State Berkshires
24. St. Patrick Catholic Church
25. Stone House Properties
26. West Stockbridge Congregational Church, UCC
27. The West Stockbridge Cultural Council
28. West Stockbridge Historical Society
29. West Stockbridge Public Library
30. Boundless
31. Energy in Motion
32. Charles H. Baldwin & Sons
33. Graham Farmhouse Winery
34. Public Market
35. Ceramics by Margie Skaggs
Iverson Jewelry + SALA
Peter Thorne Furniture
Sarah Thorne Design
The Lady's Touch / Lisa F. Parker
Guild of Berkshire Artists
Berkshire's Own

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Select Board Meeting Minutes

[Editor's note: At the town administrator's request, the Select Board minutes here are reprinted verbatim with no editing of text. Official board minutes are available at the West Stockbridge Public Library and on the town website, <https://www.weststockbridge-ma.gov/>. Select Board meetings may be viewed on Spectrum cable local access channel 190. Residents can receive e-mail notification of town events and meeting agendas by subscribing at <http://weststockbridgema.virtualltownhall.net/subscriber>].

Select Board Meeting Minutes October 23, 2019

6:00 PM: Open Meeting

Quorum present: Select Board Members: Bernie Fallon, Chair; Doane Perry, Eric Shimeloni and Town Administrator Marie Ryan.
Board reviews and approves warrants; payroll and vendor.

Agenda Items/Action/Discussion Items: Meeting Opened at 6:00PM

Special Town Meeting Warrant- Bernie stated that the Select Board needed to sign the warrant for the Special Town Meeting for November 13. This is for monies to be approved to pay for repairs at the DPW Garage. Public Works Director Curt Wilton explained that the support columns in the Highway Garage were rusted out and were in urgent need of replacement. He stated that he put the job out to bid already and the money is enough to cover all the fees need for engineers and replacement of the columns.

Police Sergeant Rosario Messina – The Sergeant gave an updated on the junk car situation in town. He stated that after the first court date, all people who did not show up will be getting another court date to show up but they have not been notified of that date as of yet and he will let the Board know when that date is once they do.

As far as the trailer park junk cars, there has been movement on this. He said that Formels has been in the trailer park and has taken several cars out of there.

Building Inspector Brian DuVal – Brian stated that has new work schedule is working out well for everyone. He currently is now by appointment only. He has changed his voice mail on his phone which includes his cell phone number for people to contact him easily. He also checks his e-mail on his phone so he seems to be able to get back to everyone quicker than before.

As for Troy's Garage, Brian reported that he had John D'Aniello move several cars and a few other issues and all has been taken care of. Brian stated that he feels the grounds are looking good and John agreed to keep that up. Rosario also reported that he spoke with John as well and they feel things are getting better there.

Library Trustees – Bernie stated that due to a Library Trustee who resigned, the Trustees has asked the Select Board to appoint Beth Sack. Bernie then read the attached brief bio of Beth. Bernie made the motion to appoint Beth Sack as a member of the Library Trustees until the next Town election in May 2020, Doane seconded, all were in favor.

Council on Aging – John Zick of the Council on Aging stated that he has come before the Select Board to ask for consideration for the West Stockbridge Council on Aging be able to merge with the Richmond Council on Aging. The Board thought this was a great idea. John also stated that they were also asking for consideration of in the future, possibly at town meeting, to be able to purchase a larger van to carry maybe 12-16 people and split the cost with Richmond. He stated that West Stockbridge has a newer small van for a wheelchair that holds maybe 4 people which is great and they will keep but that Richmond has a van that is in bad shape and the larger van will be helpful for them to all take trips. He feels that combining the Councils on Aging will better serve the communities. Marie Ryan will contact Richmond Town Administrator Danielle Fillio begin the discussion. Marie stated that she contacted the State on the procedure and that special legislation is not required. She said that the State recommended to create a Memorandum of Understanding.

Public Works Director, Curt Wilton – Curt gave updates on all his departments that he is currently overseeing. See attached document.

Joe Roy also stated that whatever the DPW did at the Card Lake Inn Parking Lot, it looks great and he thanked Curt for their work.

...continued on page 5



Annual Harvest Concert

"A Cornucopia of Beautiful Music"

By Liza Bennett

Golden sunlight slanted through the upper windows of the Old Town Hall as the celebrated West Stockbridge Chamber Players took the stage on Sunday, November 3, for their annual Harvest Concert. Led by clarinetist and artistic director Catherine Hudgins, the Chamber Players are a world-class ensemble of Boston- and Berkshire-based musicians that, for this concert, along with Hudgins, included flutist Linda Toote, oboist Andrea Bonsignore, bassoonist Richard Ranti, violinist Sheila Fiekowsky, and violist Daniel Getz.

The concert opened with a performance of Jacques Ibert's charming *Cinq Pièces en Trio*, followed by Eugène Bozza's *Trois pièces pour une musique de nuit* that was introduced by Richard Ranti. "We spent the last week in Boston playing with the Gewandhaus-orchester Leipzig. It always takes a little while to adjust to the differing American and German styles, but before long we were in perfect sync. There's nothing better than playing music together." He went on to say that Bozza, too, was exposed to many musical styles, including a lot of jazz, and that his work benefited from these different influences, an observation borne out in the delightful performance that followed. Hudgins introduced the next piece, Randall Thompson's Suite, explaining that it was composed when the Nazis were invading France and seems colored by that event. Andrea Bonsignore added that she had the great privilege of playing the Suite for Thompson during a celebration of his 89th birthday.

