

Local yokel

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

West
Stockbridge
July
2021



SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 2005

With the vaccination rate climbing and COVID cases falling, it feels like West Stockbridge is open again! Photo by John Parker

Art@Arrowhead: A Whale of a Show!

Featuring Five West Stockbridge Artists

By Carolyn Kay Brancato

Five artists from West Stockbridge will be among the 40 artists exhibiting at "Art@Arrowhead: A Whale of a Show!" The show takes place Saturday and Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on July 24 and 25 at Arrowhead, home of Herman Melville, 780 Holmes Road, Pittsfield. A reception will be held on Saturday from 2 to 4 p.m. The show is the brainchild of Adrian Holmes, part of the team chairing the show along with Guild of Berkshire Artists board member David Hagerty and West Stockbridge residents Margie Skaggs, president of the guild, and Amy Pressman, vice president of the guild.

Amy will turn her commercial design talents toward designing the Arrowhead show in the barn and outdoors under a large white tent—think Great White Whale! Along with several others, she designed the guild's fall show at the TurnPark Sculpture Garden.

Amy works in mixed media and "encaustic," a Greek word meaning "to heat or burn in." Heat is used throughout the process with a base of beeswax and dammar varnish, allowing her to integrate a multitude of textures and materials into each piece. She describes her work as "generally nature inspired, at times incorporating photography and found objects from my daily walks in the woods." Her piece, "My Favorite Seasons: Spring and Fall," uses birch bark, trillium as a stencil, and a photo of a sumac tree in fall.

Karen Andrews, whose gallery is located at 2 Furnace Road, West Stockbridge, is a multifaceted artist. Over the past 30 years, she has created an expansive portfolio of photographs, watercolor paintings, drawings, collages, and blends of different media in a unique style that captures the imagination and touches the hearts of her viewers. Her watercolor, "Boy in Beach Grasses," is typical of her work, providing a deep connection between art and soul.

For the past 15 years, following his retirement from the Financial Accounting Standards Board, Gary Schieneman has been painting in oil, watercolor, and pastel. His pastel, "Paris," shows a unique angle of the iconic Eiffel Tower.

West Stockbridge residents may see Karen Carmean, a former president of the guild, conducting plein air painting sessions around town on Saturdays. Karen has developed a full program of plein air painting sessions at such places as The Mount, Berkshire Botanical Garden, and Hancock Shaker Village. Her "Dancing Tulip" is oil on mixed media.

Finally, Lear Levin is exhibiting his photograph "Ladies That Lunch," part of his vast portfolio. Lear, a frequent contributor to the *Local Yoke!*, has enjoyed making the transition from his film work in New York City to photographing the lush landscape surrounding West Stockbridge.

The weekend show at Arrowhead is a departure from the guild's two-week show, typically held at the end of the summer in the Old Town Hall on Main Street. Amy notes that the setup under a tent requires erecting panels and highly compresses what is ordinarily many days of gathering, organizing, and placing art in a gallery space. The goal is to present a beautifully curated show, thanks in part to curators Marion Grant and Carol Kelly, that features art from among the guild's more than 170 Berkshire-based members. With COVID-19 restrictions lifted, the guild hopes to be back indoors in West Stockbridge very soon.



Amy Pressman, "My Favorite Seasons: Spring and Fall," mixed media and encaustic



Karen Carmean, "Dancing Tulip," oil on mixed media



Karen Andrews, "Boy in Beach Grasses," watercolor



Lear Levin, "Ladies That Lunch," photography



Gary Schieneman, "Paris," pastel

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 are on Zoom and may be viewed by clicking on the link in the meeting agenda posted on the town website calendar. Residents can receive e-mail notification of town events and meeting agendas by subscribing at <http://weststockbridgema.virtualltownhall.net/subscriber>].

Select Board Meeting Minutes Meeting via Zoom April 26, 2021

Open Meeting

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

Other Attendees: Police Chief Marc Portieri and Public Works Director Curt Wilton

Roger called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

The Board will approve minutes from April 12, 2021 meeting at the next meeting.

Kathleen made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 29, 2021 meeting, seconded by Eric.

Roll call vote:

Eric, Yes Roger, Yes Kathleen, Yes

Motion Passed.

Town Administrator Updates:

- Reminded voters about Town Meeting which will be an outdoor meeting on Monday, May 3rd at 6 PM.
- Voters can obtain a ballot for the Annual Town Election for Early Voting by Mail by printing an application for the EV ballot from the website.

