

Local yokel

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

West
Stockbridge
January
2021

WISHING YOU A HAPPY, HOPEFUL, AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR!



American Basswood fruits borne on leafy bracts at Card Pond. Photo by John Parker

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 2005



Santa and his helpers. Photo by Cait Graham

By Caitlin Graham

On Sunday, December 6, Santa arrived in West Stockbridge to greet local families on a cold and windy evening. Thanks to the officers of the West Stockbridge Police Department, who coordinated with North Pole Security, Santa was able to visit safely and provide some holiday cheer while the Christmas tree at the Town Offices was officially lit. Although the global pandemic made this a very different event from years past, the folks at West Stockbridge Parks & Recreation were happy to bring some socially distanced fun, in the form of s'mores, fire pits, and Frosty the Snowman, to the community we all love so much. Everyone looks forward with hope to next year when strolling around Main Street and cookie decorating with Mrs. Claus can resume!



Snowman. Photo by John Parker

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

November 20, 2020

Via Zoom Meeting

Open Meeting

Quorum present: Roger Kavanagh, Select Board Chair, Eric Shimelonis, Select Board Member, Kathleen Keresey, Select Board Member, and Marie Ryan, Town Administrator.

Others Present: Curt Wilton, DPW Director

Roger called the meeting to order at 11:01 AM. He stated that the purpose of this meeting is to discuss and come up with a consensus on how to develop the Shared Winter Streets grant application, specifically the what, who and how to manage if we receive the grant.

Kathleen began by reviewing the first Shared Streets grant program (Shared Streets 1.0) and stated that it required a quick response with a very short deadline. For this grant (Shared Streets 2.0) she suggested to get the word out to the community and get them involved as much as possible. This grant could dovetail perfectly with the Master Plan to involve sidewalks, streets, walkability and

parking. Kathleen suggests that it is imperative that the issues of purchasing and procurement be worked out before applying for this grant.

Eric said there needs to be a gathering of ideas as soon as possible. This grant has a more infrastructure base to it. Roger would like the ideas to include the materials that would be needed to implement the projects in order to get set with purchasing from different vendors, and possibly revisit the option of the Town getting a municipal credit card.

The "who" should include a committee but it will need a leader. Kathleen believes this grant application should include Curt, the Parks and Recreation Committee and the merchants. She is happy to still be involved in this grant application development process since she has a good working relationship with the consultant, Mass DOT, and the vendors. There will need to be more helping hands for the implementation.

Kathleen would like to have a public forum and to work with the Planning Board, Parks and Recreation and Master Plan Committees. She would like a Zoom meeting set up for information

...continued on page 5

WANDERING JEWS
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MIXED UP JEWS
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- ❖ The Local Yokel
- ❖ Pet Partners of the Tri-State Berkshires
- ❖ 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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ma.gov

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E-mail: chief@weststockbridge-
ma.gov

WINTER PARKING BAN November 16, 2020

The "Winter Parking Ban" is in effect from November 15, 2020 to April 30, 2021 between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 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, where the public bathrooms are, may be used for overnight off-street parking. However, vehicles in those lots must be moved by 8:00 a.m. to allow the Department of Public Works to manage snow and ice removal.

Anyone having questions about off street parking or the winter off-street parking ban can call Marc Portieri, Chief of Police at 413-232-8500.

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gathering and ideas. The community should submit written ideas to the SB prior to the public meeting, who then in turn will decide which ideas would be appropriate to include in the grant proposal. Eric suggested having an anchor project and then include the other ideas. Curt agreed with the public meeting and said it needs to be done quickly so that Kathleen can focus on what is needed for the projects. There was a discussion to include seasonal ice skating rinks and work at Card Pond.

Kathleen will reach out to Kittleson Consultants and get ideas of what would qualify for the grant, if they will be able to work with the Town again and what their turnaround time would be.

Roger wrapped up the meeting:

1. Kathleen offered to be the contact person and take the lead in developing the Shared Winter Streets application. She will contact the consultants to see if they can assist us.
2. We will hold a public forum for ideas but require written ideas prior to the meeting to discuss and review what will fit into the schedule of a January 5th or January 29th submission date.
3. If we are awarded the grant, the Board will work out how it will be managed.