After a brief intermission, the concert continued with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Duo in B-flat for Violin and Viola, K. 424. It was one of two that Mozart wrote to help out the composer Michael Haydn, a close friend who was unable to complete a commission due to illness. Violist Daniel Getz, who performed the piece with violinist Sheila Fiekowsky, recalled that they performed the other Duo years ago at Historical Society board member Sybil Pollet's home in West Stockbridge, which was Daniel's first time playing with the Chamber Players. The transporting afternoon of music concluded with Jean Francaix's witty, musically rigorous Quatuor.

After the concert, the audience flocked to the reception downstairs to enjoy wine and refreshments and mingle with the musicians, many of whom have become esteemed friends of the West Stockbridge Historical Society.

Left to right: flutist Linda Toote, oboist Andrea Bonsignore, bassoonist Richard Ranti, and clarinetist and artistic director Catherine Hudgins. Photo by Bob Salerno



Left to right: Violinist Sheila Fiekowsky, and violist Daniel Getz. Photo by Carol Kuller



Reception sommelier John Masiero. Photo by Liza Bennett



At the post-concert reception: C.C. Cave, Robert Salerno, Catherine Hudgins, Eric Shimelonis, Peter Rothstein, and Margaret Skaags. Photo by Liza Bennett

Fire Chief Peter Skorput – Peter submitted his September and October monthly report to the Board (see attached). He also stated that Liz Digrigoli had been to his office at the Fire Department and has gone through all his records and she agreed that everything seems in order and she is willing to go and assist any time he needs help.

Eric handed a copy of a report that Fairview Hospital did on EMS services in South Berkshire County to Peter. Eric feels that this report helps to tie the towns together and make more efficient services to the communities by using better communication. Peter agreed. Eric then asked Peter if he would consider using the IAM Responding software. Peter thought this was a great idea and that he was planning on including this in his FY21 budget for the next town meeting. Eric would like to see the town get this sooner and he and the Board asked Peter to get information on it as well as costs for Peter to come back to the Board with that information. Peter agreed and that will be in the agenda for the November 20th.

Bernie discussed things from the list of projects that Peter was supposed to have completed on a timeline. He stated that Peter did well with getting OSHA issues worked on, gave a list of members and their training and has signed up for the training that was suggested.

Brain DuVal also stated that he and Peter will be getting together to do the inspections for the Renewal 2020 Alcoholic Liquor Licenses.

Vision Committee, Joe Roy – Joe began his update on his Committee by stating that Curt has covered most of his list/questions.

1. **Affordable Housing** - The one issue Curt did not touch on was Affordable Housing. Eric stated that he and the rest of the Master Plan Committee will be working on this issue. They are hoping to have some new zoning created for accessory dwelling so that the town can have more apartments near town that can make living here more affordable and hopefully encourage more people move into town.
2. **Broadcasting the meetings** – Marie stated that there has been issue on the broadcasting but she is working on getting this fixed. Eric said he would like to be able to tape the meetings and have them put on YouTube or some other online streaming.
3. **Beautification Committee** – Joe said that this sub-committee has been working on issues around town. They were asking if Curt could look into some screening or planting to cover the fence in front of the pump station and around the public bathrooms. Curt agreed to take a look at the area. Another thing they were discussing was having a tree put up for Christmas time. Joe asked if at some point maybe a pipe could be put into the ground across from the Post Office to be able to place a tree in there so it will be sturdy.
4. **250th Anniversary** – Joe also mentioned that in 2024 the town will be 250 years old and thought it is something we should all start thing of as far as celebrations.

Miscellaneous Items:

Eric brought up the fact that the signage for Town Hall is not looking good. He would like to look into getting some costs to replace it with a larger nicer sign and possibly make several signs of the same set up for around town so they are look have the same design. The Board agreed and Eric will look into a mock up as well as pricing.

Marie reminded the Board that the next meeting will be Wednesday, November 6th.

Bernie motion to adjourn at 8:00 PM, Eric seconded.

Respectfully submitted,
Marie Y. Ryan
Marie Y. Ryan
Town Administrator

Select Board Meeting Minutes November 6, 2019

6:00 PM: Open Meeting

Quorum present: Select Board Members: Bernie Fallon, Chair; Doane Perry, Eric Shimeloni and Town Administrator Marie Ryan.

Board reviews and approves warrants; payroll and vendor.

Agenda Items/Action/Discussion Items: Meeting Opened at 6:00PM

Library Signage- Bernie stated that Jayne was unable to attend this meeting so she will present her discussion at a meeting in the future.

Appointments to Parks & Rec Committee- Bernie stated that the Parks & Rec Committee would like to have Joe Roy, Jr. and JP Boscarino. He then made a motion to appoint them and Eric seconded, all were in favour.