SoMa request for BYOB on their property:

SoMa owner, Loretta Tennuta, asked that the Board to approve her request for a "Bring Your Own Beverage" (BYOB) permit at her establishment, SoMa. She read the request she had sent to the Board which included the dates, timeframe and all restrictions and guidelines they will follow. She requested the permit for Monday-Wednesday from 4pm to 8pm, from April 27 through October 31 for their 7 outdoor tables. The Board and Loretta agreed to expand the permit to 7 days a week from April through the end of November, should circumstances allow them to expand service. SoMa will also adhere to the strict COVID safety guidelines.

Roger made a motion to approve the BYOB permit at SoMa in their outside table service for 7 days a week from 4pm to 8pm, from April through the end of November, seconded by Kathleen.

Roll call vote:

Eric, Yes Roger, Yes Kathleen, Yes

Motion Passed.

Parking Issues:

Roger asked the Board to discuss;

1. Recap of logistical and parking issues identified from the last meeting on April 12, 2021 related to the street closure and entertainment events
2. Agree on key issues, solutions and discuss pros/cons
3. Develop a plan of action

Eric proposed a more coordinated and intentional program of municipal parking, and estimated that more effectively demarcated parking lots - along with better signage - would do a lot to alleviate parking issues in town. He reported that he has started the process for negotiating a possible agreement between the Town and the owners of No. Six Depot and the Tap House to use their parking areas as large municipal parking lot which the Town DPW will develop and maintain. This plan alone will greatly increase the number of available parking spots in the town center.

Terry Dixon from the Farmer's Market asked if the Town could mark the parking spots near the public restroom. Marking the spots will enable a more efficient use of the parking lot. She also stated that her vendors, all the volunteers and staff all park in Truc's Harris St. lot. The Farmer's Market also will post signs for available parking on their website but also feels signage is the key. Hotchkiss Mobiles and Turn Park have stated they will allow use of their parking lots as well. She will ask the Local Yokel to include parking suggestions in their paper. The Farmer's Market will close an hour earlier to allow for more parking for the restaurants.

Roger asked Terry how the street closure worked for them last year when Center Street was closed for Rouge to have extra outdoor dining. Terry responded that it worked fine and that Rouge was very helpful with making signage. This year Jeremy Kenny, Rouge Manager, said they will not close the street until 5:30 this year. This should help alleviate traffic congestion and parking issues.

Curt agreed that signage is a top priority and will help alleviate parking issues. He suggested that with marking the parking spots, adding signage and ticketing violators, will help. He then asked the Board to approve allowing DPW and Police Chief Marc Portieri to work on marking on-street parking around Town and create on street parking spots on Moscow Road, Oak Street and Old Great Barrington Road.

Roger feels strongly that there needs to be a police presence to assist with parking and public safety during the large events in town. He said the Police budget can not support it financially and that perhaps the businesses

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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.



Basement Mystery: Can You Help?

West Stockbridge resident Gail Garrick found the plaster slabs pictured here in her basement. They appear to show a street scene, possibly of a nearby town. If you recognize the street, please contact us at info@thelocalyokel.org to solve the mystery!

Photos courtesy of Gail Garrick



Wisdom Lodge A.F. & A.M.



6th Annual Golf Tournament Sunday, August 29th

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8:00 A.M. - Shotgun Start
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Public is Invited

Contact: catddgm31@yahoo.com

July History Quiz Question:

It wasn't until the 1980s that West Stockbridge (and many other towns in the county) standardized their street names and assigned house numbers. Before that, roads were known by where they led (e.g., Pittsfield Street), and the houses had the names of the owners or former owners. Families didn't move very often, and everyone knew where everyone else lived. This custom became a problem when 911 was installed and dispatchers needed more specific information than a family's location on a street with a local name.

Railroads had a different issue. They didn't know where everyone lived and needed to identify key points on the line. Track charts and control points needed more specific definitions. Thus locations and distances were identified by the station location, the siding of a major customer ("siding" is a short stretch of railroad track used to store rolling stock or enable trains on the same line to pass), or crossing a major road. But even the road crossings had to be specific because they could intersect a road numerous times, hence a name given to each crossing. One cited on many charts for West Stockbridge was "Elkay's Crossing." Where was this crossing, and who was Elkay?