Kathleen discussed getting a date set for the public forum and that she will reach out to businesses and see what their future needs may be. She also would like another discussion with Town Accountant, Elaine Markham in regards to a Town credit card.

The Board decided on a Zoom public forum meeting on Wednesday, December 2 at 6 PM. Roger would like it publicized on the website and Eric will see if he can get it into the Local Yodel this week.

Roger made a motion to adjourn at 12:14 PM, Kathleen seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Kathleen, Yes Eric, Yes Roger, Yes

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Y. Ryan
Town Administrator

Select Board Meeting Minutes November 30, 2020

Open Meeting

Quorum present: Roger Kavanagh, Select Board Chair, Eric Shimelonis, Select Board Member, Kathleen Keresey, Select Board Member, and Marie Ryan, Town Administrator.

Others Present: Town Accountant Elaine Markham and Finance Committee Chair Bob Salerno

Roger called meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Meeting Minutes:

Eric made a motion, seconded by Roger, to approve minutes from October 29, November 2, 12 and 16, 2020 as amended. Roll call vote was taken:

Kathleen, Yes Eric, Yes Roger, Yes
Motion Passed.

Town Administrator Update:

- Sparkles Holiday event will take place on Sunday Dec 6 at Town Hall from 5 PM-7PM with a fire pit, Santa and Music.

Discussion Items:

Alcoholic Liquor License Fees:

Discussion ensued in regards to a reduction of the Alcoholic Liquor License fees for local restaurants for the calendar year 2021. Roger was concerned about giving relief to a few businesses that pay license fees to sell alcoholic beverages when all businesses and town residents have been impacted by COVID related restrictions. He suggested the possibility of waiving the fee for 6 months and then revisiting the issue. Eric made a motion to reduce the fee to \$100 for the calendar year 2021 only, Kathleen seconded. The Board took a roll call vote:

Kathleen, Yes Eric, Yes Roger, No
Motion Passed.

Purchasing from Online Vendors:

Elaine researched and discussed this issue with the auditor and the consensus is that the Town should not have a credit card. She told the Board that some towns apply for a credit card through their local banks with a limit of \$10,000. The main concern the Board has is that once the card reaches the limit they would like to have it cleared/paid up as soon as possible to use the card again. Elaine explained the warrant procedure and said they can only pay on a monthly statement from the bank.

...continued on page 6

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Roger thanked Elaine for the research she did and for her thoughts on getting a credit card. She will research a possible line of credit from the bank as well as a credit card from Berkshire Bank. Marie and Elaine will gather information on what other towns in Massachusetts are doing in regards to purchases with grant money and report at the Dec 7th Select Board meeting.

Elaine will continue to work with vendors to set up accounts to pay by invoice.

Select Board Speak:

Roger told the Board that he had written to Senator Adam Hinds and Representative Smitty Pignatelli in regards to changing the rules for Town Meetings so that they may be virtual. Smitty called Roger and said the issue had been reviewed earlier this year and that the conclusion was that Open Town Meetings have to, by definition, be open to all residents. Moving them to a virtual format would not allow all residents to participate. He mentioned parking lot meetings held in Richmond and several other towns as an alternative approach.

Roger asked Marie to gather ideas for holding future outdoor Town meetings that could include using the parking lot and to report back at the December 14th meeting.

Roger said he would like to see documents related to the Master Plan Project posted on the Town website to keep residents up to date on the project. He asked Eric to check with Dana Bixby, who is managing the project, to see if that would be okay with her.

Kathleen said she would like to see the Shared Streets proposal posted on the website as well.

Citizen Speak:

Joe Roy thanked the Board for a productive meeting.

Bob Salerno asked what the current status of the audit is and Marie told him they have begun and are expecting to have the report sometime in January.