Building Use for Dog Training – Mariday Geyer, owner of Shaker Paws LLC presented that she would like to use the room at the end of Town Hall for dog training on Fridays. She stated this would be open to the public and there is no fee and she has insurance. She is trying to find a location inside for the cold winter months. Eric stated that he was concerned of allowing people using the Town Hall for non-community service functions. Bernie asked Mariday if the Board could further think about it and get back to her. He asked her to keep in contact with Marie and the Board would get back to her. Mariday thanked the Board for their time and consideration.

Bernie then introduced Dan Bailly, representative from the Next Steps Committee. Dan then gave a brief power point presentation on the issues, findings and recommendations of the Next Steps Committee in regards to the high school. The recommendation was for a new or renovated high school. They believe that repairs are not an option.

Bernie then made a motion to adjourn, Doane Seconded, all in favour.

Meeting adjourned at 7:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Marie Y. Ryan
Marie Y. Ryan
Town Administrator

November 13 Special Town Meeting Results

A Special Town Meeting was held on Wednesday, November 13. Moderator Gene Dellea called the meeting to order. Article 1 was “to see if the town will appropriate the sum of \$75,000 from available Overlay Reserve for the purpose of conducting repairs to the Highway Garage on Albany Road.” The article was read, and a motion in favor was made, seconded, and approved with no discussion, “within two minutes,” according to Town Clerk Ronni Barrett.

Baseball in the Berkshires

By John Parker



The town's finest player, Peter J. (Pete) Noonan, who played for the Holy Cross college, and the Philadelphia Athletics, Chicago Cubs, St. Louis, St. Paul, Wilkes Barre, to mention a few of the clubs he played with. He also coached college teams.

West Stockbridge native Pete Noonan played in the majors

The season may be over, but it was "Baseball in the Berkshires" at the Old Town Hall on Friday, November 15. The program was presented by Larry Moore, director of Baseball in the Berkshires, Inc., a nonprofit organization based in Lenoxdale. Spanning the gamut from Little League to the major leagues, Moore related how the history and culture of America's pastime are intertwined with the towns and families of Berkshire County.

Larry Moore, an outreach instructor with the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown and coauthor of *Baseball in the Berkshires: A County's Common Bond*, has roots in the region and baseball. He taught swimming at Card Pond and coached local baseball teams. As a physical education teacher with the Central Berkshire Regional School District, Moore taught a multidisciplinary program using baseball as the focus.



Larry Moore, director of Baseball in the Berkshires

The connection between baseball and the Berkshires goes back to 1791 when the Pittsfield city council passed an ordinance banning the games of "Wickets, Cricket, Baseball, Batball, Football, Cat, Fives or any Game or Games with Balls" within 80 yards of their newly completed meetinghouse that had windows facing the town common. Violators were subject to a five-shilling fine. This ordinance was one of the first published uses of the word "baseball" in America, demonstrating that the sport was popular here in Berkshire County as far back as the 18th century.

In 1859, the first intercollegiate baseball game was played in Pittsfield, with Williams College facing Amherst. The game took place near where Dottie's Coffee Lounge is today (a plaque outside the shop commemorates the occasion). Although undeniably baseball, there were some notable differences from how the game is played today. For example, the field was a square, not a diamond, and there were no foul lines. Pitching was underhanded, and the hitter could "call" for a high or low pitch. The ball was rubber wrapped in hide, so there were *lots* of runs. Perhaps not surprisingly, the final score was Amherst 73, Williams 32!

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Troy's Garage team; Garrett Troy at left

Home to Wahconah Park, one of the oldest ballparks in the country, the Berkshires has produced 38 major league players, plus two more who played at the highest levels of black baseball before the sport was integrated. Many more played in the minor leagues or served as umpires or in the front office. Two Berkshire natives are in the Baseball Hall of Fame: Jack Chesbro of North Adams and Frank Grant, born in Pittsfield and raised in Williamstown. In 1904, Chesbro, a pitcher, started 51 games and won 41, a record that still stands today. Frank Grant, considered by some the best second baseman of the 19th century, played for some of the best black teams from 1886 to 1891, long before Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier.

West Stockbridge featured prominently in Berkshire baseball history. Born in West Stockbridge, Pete Noonan played for major league teams including the Philadelphia Athletics and Chicago Cubs from 1904 to 1916. Troy's Garage fielded many teams starting in 1934, playing at Keresey Field north of town on Route 41 near the cemeteries. In 1935, the Philadelphia Athletics played a night game at Keresey Field, with lights mounted on top of stepladders.

Berkshire County has been a hotbed of baseball activity for more than two centuries with numerous amateur, pro, and semipro teams;

minor league and college teams; teams fielded by hotels, estates, and other businesses; black teams and white teams; and men's teams and women's teams (one photo showed Miss Hall's School students playing in long pleated skirts). As noted, the county has produced scores of major and minor league players. Fans of the game may recognize the names of some Berkshire County natives who played in the majors in recent decades, such as Jonah Bayliss, Tom Grieve, Jeff Reardon, Turk Wendell, and Matt White. Others settled here after their baseball careers, such as author and Yankee pitcher Jim Bouton.

Baseball in the Berkshires invites contributions of baseball artifacts and keepsakes, some of which are featured in traveling exhibits hosted in towns around the county. For more information, visit <https://baseballinberkshires.org/>.