(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

should help pay for the police presence. The estimated cost for the detail would be about \$5,400 per season. The Police are offering to do it for \$47 per hour, normally they get paid \$70 per hour for a detail. Amy Brentano, Foundry owner, stated she cannot afford to assume these costs, and that they are barely surviving. She felt this is an unexpected unfair added cost after all her plans have been discussed and approved. Kathleen and Eric agreed with Amy and feel the Town has the responsibility to properly allocate emergency service manpower and budgets to provide for public safety, especially since we are still under COVID precautions. They do not want to pass the cost of public safety on to the merchants.

Curt, speaking as a tax payer, asked the Board to consider the burden of the success of the businesses on the tax payers like himself and the elderly in Town by increasing taxes to pay for a police detail for the businesses.

Police Chief Marc Portieri stated he wants the businesses to succeed but not at the cost of public safety.

Roger asked the Board if they wanted to carry the discussion of the businesses paying for the Police Detail to another meeting or simply decide to kill the idea. Eric and Kathleen both agreed to kill the idea, and not levy additional fees on businesses for needed police protection.

Eric then made a motion to allow Curt and the DPW to work with Police Chief Marc Portieri to study the feasibility of creating on street parking on Moscow Road, Oak Street and Old Great Barrington Road, to open a dialogue with the residents on those streets, and if advisable, to establish such parking. Roger seconded.

Roll call vote:

Eric, Yes

Roger, Yes

Kathleen, Yes

Motion Passed.

Select Board Speak:

Eric discussed a few items:

1. He announced that the Town officially has been designated as a Green Community. In the short-term, the Town will be receiving grant money to pay for new LED lighting, and a new boiler at the DPW/Fire Station building. The town will also be exploring
2. Mr. McGrath has cleaned up the trash on his property on Swamp Road near the pond on his own.
3. He thanked Peter Thorne for a very successful Earth Day clean up as well as Curt and the DPW for picking up all the trash bags.
4. Update on the appointed positions – He found that most of the Select Board appointed positions are by statute and there is no need to try to eliminate them. He would also like to invite different committee appointees to Select Board meetings throughout the next year to keep an open dialogue and to get updates from them.
5. Class II and Class III Licenses – He will be meeting with Ricky Klein on Tuesday to discuss the new amendment to the Town Bylaw. He will also get an update from Ricky on the court case and his plan to remove the junk cars from his property. Eric will report back on that at the next meeting.

Citizen Speak:

Jeremy Kenny, Rouge Manager – He asked the Board to please get signage up to help with the parking issues.

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WANDERING JEWS
WONDERING JEWS
CULTURAL JEWS
MIXED MARRIAGE JEWS
MIXED UP JEWS
NON-JEWS
LGBT JEWS
CREATIVE JEWS

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Chamber Players Return to the Old Town Hall: Unexpected and Utterly Wonderful!

By Liza Bennett

The cold and rainy Memorial Day weekend forced a sudden change of plans for what had been billed as another open-air benefit concert by the West Stockbridge Chamber Players. Instead, after hasty behind-the-scenes discussions and a cleaning blitz of a 167-year-old building that had sat empty for over a year, the Chamber Players took the stage inside the Old Town Hall. The cool gray weather outside did nothing to dampen the celebratory mood within. “This is the first time since March 2020,” said Catherine Hudgins, the Chamber Players artistic director, “that any of us has played inside in front of a live audience.” For most in the masked and appreciative crowd, it was the first opportunity in all that time to hear music performed live and indoors. And what a performance it was!

“On Memorial Day we usually honor the soldiers who have died,” Hudgins announced before the first piece in the program. “But we have been at war with a virus. So we would like to dedicate this concert to the 3½ million citizens of our world who have died in the pandemic this past year.” Alexander Glazunov’s haunting and lovely *Rêverie orientale for Clarinet and String Quintet* was offered by the Chamber Players as a fitting tribute, performed by clarinetist Hudgins, violinists Sheila Fiekowsky and Lisa Crockett, violist Daniel Getz, and cellist Oliver Aldort.

Oliver Aldort introduced Ernő Dohnányi’s *Serenade for String Trio in C major, Op. 10*, explaining how the composer studied in Budapest where he was deeply influenced by the classical forms including the serenade mastered by Mozart. He suggested the audience listen for the two *poco animato* (a little more animated) sections that were, indeed, like a sudden surge of adrenaline in a composition filled with musical expression. “It’s a fun piece to play,” Aldort added and, along with Getz and Fiekowsky, went on to give a wonderfully spirited performance that made his case.