Roger made a motion to adjourn at 7:36 PM, Eric seconded. A roll call was taken:

Kathleen, Yes Eric, Yes Roger, Yes

Motion Passed.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Y. Ryan

Town Administrator

Documents:

Sparkles event flyer

Liquor License information

Select Board Meeting Minutes

December 2, 2020

Public Forum Meeting

Open Meeting

Quorum present: Roger Kavanagh, Select Board Chair, Eric Shimelonis, Select Board Member, Kathleen Keresey, Select Board Member, and Marie Ryan, Town Administrator.

Others Present: Town Director of Public Works Curt Wilton and Finance Committee Chair Bob Salerno

Members of the Community: Amy Brentano (The Foundry), Grigori Fateyeu (TurnPark), Connie Eagan, Jared Gelormino (TurnPark), Frank Landsberger, Karen Kavanagh and Joe Roy, Jr.

Roger called meeting to order at 6:00 PM. He stated the purpose of this meeting is to solicit public input for the Winter Shared Streets and Spaces Grant application.

Kathleen requested Grigori present his plans for the area across from TurnPark around the pump station. Grigori shared the screen with his drawings and explained his vision for the area around the pump station on Moscow Road. He explained this project may be done in stages as the elements become available for purchase.

Roger asked for input from other attendees:

Bob Salerno:

- There is a total of 8 possible trails in town he would like to see worked on, possibly with the assistance of Berkshire Natural Resources.
- He would also like to see parking set up for the trails and steps at the Old Town Hall from the upper parking lot to the lower parking lot.

Kathleen reviewed emails from two residents who had responded to the request for input on the grant application:

- Margie Skaggs suggested work to be done on trails and walkways, as well as, open spaces with more seating.
- Louise Faggioni suggested a new automatic door at Town Hall and more benches around Town.

Curt Wilton, Director of Public Works had two major project suggestions.

1. Use all or most of the grant money to create sidewalks on Lenox Road to give safe walking access for residents on that road to walk downtown.

...continued on page 7

Town Offices Remain Closed to Public Due to Pandemic

Due to the increase in positive COVID-19 cases, the Town Offices remain closed to the public until further notice. Town Offices staff, along with police, fire, and public works employees, will remain on duty. The library will also be closed to browsing and computer use at this time. The food pantry is still available. Please come to the Police Station in the Town Offices. Officers on duty will be happy to assist you in having access to the food pantry at any time.

For the latest local and state COVID updates, visit the town website news feed at <https://www.weststockbridge-ma.gov/node/1/news>.

2. Use the grant money to upgrade the Card Pond area. He suggested an upgrade to the parking lot, use the field to the south for an ice skating rink, create trails around the side of the pond, a pavilion with picnic tables and improving the beach area near the playground equipment.

Curt stated doing one of these major projects will make the process simple with limited vendors and focus on one area giving the most improvements to impact the largest number of residents.

Roger:

- Create a walking trail around the perimeter of the Town Hall property to increase the use of existing Town facilities.
- He asked Curt to get ideas from the Parks and Recreation Committee and Joe Roy to have the Vision Committee make recommendations to Kathleen.

Eric:

- His priority is the traffic safety near the crosswalk on Main Street.
- He would like to have more shade trees near the playgrounds around town.

Frank:

- Traffic safety is important.
- Upgrading Card Pond is a great idea.
- Recommended which ever project that benefits the greatest number of residents to have a maximum impact be considered.

Karen:

- She suggested placing Grigori's plans on the website and ask for community input and comments and possibly include a document summarizing the ideas put forth at this meeting as well.

Roger made a motion to adjourn at 7:32 PM, Eric seconded. Roll call vote was taken:

Kathleen, Yes Eric, Yes Roger, Yes

Motion Passed.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie V. Ryan
Town Administrator

Community Preservation Act Goes Into Effect

In 2019, the voters of West Stockbridge approved an article at the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) allowing the town to establish and fund an account for community preservation projects. That vote was again approved by ballot at the 2020 ATM and goes into effect with the issuance of the 2021 actual real estate bill in January 2021.