All photos courtesy of John Parker

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December History Quiz Question:

In the early 19th century, the Congregational Church was the de facto state religion. Citizens were obligated to attend services or pay a fine. The church congregation was required to provide support for the minister and his family in the form of housing, food, and wood or coal. Every congregation owned a parsonage or rented space. Massachusetts was the last state to abolish state religion in 1834, but the churches continued the practice of supporting the minister.

Our Congregational Church in the village center was established in 1833 on property donated by the Hudson & West Stockbridge Marble Association. As the congregation grew, it added a parsonage for the minister. Where was that parsonage? (Hint: It's not the building you may think.)

(Find the answer somewhere in this issue!)

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



**West Stockbridge
Historical Society**
Incorporated in 1994

Meet the Artist 2019

Amy Pressman

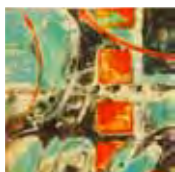
*Amy
Pressman*

*Encaustics and
Watercolors*

Tues. Dec. 10
4 – 5pm

Gallery Walk & Talk
TKG Real Estate
137 North St.
Pittsfield

Guild of Berkshire Artists
www.BerkshireArtists.org and
BerkshireArtists@gmail.com



Join Amy Pressman on Dec. 10, 4-5 p.m. at TKG Real Estate for a gallery walk and talk and informal discussion of her process. You will be able to ask her questions. RSVP: BerkshireArtists@gmail.com.

Amy Pressman has always loved nature and drawing. She received her BFA from University of Massachusetts in Interior Design and an MA from Cornell in Design and Environmental Analysis. At 40 she took a summer off to teach herself watercolor painting. Happily marching off to the fields behind her home for two months, she found great joy. The move to the Berkshires has brought her back to her first love - nature and drawing. Now spending a majority of her time cataloging the beauty of her surroundings and exploring both realistic portrayals and abstractions in encaustics and watercolor.

Exhibit

OPEN HOUSE: Shaker Mill Inn

More than 90
Paintings and
Photographs

by Local Artists

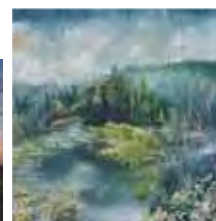
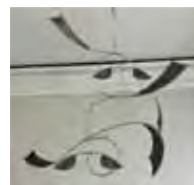
Wed. Dec. 11

4-6:30 pm
Light Refreshments

Shaker Mill Inn
2 Oak Street
West Stockbridge



Guild of Berkshire Artists
www.BerkshireArtists.org
BerkshireArtists@gmail.com



Join us for a rare opportunity to see some of the nine rooms decorated with art by local artists and enjoy light refreshments at the Shaker Mill Inn. This exhibit rotates and other artists will be added for our new show. Joel Hotchkiss, Walt Pasko, Laurie Rando, Amy Pressman, and David Edgecomb. To RSVP and for more information contact BerkshireArtists@gmail.com. Check website if stormy.



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



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

Santa's Wish List

Dear Readers,

It's that time of year again, and we are making our 12th annual Santa's Wish List appeal.



When you are making out your gift lists, we hope you will consider a donation to one or more of these great organizations: Community Health Association, Friends of the West Stockbridge Library, Pet Partners of the Tri-State Berkshires, West Stockbridge Beautification, West Stockbridge Farmers Market, West Stockbridge Fire and Rescue Services, West Stockbridge Historical Society, and, of course, the *Local Yokel*.

Without your help, none of these organizations could do the wonderful things they do to make our town such a special place to live. Your donations are very much appreciated, and gifts of even a few dollars add up and make a real difference.

To make a donation, just use the gift tag at the right, fill out your name and the donation amount on the reverse side, and send it with your check or checks (*made out to the recipient organization, please!*) to:

WSLY
P.O. Box 238
West Stockbridge, MA 01266

Thanks for your support, and we wish you the happiest of holidays!

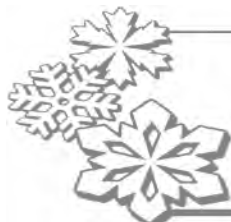
The WSLY Editors



To: Community Health Association



To: Friends of the West Stockbridge Library



To: The Local Yokel



To: Pet Partners of the Tri-State Berkshires



To: West Stockbridge Beautification



To: West Stockbridge Farmers Market



To: West Stockbridge Fire and Rescue Services



To: West Stockbridge Historical Society

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From: _____

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The Local Yokel

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“We Remember When . . .”

Growing Up in West Stockbridge in the 1950s

A Series of Recollections by John Bormolini and Friends

Christmas in West Stockbridge

By John Bormolini and Friends

The 1950s was a memorable decade for those of us who grew up in West Stockbridge. The celebration of Christmas was no exception. The two most prominent churches were the Congregational Church and St. Patrick’s Catholic Church. The other church was the Congregational Meeting House in West Center. Unfortunately, the steeple was struck by lightning in 1956, and the chapel burned in 45 minutes. A new chapel was built the following year.