Playing Glazunov’s *Rêverie Orientale* are (left to right): Sheila Fiekowsky, Lisa Crockett, Catherine Hudgins, Oliver Alford, Daniel Getz. Photo by Carol Kuller

Catherine Hudgins pointed out that the final work in the program, Carl Maria von Weber’s *Clarinet Quintet in B-flat major, Op. 34*, was written by Weber in the early 1800s when so much of the world as we know it, including the Old Town Hall, did not yet exist. “It’s a good moment to look back on how far we’ve come since then—and toward an even brighter future.” As if on cue, the sun broke out as the Chamber Players performed the stirring piece and as hope for better days ahead seemed within reach at last.

With the generous help of the Chamber Players and the loyal audiences who flock to their concerts, the West Stockbridge Historical Society has been able to make tremendous strides over the past few years in turning the Old Town Hall into a community center, history museum, and acoustically perfect home for the West Stockbridge Chamber Players. Work begins soon to replace the building’s old metal roof and restore its doors and windows, thanks to an \$80,000 grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council that was matched this spring, despite the many hardships of the pandemic, by our community of loyal supporters.



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Notes from the Tax Collector

First-quarter preliminary real estate and personal property tax bills for FY2022 were mailed at the end of June and are due August 2, 2021. Interest begins accruing on unpaid bills on August 3. *There is no grace period.*

To ensure that your payment arrives on time, please . . .

- Mail several days ahead of the due date
- Remit payments to 21 State Line Rd., West Stockbridge, MA 01266 (a misdirected letter is still late) OR
- Deliver payments to the Town Offices. When the office is closed, be sure to place it in the drop box to the right of the *collector's* window or in the new multipurpose drop box on the exterior of the building to the left of the main doors OR
- Pay online using your checking account or debit or credit card. The site is available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week. There are fees for this service. Paying from your checking account is 50 cents for as many transactions as you need. Remember, postage goes to 58 cents in August. Use of a credit or debit card has a different fee schedule based on the size of the transaction
- Note: If you use your bank's online service, please remember there is usually a 5 to 7 business day delay until delivery to my office. Payment must arrive by August 2 to be timely

If you pay online using your own bank's online bill pay service, please be sure to update the mailing address for tax payments. We no longer use a post office box. All town mail should now be addressed to 21 State Line Rd., West Stockbridge, MA 01266.

Many of you discovered the advantage of electronic billing during the disruptions caused by COVID-19. Having real estate and personal property bills delivered to your inbox is an efficient way to receive those bills in the case of sudden relocation. Directions for signing up are on the town's website: www.weststockbridge-ma.gov.

Have a safe summer!

June Biggs, Town Collector



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Delivery

Select Board Meeting Minutes ...continued from page 5

Joe Roy said he was stunned and delighted with all the positive thoughts about improving the parking situation in Town. He told the Board that the Village Association has maintained the two signs in Town, one off Mass Pike and the other by Berkshire Bank. They are in bad shape and need to be removed. The Association cannot afford to continue to maintain them and he hopes that possibly the Town will consider adding an item to the next fiscal year budget to replace these signs.

Eric made a motion to adjourn at 7:50 PM, Kathleen seconded.

Roll call vote:

Eric, Yes Roger, Yes Kathleen, Yes

Motion Passed.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie W. Ryan

Town Administrator

Documents:

Email from SoMa with their set up plan and guidelines for BYOB

Select Board Special Meeting Minutes Meeting via Zoom May 11, 2021

Open Meeting

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

Others in Attendance: Town Librarian Rachel Alter and Library Trustee Gail Garrick

Roger called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

Eric made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 15, 2021 meeting, seconded by Roger.

Roll call vote:

Eric, Yes Roger, Yes Kathleen, Yes

Motion Passed.

Select Board Minutes from April 12, 2021 will be approved at the next meeting.

Town Administrator Update:

The Town, up until now, has received mail through a number of paid post offices boxes – one for each department. Marie will be closing all of these boxes in the coming months, which will save the town \$1000 annually. Marie will be acquiring a commercial mailbox for the Town Hall, and the Postmaster will transition all mail deliveries to this box.