Therefore, taxpayers will find a Community Preservation Act surcharge on their upcoming bills. The amount, as approved at the ATM, is *2% of the tax on all but the first \$100,000 of valuation on each real estate parcel.*

Birthdays & Anniversaries

1/1	Ada Masigro
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 Yoke!*, please send it in by the 15th of the month before the desired issue each year.

The *Local Yoke!*, P.O. Box 238, West Stockbridge MA 01266, e-mail info@thelocalyoke.org, or visit www.thelocalyoke.org



January History Quiz Question:

Winter is here, and thoughts are starting to turn to spring and specifically baseball. During the mid-1930s, Berkshire County towns, particularly West Stockbridge, sponsored semipro local teams. George (Garrett) Troy was owner of Troy's Garage, town constable, and a major promoter. His baseball team (the Troy's Garagemen) was a semipro group of local players who regularly played at Keresey Field, located on Route 41 near the village cemetery.

George Troy served as a town clerk, selectman, and fire chief, but he was a businessman and promoter at heart. George used his baseball team for marketing purposes to raise awareness of his Ford dealership. Two games were well publicized in the area and drew large crowds to Keresey Field on Albany Street (now known as Route 41). What were they?

(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

Collector's Note

By June Biggs

As 2020 and its many challenges finally comes to an end, it's unfortunately time to prepare for the fiscal year 2021 actual real estate and personal property billing cycle. Once the Department of Revenue approves our tax rate, bills will be created and issued. You can expect to receive yours during the first week of January. These bills will be due on February 1, 2021.

If you wish to challenge your property assessment, the window of opportunity runs until February 1, 2021. Bills must be paid in full, and the abatement request, available online or in the assessors' office, must be received by the assessors no later than February 1 for consideration. If you have a prior year delinquency, it will be noted in the lower right-hand corner of your bill. The past due amount is not listed; you must call the office for a payoff amount.

For those on the water/sewer system, any water/sewer bill that remained unpaid on December 15 was liened to real estate bills and became part of your tax liability. Be aware that if your mortgage is escrowed, it may impact your monthly mortgage payment.

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 real estate or personal property 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! Unfortunately, this service is not available for excise or utility bills.

As I prepare this article in early December, the Town Offices are closed to the public due to the pandemic. I suspect this may continue through most of January and possibly longer. If you wish to drop off payments, please use the drop box to the left of the main doors. Please do not leave cash.

Lastly, I hope you were all able to find some joy in the holidays even though your celebrations may have taken on a new form. My wish for each of you is that the upcoming year brings release from the tensions brought on by COVID, restored health of both body and spirit, and millions of hugs from all those you love!

June Biggs, Collector

Tel.: 232-0300, ext. 302

E-mail: collector@weststockbridge-ma.gov

January Donor Roll Call

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Anonymous: 3

Thanks to everyone who has donated to WSLY. We couldn't do it without your support! Keep the *Local Yokel* coming. Please send your gift today! (See response form on page 17.)



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@annelesserscommunications.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.

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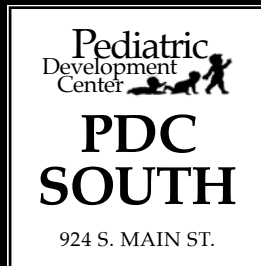
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Grist from the Mill

by Kelt Wilska

Musings on Books and Writing

It Could've Been To Kill a Blue Jay!

By Kelt Wilska

The new year is upon us, and with that, better days ahead. It is a time to consider what will be and what could have been. In this spirit of reflection, we examine the twists and turns that have led authors to the most difficult finishing touch, that pithy yet inexhaustible source of inevitable controversies and limitless interpretations: the title!

Catch-22 by Joseph Heller has perhaps the most famous title origin story. Would it surprise you to learn the renowned World War II satire was supposed to be *Catch-18*? Would it make a difference to you? After the revelation that another book with the number 18 featuring prominently was going to be published around the same time, Heller's editors decided to go with 22, much to the author's dismay. To a reader, no big deal. To the man who invested blood, sweat, and tears, it was night and day, *Gone with the Wind* versus *Gone with the Breeze*.