I remember the nativity scene set up in the front of the altar of St. Patrick’s Church. Christmas masses were well attended, and a midnight mass was also celebrated. The Congregational Church celebration of Christmas was also well attended every year. I think a nativity scene was displayed outside in front of the church.

The Christmas Tree

The common denominator for most families was the Christmas tree. Most trees came from the woods around West Stockbridge. Judie Masiero (Bodnar) recalled, “No trees were sold in town. Most everyone had a favorite spot in the woods somewhere nearby and went and got a tree. I think that, most likely, you just needed to ask permission to do so.” Steve Salvi and his dad would make getting a tree a part of deer hunting in mid-December.

From a contributor: “Usually dads went out to get the Christmas tree alone, unlike today with the families going. In some cases, the tree that was chosen brought tears to kids because it was missing branches and had empty spots. But then Dad tied on branches or drilled them in, and the tree looked beautiful. The bad side went in the corner or by the wall. Tinsel was used on every tree and hid a multitude of ‘irregularities.’ Ornaments were mostly made by crafty moms. The kids always cut out and colored paper trees, wreaths, and bells from craft paper to decorate the tree.”

Anita Norton (Zanconato) recalls, “I remember my father going through the pasture, where the cows grazed most of the year, into the woods where he always found a beautiful tree. We would all get together to decorate it. It was always beautiful with lots of handmade paper garlands that we made.”

John Masiero, who lived on a farm, remembers, “My father and I would walk up into the woods behind our house and cut a tree for the living room. It was never a beautiful specimen. Usually the bare side was turned toward the corner. When fully decorated with lights, homemade paper chains, popcorn on strings, and glass ornaments, it was the tree of my dreams.”

Nearly everyone in town had the same Christmas topping, an angel from Newberry’s department store. Some of those angels still adorn the tops of trees today, having watched over the same families for more than 60 years.

In Town

Maryann Hamling (Raspuzzi) remembers, “One of the best things that happened in West Stockbridge at Christmas time was Joe Bormolini playing Santa at our town party!” Judith Bodnar (Masiero) recalls, “There were even Christmas carols coming from a speaker set up in a window at the Town Hall for all to hear.”

The Presents

A recollection: “We always went Christmas shopping in Pittsfield at England Brothers, but most purchases were made at Newberry’s or Woolworths department stores. I don’t remember how we got to Pittsfield and back as transportation was always a challenge.”

Most gifts were of a practical nature, such as clothing items (e.g., pajamas, gloves, scarves, mittens, boots, or hats). Usually one gift was opened the night before Christmas. All others were opened in the morning. I remember getting one toy, a doll, and then small things like jacks, coloring books, marbles, Chinese checkers, and one book.”



*Christmas morning at the D’Aniello, ca. 1953. Left to right: John D’Aniello, Joseph Bormolini (my brother), John Bormolini, and Victor D’Aniello
Photo courtesy of John Bormolini*

...continued on page 13

December Art Calendar

Guild of Berkshire Artists | BerkshireArtists.org | gobasocial@gmail.com

2019

Dec 4, Monthly art seminar and Guild business meeting (first Wednesday of month). Wed. Dec. 4, 4pm Introductions and bring a recent work to share or ask feedback. **Seminar 4:15- 5:15 Doane Perry III:** How to view the catalog of videos taken of Guild Events on Facebook. **Business Meeting 5:15-6:00** Plan upcoming shows and activities. Community Room Town Hall, 21 Stateline Road (Route 102) West Stockbridge (WS)

Dec 6, Collage Group. Friday Dec. 6, 12-30-3pm Richmond. This group is currently closed but inquire for waiting list. RSVP: BerkshireArtists@gmail.com

Dec 6, First Fridays Artwalk Friday Dec 6, 5:00-8:00 p.m. **Guild of Berkshire Artists' Officers:** Jill Gustavis (Watercolor/Acrylics), Amy Pressman (Watercolor/Encaustics), Keith Emerling (Plein Air Watercolor), and Doane Perry III (Photography), and also featuring Rose Tannenbaum (Oils) at TKG Real Estate, 137 North Street, Pittsfield. www.firstfridaysartwalk.com

Michelle Iglesias' (oil and acrylic) in "Wicked Winter Wonderland" at Berkshire Paint and Sip, 305 North Street. For more information, visit www.berkshirepaintandsip.com.

Ilene Richard at NUarts Studios & Gallery, 311 North Street, Pittsfield.

Dec 8, Members' Potluck. Sun. Dec. 8. 4-7pm Stockbridge. Bring main dish, hors d'oeuvres or dessert for ten and what YOU want to drink. Partners welcome. For location, RSVP: ftsegal@nycap.rr.com

Dec 10, Meet the Artist: Amy Pressman. Gallery Talk. Watercolor and Encaustic. Tue. Dec. 10, 4-5pm. TKG Real Estate, 137 North Street, Pittsfield.

Dec 20, Photo Explorers: Red Lion Inn. 30 Main Street, Stockbridge. Join Carole Quinn on Fri. Dec. 20, 8:30am for coffee/breakfast. Explore the area.

Berkshire Photo Gathering. No gathering this month, see you in 2020!