The article on Town debt at Town Meeting which Bill Biggs stated had an incorrect total actually was correct but the number for the West Center Road project was in the wrong column. This has been corrected in the warrant wording used for the final minutes. Also, the revenue source for the Cemetery Commissioners has been corrected with the addition of the words “Perpetual Care”.

Marie asked the Board to approve the creation of a Beautification Committee. This Committee would work with Lisa Parker and Curt on the annual Town Beautification program. The Board approved. Kathleen will contact possible members to be appointed.

The Sewer & Water Department is going to go over their FY21 budget due to several costly repairs. This will necessitate holding a special Town meeting in June to transfer funds to cover expenses through the end of the fiscal year.

The Select Board confirmed they will meet in person at the next meeting at Town Hall on May 24th. One of the residents on the agenda cannot be there by zoom. The meeting will also still be available by Zoom.

Marie will be on vacation Thursday, May 14 and Friday, May 15th.

Re-Organization of the Board:

Roger made a motion and Kathleen seconded, to appoint Eric as the new Chair.

Roll Call vote:

Roger, Yes Kathleen, Yes Eric, Yes

Motion Passed.

Roger made a motion and Eric seconded, to appoint Kathleen as the Secretary.

Roll Call vote:

Roger, Yes Kathleen, Yes Eric, Yes

Motion Passed.

Eric made a motion and Kathleen seconded, to appoint Roger as the Clerk.

Roll Call vote:

Roger, Yes Kathleen, Yes Eric, Yes

Motion Passed.

Discussion of New Signage:

Eric stated that new signage has been the subject of discussion in the past, and that the Library especially has been asking for more effective signage. He revisited his concept for new signs that are modular and include the Town Seal. This included a new sign for the Town Hall, as well as directional signs throughout the town – all of which would use the same design and aesthetics. The preliminary designs were shown using screen sharing. Roger and Kathleen liked modular concept. Kathleen suggested that other Boards such as the Vision Committee and Master Plan Committee should

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We look forward to seeing you soon! Brad, Vicky, Rachel



NEW ADULT FICTION

Baldacci, *Gambling Man*
Birchall, *Secret Bridesmaid*
Bohjalian, *Hour of the Witch*
Lahiri, *Whereabouts*
Morse, *Margreete's Harbor*
Roberts, *Legacy*
Silber, *Secrets of Happiness*
Weir, *Project Hail Mary*

NEW ADULT NONFICTION

Higginbotham, *Midnight in Chernobyl: The Untold Story*

NEW ADULT DVDs

Happy Valley, season 1; Judas and the Black Messiah; The Little Things; Minari; Tenet; Wonder Woman 1984

NEW YOUNG ADULT AND CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Adelman, *Way Past Worried*
Ashman, *Rain!* (Board Book)
Doerrfeld, *Rabbit Listened*
Higgins, *Spring Stinks: A Little Bruce Book*
Jullien, *Why the Face?*
McLaughlin, *While We Can't Hug*
O'Meara, *And the People Stayed Home*
Yolen, *I Am the Storm*
Yoo, *You Are a Lion!: And Other Fun Yoga Poses*

NEW FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S DVDs

Bluey, season 1 and 2; The Croods, A New Age; Soul; Tom & Jerry



Scrapbook July 2021: TEST YOUR TRIVIA KNOWLEDGE!

1. At the January 13, 2014, special town meeting, what did the residents petition the selectmen to create?
2. Which resident is a retired Lee science teacher?
3. What major undertaking did he accomplish after his retirement?
4. Town Administrator Mark Webber also was town administrator for which other town?

1. A mobile home rent control board; 2. R.M. Hungate;
3. He traveled to Churchill, Manitoba, to take 700 photos
of polar bears; 4. Cheshire.



The Library will be increasing their hours effective
July 1st, 2021!

| | |
|-----------|--------------|
| Monday | 10 AM – 3 PM |
| Tuesday | 2 PM – 6 PM |
| Wednesday | 10 AM – 3 PM |
| Thursday | 10 AM – 3 PM |
| Friday | 2 PM – 6 PM |
| Saturday | 10 AM – 3 PM |

Select Board Meeting Minutes ...continued from page 9

be able to weigh in on the design. Eric favors having such input, and proposed getting a professional rendering that more faithfully illustrates the concept that could be brought to the other Boards for additional ideas. A final design will be rendered and brought back to the Select Board for final approval.