Artists draw inspiration from practically everywhere: a dappled forest grove, a bustling city street, and even other pieces of art. Have you ever visited The Mount in Lenox, the garden estate that was once home to Berkshire literary giant Edith Wharton? The title of her most famous novel, *The Age of Innocence*, came from the name of a popular painting at the time, a portrait of a young girl in a flowing white dress. The simple unassuming title belies a much more complex plot of marital discord and forbidden love—ironic juxtaposition at its finest.

The final title here requires some extra detective work. Everyone is familiar with the beloved cast of characters in *Winnie-the-Pooh*, especially the titular bear himself. Pooh was in fact named after the stuffed toy of author A.A. Milne's son, Christopher (Robin!), along with many of the other whimsical animal characters. But how did Pooh the stuffed bear get his name? Two of young Christopher's favorite animals in real life were a bear named Winnie from the London Zoo and a swan he found while on holiday. Its name was Pooh.

Happy New Year from Shaker Mill Books. Of course, 2020 was certainly *The Year of the Pandemic*. What will 2021's title be?

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We are happy to include them in the next issue.



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"We Remember When . . ."

Growing Up in West Stockbridge in the 1950s

A Series of Recollections by John Bormolini and Friends



*Cawcaw, sitting on the hood
of my brother's '50 Ford*

Cawcaw the Crow

I can honestly say that I was the only kid in West Stockbridge with a pet crow. It all began in the spring of 1953 when my brother Joe and a friend of his raided a crow's nest that had four young crows in it. Joe brought two of them home, and I quickly became the caretaker. We made a nest box with some hay from the barn.

I fed them twice a day, before going to school and when I got home. I soaked bread in water and held the bread over their heads, like the mother crow would do it. After a couple of days, the birds opened their mouths and literally crowed. I dropped the wet bread into their mouths and they gulped it down.

After a couple of weeks one of the birds would not eat and died. The other crow and I got along very well. I don't really know if it was a he or she, but I made the assumption that it was a he and gave him the name of Cawcaw.

Cawcaw grew in strength and became more inquisitive. One day after school I found Cawcaw on the floor of the barn. I picked him up and put him back into the nest, fed him, and went off to play. Eventually, Cawcaw decided it was time to leave the barn, but he never went far and

usually stayed near me. He depended on me for his meals. As summer was approaching, he became acquainted with my mother Anna, who would feed him leftovers. By this time, he could fly and found his own places to roost overnight.

Cawcaw was part of our family and would follow me just about anywhere. In the fall, when hunting season began, I took a walk in the woods and encountered two hunters. Suddenly, Cawcaw flew between me and the hunters. One hunter was ready to shoot him when the other hunter yelled out, "Don't shoot; he belongs to Bumbo!" That was me. A close call!

When winter arrived, we kids were able to sled down the hill behind my house. Cawcaw would follow me up and down the hill, flying from fence post to fence post that divided the pasture, all the time crowing. By now he was well known around the neighborhood.

Cawcaw would also follow me to elementary school, which is now the Town Offices. On several occasions he pecked at my classroom window. Mr. Reddington, our teacher and school principal, was amused the first time, but it soon grew old and I had to shoo him away.

Louise Faggioni also remembers Cawcaw:

One of the things he liked to do was to look for shiny things. One day he landed on an old wooden fence post with a cavity at the top. He had something shiny in his beak, which he deposited in the post and flew off. We found that the post was full of shiny objects. Other fence posts were filled with his "treasures" as well.

It was rumored that Cawcaw liked to fly into open windows, and on one occasion he flew into an open window, landed on a beautiful bed spread, and pooped on it. The resident did not open her windows again until he went to crow heaven.

Cawcaw lasted for about two years. For some reason, he dropped me like a hot potato and took after Jimmy Dellea who lived close to the town center. Why? It's still a mystery. He finally succumbed to injuries after being attacked by blackbirds.

I truly enjoyed having a pet crow for a few years. Cawcaw remains a cherished memory to this day, nearly seventy years later.