Jill Gustavis - Interim President



Amy Pressman - Vice President

A selection of art from the Guild Officers on display at TKG for December and January

Keith Emerling - Treasurer



Doane Perry III - Clerk



Also featuring works by Rose Tannenbaum

Dec 27, Art Book Gathering Friday, Dec. 27, 2-4 p.m. Share a favorite book: artist, process. Shaker Mill Books, West Stockbridge

TUESDAYS, Figure Painting, Open Studio Tuesdays 1-4pm. IS 183, Stockbridge. \$20 members, \$25 nonmembers. Bring your supplies. RSVP 413-298-5252x100. Confirm dates.

Creating Art Outdoors. If the weather is lovely, post time and place you want to meet others on Facebook Berkshire Plein Air.



Do you enjoy writing or photography?

The *Local Yokel* needs regular and occasional contributors.

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



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Anita recalls that one present was opened on Christmas Eve because her dad had to work on the railroad on Christmas Day. The rest of the presents were opened after he came home from work.

From John Masiero, "I started my downhill adventures on a secondhand sled. One year, Santa brought me a snow saucer (aluminum with rope handles). It was like a space age sled! If the snow crusted over, I would still use a piece of cardboard for sledding."

From Steve Salvi: "My favorite gift was my Red Rider BB gun, although it was not nearly as nice as my Ralphie's Official Red Ryder: carbine action, 200-shot, range model air rifle, with a compass in the stock."

John B: "I remember getting two gifts but not both in the same year. One was a Lionel electric train. The other was an erector set. I spent hours and hours with my erector set building and rebuilding. I remember buying my brother Joe a carton of Lucky Strikes for Christmas—cost about two bucks!"

AFTER CHRISTMAS

From John Masiero: "After Christmas came New Year's Eve. Often, I would spend the night with my Nonna at the variety store in town while my parents celebrated at the Card Lake Hotel. From my bedroom window I could see the holiday lights and hear the music and laughter."

It wasn't long after the New Year that we were back to school and life returned to normal—in my hometown, West Stockbridge.

Watch for future installments of "We Remember When..." in the Local Yokel. Our January article will feature the social clubs of West Stockbridge. John Bormolini is a West Stockbridge "ex-pat," now residing in Leavenworth, Kansas. Readers who would like to share their stories of 1950s West Stockbridge are invited to e-mail John at johnbormo@aol.com.

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The *Local Yokel* is published monthly. Please mail submissions to: *The Local Yokel*, P.O. Box 238, West Stockbridge, MA 01266, e-mail info@thelocalyokel.org, or visit www.thelocalyokel.org. Copy deadline is the 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, 717-0277, anne@annelessercommunications.com; Designer: Kim Bradway, kim@bloominarts.com.

The *Local Yokel* is supported in part by a grant from the West Stockbridge Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.



DID YOU KNOW???

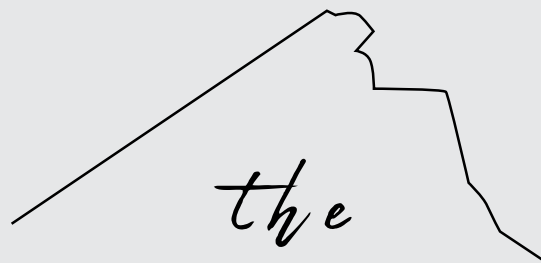
Friends of the
West Stockbridge Library offer:

- Ongoing book sale in the Community Room. Prices are posted. Pay using the honor system cash box.
- The *Berkshire Record* and *Berkshire Eagle* are available to read during library hours.
- Complimentary/discount passes are available at the library for numerous area museums and cultural attractions.



Happy Holidays to one & all!

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“OWL” of the staff, trustees, and friends of the library wish you the best for a joyful holiday season and a wonderful New Year! The library staff is “owl-ways” happy to see you stop in to sit and read, or look for books or movies to take with you.



Please join us to learn about local wildlife and ways to avoid problems around your home and help ensure wildlife remains wild

LIVING WITH WILDLIFE

**Saturday, December 28, 11 a.m.
Plus: Skull, Scat, & Track ID Challenge**

You can use the library from home, too. Will you be watching sports during the holidays? If you want to read articles about your favorite teams in the famous *Boston Globe* sports section, go to weststockbridgelibrary.org and click on the “Research Databases” tab. Look for “The Boston Globe,” click, and go from there. The *Globe* is just one of many newspapers and magazines you can read and print through our website.

We are fortunate to have a local student volunteer offering you one-on-one computer help. Please contact the library to arrange this and we will have him contact you.

If you are interested in attending a short course on Microsoft Excel, sign up with us for a class that is planned for early 2020. We have room for about four students, so you will get a lot of individual help!

Are you interested in visiting a local museum during the break? How about Mass MoCA? The library can loan you a pass that admits up to two adults and two children.

The library will be closed for Christmas on Tuesday, December 24, and Wednesday, December 25, and for New Year’s Day on Tuesday, December 31, and Wednesday, January 1.

NEW DVDs

The Girl in the Fog; Victoria, Season 3

NEW ADULT FICTION

Castillo, *Shamed*

Chevalier, *A Single Thread*

Flynn, *Lethal Agent*

Grisham, *Guardians*

Jordan, *Warrior of the Altai*

Morgenstern, *The Starless Sea*

Patchett, *Dutch House*

Penny, *Better Man: A Chief Inspector Gamache Novel*

Prescott, *Secrets We Kept*

Sandford, *Bloody Genius*

Woodson, *Red at the Bone*

NEW ADULT NONFICTION

John, *Me: Elton John Official Autobiography*

Kendi, *How to Be an Antiracist*

Power, *Education of an Idealist: A Memoir*

Tough, *The Years That Matter Most: How College Makes or Breaks Us*

Wehle, *How to Read The Constitution and Why*

Rachel Alter, Vicky Cooper, and Brad Havill



Scrapbook December 2019: TEST YOUR TRIVIA KNOWLEDGE!

1. How many towns voted to take part in a Western Massachusetts broadband initiative in 2010?
2. The Wisdom Chapter #130 of the order of what organization celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2010?
3. What does MBI stand for, and what did it do?
4. Who bought the Card Lake Inn when it went to auction in 2010?

Answers: 1. 49. 2. Eastern Star. 3. Massachusetts Broadband Institute. It spearheaded efforts to bring 123 unconnected or underserved towns to create “the middle mile network,” a direct connection to a speedy new fiber optic network. 4. It remained unsold.

Community News & Events

Community Health Association

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

Stockbridge Grange Dinner

There will no dinner at the Grange in December. Regular meals will start up again in January.

Council on Aging

No potluck luncheon is planned for December. See you again in January!

West Stockbridge Congregational Church

St. Patrick's Catholic Church is holding its 22nd Annual Holiday Cookie Walk on Saturday, December 14, from 9 to 11 a.m. in the Parish Center. You will be able to choose from a wide variety of cookies that will be sold by weight. Please visit St. Patrick's for your holiday cookies!

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

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Collector's Note

As another calendar year comes to a close, it's time to prepare the FY 20 actual real estate and personal property bills. I hope you all took the opportunity to review your revised property valuations. They have been available on the town's website and at the assessors' office since early November.

Once the Department of Revenue approves our tax rate, bills will be issued. Expect to receive yours in early January. This bill will be due on February 1, 2020. If you wish to challenge your bill, the window of opportunity ends February 1, 2020. Bills must be paid in full and the abatement request must be received by the assessors no later than February 1 for consideration.

For those on the water/sewer system, any water/sewer bill that remains unpaid on December 11 will be liened (charged) to the real estate bill as well.

When paying bills, receipt at the collector's office, not postmark, determines when a payment is considered complete. Those who choose to wait until the due date to make payment must either deliver it to the collector's office before the close of business hours or pay online at the town's website using the link to Unibank and complete the transaction before 11:59 p.m. to be considered timely. Dropping a payment at the post office or using a bill payment service through another bank usually means a 3- to 5-day delay in crediting and results in a late charge.

Anyone interested in receiving future bills electronically can sign up on the town's website through the Unibank online payment link. Enjoy the benefit of having your bill delivered to your inbox. No more bills lost in the mail or misplaced around the house!

Happy holidays and best wishes for a healthy, peace-filled new year!

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.

Winter Parking Ban



The winter parking ban is in effect from November 15, 2019, to April 30, 2020, between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. for all streets in West Stockbridge. Violations of this ban may result in a \$25 fine for parking in prohibited areas or a \$50 fine for impeding snow removal. In addition, if the vehicle is impeding snow removal, it may be towed at the owner's expense.

The municipal parking lot across from the Public Market and the parking area on Moscow Road near the public bathrooms may be used for overnight off-street parking. However, vehicles in those lots must be moved by 8 a.m. to allow the Department of Public Works to manage snow and ice removal. For any concerns about off-street parking or the winter off-street parking ban, contact Chief of Police Marc Portieri at 232-8500.

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**For more information and to sign up:
www.VisitWestStockbridge.com under Events**

To Audition: <http://bit.ly/CelebrateARTSaudition>
To Volunteer: <http://bit.ly/CelebrateARTSvolunteer>
Questions?: WSWalk012@gmail.com

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History Quiz Answer:



The Comstock House, then and now. Photos courtesy of Bob Salerno.

The village Congregational Church was started by a small group of 25 in 1833, holding services in the second floor of the local school. As the congregation grew, it raised enough funds to build the first church in 1843 on the current knoll. That structure burned in 1881 and was replaced by the church building still there today.

By 1869, the congregation grew to more than a hundred people. With a gift of \$2,000 from Benjamin Cone, a prominent quarry owner and farmer, the congregants were able to purchase a house on the east side of Main Street to serve as the parsonage and social hall. The house only cost \$1,900; there's no record of what the other \$100 was used for.

The Comstock House (35 Main Street), as it was known in town, was built 20 years earlier by local merchant James Comstock. By the 1860s, it was owned by the local carriage maker, James Carpenter. His family lived upstairs, and he sold harnesses and leather goods on the first floor and "fine" carriages in the barn out back.

The church used the new parsonage for "delightful church functions such as out-of-this-world suppers on long plank tables with homemade foods." They used the front room for socials and to sell quilts and other handmade goods, and the rest of the space as housing for the pastor. It was an active extension of the church community. The church retained the house until 1950 when they sold it for \$5,000 to a private family. The proceeds of the sale funded excavating under the current church to build a recreation room and accommodate a new furnace.