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Community News & Events

Due to the coronavirus health emergency, many meetings and events are being cancelled or postponed. We are including all information available to us up until publication, but with the likelihood of changes, readers should check with the office, department, or organization for the latest information.

Community Health Association

Weekly blood pressure clinics are by appointment only: 9 to 10 a.m. every Wednesday and Thursday, at the Town Offices, 21 State Line Road, West Stockbridge. Info: Emilie Jarrett, RN, 232-0122, or Emilie@charws.com.

Stockbridge Grange Dinner

The dinners at the Grange have been suspended indefinitely due to the health crisis.

Council on Aging

Council on Aging meetings have been suspended indefinitely due to the health crisis.

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



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West Stockbridge, MA 01266



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weststockbridgelibrary.org | 413-232-0300 ext. 308

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

***Hello to all and best wishes for a happy 2021
from the librarians and library trustees of West Stockbridge.***



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This seems like a good time to review the free electronic treasures that await you at the Boston Public Library! Just go to bpl.org/ecard to get an eCard using the bar-code number from your local library card. If you don't have your card handy, we encourage you to call or e-mail us, and we will send you the number and answer other questions about setting up your BPL eCard.

The film and television streaming services Kanopy and Hoopla are among the many services you can use for free with your BPL eCard.



Rachel, Brad, and Vicky

NEW ADULT FICTION

Baldacci, *Daylight*
Blooms, *Every Bone a Prayer*
Cole, *When No One Is Watching*
Connolly, *Dirty South*
Cooney, *One Night Two Souls Went Walking*

Gaiman, *Neil Gaiman Reader: Selected Fiction*
Rijneveld, *Discomfort of Evening*
Tchaikovsky, *Doors of Eden*
Washington, *Memorial*
Wiseman, *Orphan Collector*

NEW ADULT NONFICTION

Alter, *His Very Best: Jimmy Carter, A Life*
Cooper, *We Keep The Dead Close: A Murder at Harvard*
Gosden, *Magic: A History*
Leakey, *Sediments of Time: My Lifelong Search for the Past*
Minoui, *Book Collectors: A Band of Syrian Rebels and the Stories That Carried Them Through a War*
Payne, *Dead Are Arising: The Life of Malcolm X*
Smith, *Intimations: Six Essays*

NEW ADULT DVDs

Yellowstone, Season 3

NEW YOUNG ADULT AND CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Pinkney, *Little Mermaid*
Riordan, *Trials of Apollo: The Burning Maze*
Wein, *Enigma Game*



Scrapbook January 2021: TEST YOUR TRIVIA KNOWLEDGE!

1. What was Rouge fare billed as in 2012?
2. The photo made as part of the after-school program "Spartan Launch " by Lexzi Summers was on display where?
3. Who was the "student ambassador" that was nominated in 2012 from West Stockbridge?
4. Who was the only student from West Stockbridge to make the fall 2011 BCC Dean's List?

1. French cuisine 2. Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge 3. Brocque Tonini 4. Hilary Houldsworth

New Process for Burn Permits in 2021

According to Town Administrator Marie Ryan, beginning January 2021 all burn permits will be available online through the town website or by phone for those without a computer. Applying for a permit must be done on the same day of the requested burn to ensure that weather conditions are favorable. The permits will now be free. The online information and phone number will be announced at a later date.



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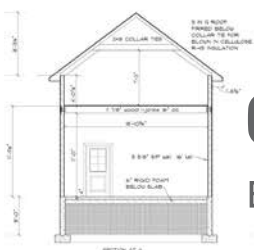
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On the Home Front

By Thom Lipiczky

The Housing Market

I wish my readers—both of you—a happy New Year and send hopes for better times. One of the issues that the pandemic has brought to prominence for many is that of inequality in housing. Since most of my articles are about owning or at least living in a home of some sort, this topic has been on my mind for a long time.

As I'm writing this article in mid-December 2020, the Congress has not yet agreed on another relief bill that will offer help to the many people suffering economically from the effects of the pandemic. Due to expire on December 31 is an eviction moratorium. As I'm writing this, I don't actually know if literally millions of our fellow citizens, who *through no fault of their own*, will be made homeless without some sort of federal assistance.