The Comstock House is still there and in private hands as an apartment house now. The building has been modified with additions in the front, but you can still see the ornamental work on the eaves and the classic Italianate-style flat roof. The rear barn where the carriages were sold has been taken down.

The common misconception is that the Italianate-style house, next to the church on the south side, was the parsonage. Some early tourist materials and town write-ups misidentified it as such. That iconic house, the Gay-Kniffen house, has its own story and will be the subject of another history question.

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Birthdays & Anniversaries

12/1 Steve Seward

12/20 Connor Bagel Epsteinkraus

12/20 Susan Fisher

12/20 Robin Lazarow

12/30 Mark McGuane

12/30 Chrystal Reder

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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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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Animal Control	<i>Brian Hoskeer</i>	232-0300	ext. 335	As Needed
Assessors Office	<i>Mary Stodden</i>	232-0300	ext. 303	Tues. 1–5 p.m.; Thurs. 9 a.m.–1 p.m.
Board of Health	<i>Earl Moffatt</i>	232-0300	ext. 314	Fri. 9 a.m.–4 p.m., or by appt.
Select Board	<i>Bernie Fallon, Doane Perry, Eric Shimelonis</i>			
Administrative Assistant	<i>Marie Ryan</i>	232-0300	ext. 319	Mon., Wed., Thurs., Fri. 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
Building Inspector	<i>Brian Duval</i>	232-0300	ext. 313	Tues. 4–7 p.m.
Conservation Commission	<i>Jennifer Kujawski, Lori Rose</i>	232-0300	ext. 338	Leave Message for Inquiries
Council on Aging	<i>John Zick</i>	232-0300	ext. 340	Leave Message for Inquiries
Emergency Management	<i>Louis Oggiani</i>	528-2175		
Fire Department	<i>Peter Skorput</i>	232-4200 (non-emergency)		Mon. 6:30–9 p.m.
Highway Department	<i>Curt G. Wilton</i>	232-0305		Leave Message for Inquiries
Library	<i>Rachel Alter</i>	232-0300	ext. 308	Tues. 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Wed., Thurs., and Fri. 2–6 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m.–2 p.m.; closed Sun. & Mon.
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Town 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>Wayne Cooper</i>	232-0307		Tues. & Thurs. 10 a.m.–6 p.m. and Sat. 8 a.m.–6 p.m.
Tree Warden	<i>Andrew Fudge</i>	232-4322		
Veterans Agency	<i>Laurie Hills</i>	528-1580		
Zoning Board of Appeals	<i>C. Randolph Thunfors</i>	232-0300	ext. 300	
Official Town Government Website: weststockbridge-ma.gov • Community and Business Website: visitweststockbridge.com				

THE WEST STOCKBRIDGE CHAMBER PLAYERS

Winter Concert

Monday, December 30, 2019 at 6 pm

West Stockbridge Congregational Church, 45 Main Street, West Stockbridge

Catherine Hudgins, clarinet • Sheila Fiekowsky, violin
Daniel Getz, viola • Oliver Aldort, cello
Deborah DeWolf Emery, piano

Bruch: 8 Pieces for Clarinet, Viola, and Piano, Op. 83

Khachaturian: Trio

Schumann: Träumerei from Kinderszenen, Op.15
for Cello and Piano

Dohnányi: Serenade, Op. 10

TICKETS \$35 Available Dec. 1st*

PURCHASE ADVANCE TICKETS ONLINE

www.weststockbridgehistory.org

Or call 413-232-5055

...or look for the "Blue Note"
in downtown business windows...

* Residents of West Stockbridge under 18
are free with a reservation.

A
reception
will follow
the concert
next door to
the church!



THIS PROGRAM IS A BENEFIT
PERFORMANCE FOR THE WEST STOCKBRIDGE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

West Stockbridge
Local Yokel

P.O. Box 238
 West Stockbridge, MA
 01266

thelocalyokel.org



December 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

December 2019 Calendar of Events

12/4	Knitters & More	2–4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
12/4	Select Board meeting	6 p.m.	Town Offices
12/5	Board of Health meeting	6:30 p.m.	Town Offices
12/6	West Stockbridge Sparkles	5–7 p.m.	WS Congregational Church, 47 Main St.
12/7&8	Christmas in the Village	All day	Locations around town
12/10	American Legion meeting	7 p.m.	Town Offices
12/11	Knitters & More	2–4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
12/14	St. Patrick's Holiday Cookie Walk	9–11 a.m.	St. Patrick's Parish House
12/15	*** Deadline for the next Local Yokel ***		Send to info@thelocalyokel.org
12/18	Knitters & More	2–4 p.m.	Town Offices Community Room
12/18	Select Board meeting	6 p.m.	Town Offices
12/21	First Day of Winter		
12/22	Hanukkah starts at sundown		
12/24	Christmas Eve		
12/25	Christmas		
12/26	Kwanzaa begins		
12/30	Chamber Players Holiday Concert	6 p.m.	WS Congregational Church, 47 Main St.
12/31	New Year's Eve		