I don't actually know how many of our neighbors right here in town and in other local communities will be affected by this situation. But I do know, from news reports from local sources, that there is a housing shortage here in the Berkshires made all the worse by the economic effects of the pandemic. The "K"-shaped recovery—wealthy people are doing just fine, and non-wealthy people are sinking into a hole—is evident in several bits of info I've seen recently.

An e-mail circulated among members of the town's Vision Committee simply lists without comment four real estate transactions in West Stockbridge on four days between November 2 and November 6. The amounts of the sales range from \$450,000 to \$810,000 to \$1 million to \$1.5 million plus. These properties are hardly fixer-uppers, and I don't disparage in any way the right of sellers to ask whatever they can for what must be very nice homes.

Then I note a report from the Berkshire County Board of Realtors last October that perhaps explains the increasingly higher cost of housing: "Much like the rest of the county, southern Berkshire's inventory of homes is *lower than ever previously recorded* [emphasis mine]. In the residential market, southern Berkshire now has just two months of inventory. . . . The closed sales volume jumped to almost \$45 million, up from \$20 million in sales last year." In other words, a shortage of available housing is pushing the cost of buying higher and higher.

Underscoring this, Conor Sen in the September 18 issue of the *Berkshire Eagle* wrote, "America has a housing inventory crisis. The number of available homes for sale is down 40 percent from this point last year, driven partly by homebuyers taking advantage of low interest rates to get more space during the pandemic."

Beyond the shortage of available housing is the rising cost of building even modest houses. I wrote about this last month in the *Local Yokel*. (Pulitzer nominations can be submitted any time.) This is my real concern: Where do the local folks making less than the median income live? Are we making it impossible for the kids graduating from Monument Mountain Regional High School or Berkshire Community College to live right here where they grew up? Can we as a community consider what so-called affordable housing (I believe the current term is "workforce housing") looks like? Who gets to live there? And how much does it cost?

I'm hoping for a better year in '21 for everybody. Comments, questions, rants can go to info@localyokel.org.



History Quiz Answer:

GIRL PITCHER TO TWIRL TWO GAMES FOR TROY'S GARAGE

A girl pitcher will take the mound for Troy's Garage when the West Stockbridge nine plays Copake in a double bill on Labor Day. She is Miss Verne Beatrice Mitchell, known as Jackie and she will start both tilts for the Garage-men. The morning game at 10 will be played at West Stockbridge and the afternoon tilt at 2 at Copake.

Jackie gained fame a year or so ago when she struck out both Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig in an exhibition game between the Chattanooga Lookouts and the Yankees. She is the only woman ever to have held a contract in organized baseball; that was with Chattanooga, although she never pitched in a regular game for the team.

Daddy Vance, a neighbor of the Mitchells when he pitched for Memphis, is said to have taught Jackie the rudiments of pitching, and the 20-year-old feminine hurler is claimed to have considerable of the speed that characterizes the Dazzler's mound performances.

The most famous game took place in 1935 when the Philadelphia Athletics played Troy's Garage. This event is well known and talked about in local circles, although the unique specifics will be for a later history question. But, in retrospect, there was a game the year before that would have been even more eventful.

George Troy's 1934 team was good but not great. They lost to teams from other town, and George need a ploy that might draw more people to the field on Route 41. He arranged for a "girl" pitcher to appear in two exhibition innings when they played a doubleheader against the Copake Falls All-Stars.

Jackie Mitchell was a 29-year-old phenomenon, a woman in a highly male world who was a very competent pitcher. In 1931, she pitched for the Chattanooga Lookouts in two games against the New York Yankees. She struck out both Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig. Babe was not happy and commented, "I don't know what's going to happen if they begin to let women in baseball. Of course, they will never make good. Why? Because they are too delicate. It would kill them to play ball every day."

Baseball didn't kill Jackie, and although her contract with the All-Stars was voided, she continued to play. She pitched for The House of David men's league team and other exhibition games for the next few years until retiring in 1937. Major league baseball didn't permit the signing of women until 1992.

The area papers reported the "nationally known girl southpaw twirled an inning for each team" in both games. Given the local talent, she likely struck out both teams. George Troy must have been happy with the attendance at his Labor Day doubleheader. West Stockbridge split the games with Copake that day, winning 11-10 and losing 5-3, typical of their season that year.

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Town Offices Main Number 413-232-0300 • Fax 232-7195				
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>Roger Kavanagh, Kathleen Keresey, Eric Shimelonis</i>	232-0300	ext. 319	Mon.–Thurs. 7 a.m.–3 p.m. Fri. 7 a.m.–11 a.m.
Town Administrator	<i>Marie Ryan</i>			
Building Inspector	<i>Brian Duval</i>	232-0300	ext. 313	Leave Message for Inquiries
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>Steve Traver</i>	911 or 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.
Police Department	<i>Marc Portieri</i>	911 or 232-8500 (non-emergency)		24 hours, 7 days/week
Post Office	<i>Colleen A. Wich</i>	232-8544		Lobby: 7 a.m.–7 p.m.; 7 days/week; Window: Mon.–Fri. 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; Sat. 9 a.m.–12 noon
Seasonal Lifeguard		232-0315		
Sewer & Water Commission	<i>Michael Buffoni</i>	232-0309		
Town Accountant	<i>Elaine Markham</i>	232-0300	ext. 317	Leave Message for Inquiries
Town Clerk	<i>Ronni Barrett</i>	232-0300	ext. 300	Tues. & Thurs. 1:30–4 p.m.
Town Collector	<i>June A. Biggs</i>	232-0300	ext. 302	Wed. 3–6 p.m.; Thurs. and Fri. 10 a.m.– 2 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m.–1 p.m.
Town Historian	<i>Robert Salerno</i>	232-4465		
Town Treasurer	<i>Karen Williams</i>	232-0300	ext. 316	Thurs. 9 a.m.–4 p.m.
Transfer Station	<i>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



January Art Calendar

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

2021

Jan 1-22, Holiday Art Show: Online. Running October 30 - January 22. Visit www.berkshireartists.org

Jan 11, Collage & Mixed Media Workshop, 1-3 p.m. Join Marion Grant for Collage & Mixed Media online using Zoom. More details online.

Jan 12 & 26, Positive Critique, 7:30-8:30 p.m. Join Michele Caplan for a positive critique session for Guild members via Zoom. Artworks to discuss due 24hrs in advance. More details online.

Jan 24, Berkshire Photo Gathering, 2-4pm. Online. See following webpage for more information: berkshirephotogathering.com/online-meetings

Jan 25, Art Book Gathering, 12:30-2pm. Share a favorite book: artist, or process. RSVP: berkshireartists@gmail.com

TUESDAYS, Demonstration, 3pm. Watch an artist demonstrate their creative process each week via Zoom. More details online.

Art Together: Join Eva Schuster and other GBA members making Art Together online using Zoom. More details online.

WEDNESDAYS, 9 - 11:30am

WEDNESDAYS, 6:30 - 8:30pm

FRIDAYS, 2 - 4:45pm

FRIDAYS, Meet the Artist, 5 - 6pm. Join a different artist each week to gain an insight into their processes and art. More details online.

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Positive Critique | Art Book Club!**

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January 2021

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						



January 2021 Calendar of Events

Due to the coronavirus health emergency, many meetings and events are being canceled, postponed, or held online. We are including all information available to us up until publication, but with the likelihood of changes, readers should check with the office, department, or organization for the latest information.

1/1	New Year's Day: Welcome 2021!		
1/4	Select Board meeting	6 p.m.	See town website for details
1/8	Cemetery Commissioners' meeting	9 a.m.	See town website for details
1/15	*** Deadline for the next <i>Local Yokel</i> ***		Send to info@thelocalyokel.org
1/18	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day		
1/19	Select Board meeting	6 p.m.	See town website for details
1/19	Vision Committee meeting	6 p.m.	See town website for details