Library Trustee Gail Garrick discussed areas in town where the Library would like to see the signs placed and asked if they would be the same design. Eric stated that he would like to have uniform signage throughout the Town.

There was a discussion about the Town Sign Bylaw. Joe Roy reminded the Board that they are the granting authority for Signs in Town, and they can review all currently hanging signs and decide if any need to be removed or replaced to comply with the bylaw.

Issue at Town Meeting in regard to Town Reports:

Regarding the allegation made at the Annual Town Meeting about it not being a "legal" meeting because the report was not available 7 days before, Marie stated that publication of the Town Report has nothing to do with the meeting's legality. The legal requirement is that the Annual Town Meeting warrant must be posted 7 days prior to the meeting. Marie said that the warrant had been posted 21 days prior to the meeting in all the required locations in town, as well as at the on the Town Hall bulletin board and website. She concluded by stating that the Annual Town Meeting was, therefore, a legal meeting and that the current Annual Town Meeting Warrant is not required to be included in the Town Report, but this has been done traditionally as a convenience to residents.

A discussion about mailing the Town Reports ensued. Kathleen was in favor of doing that as a tradition, and as a benefit for residents that do not use a computer and rely on receiving communications from the Town by mail. The Board will discuss whether or not to have the reports mailed at a future meeting.

In regard to the Board issuing a letter to the Local Yokel in response to the allegation by the voter that the Town Meeting was not a legal meeting, Eric said, after reconsidering the idea of a public letter, he felt that the Board should simply let the meeting minutes of the discussion clarify the issue. Roger said the idea of a letter from the Board to affirm that the Town meeting was indeed a legal meeting is still a good idea. Kathleen suggested a simple short note would be appropriate to clarify the issue. Marie will use the draft letters from Roger and Eric to create a letter for the Board to review at the next meeting.

Select Board Speak:

Roger stated that now that he is not Chair he will continue to work on several issues he is interested in:

1. Continue to work with Marie on how to best use the funds allocated in the FY22 budget for Human Resource consulting services.
2. To review the FY22 Budget process and develop proposals to make the FY23 budget process more transparent and consistent across budgeting entities.
3. Engage with selected committees, commissions and boards (Vision Committee, Finance Committee, Sewer & Water Commission) and bring information back to the Select Board about what he has learned.

Kathleen thanked Roger for his leadership as the Chair this past year and congratulated Eric on being the new Chair, looking forward to his perspective on the role. She also stated she feels that getting more involved with other committees and boards is a great idea. She said her interest areas are the Vision Committee and the Master Plan Committee. The Beautification Committee will also be an interest to her, as she looks forward to working with this committee and how it interacts with Lisa and Curt.

The concern she has for this committee is funding. She would like to see more money invested and asked for any ideas or options in the future. Eric suggested that in the future the Community Preservation Committee may be able to appropriate funds for their projects.

Eric thanked the Board for their support and is honored to be the new Chair. He plans on getting other committees and boards included in the Select Board meetings by inviting them to come for a dialogue on news and issues in their committee. Eric will also be working on the Green Communities program with ongoing grants and projects throughout the Town buildings.

Eric identified long-term institutional knowledge as a weakness for our town government, as there has been valuable work done in decades past that current boards and town officers are unaware of. He would like to try to assemble a guidebook of sorts to include all the policies that the Boards have voted on in the past, as well as a more comprehensive archive and database of town documents.

Eric announced that he has been working with Earl and Curt to have the public restrooms opened. Curt has hired someone to clean the restrooms on the weekends and Wayne will clean them during the week. Curt reports that they should be open by the end of this week.

There will be a Memorial Day parade and ceremony this year. Eric is working with Cait Graham and the American Legion to nail down all of the details. Once they are finalized, he will give the information to Marie to be posted on the website. He invited the Board to participate in the parade, and the ceremony.

Citizen Speak:

Joe Roy said he was in favor of the Board writing a letter to respond to the allegations of the Town Meeting being an illegal meeting. He feels that when someone lectures the Board about something like this issue, they should make that person prove their statement with evidence.

He is a Vision Committee representative when he attends the Select Board meetings and thinks the Select Board members visiting other committee and board meetings is a great idea.

Roger made a motion to adjourn at 7:14 PM, Kathleen seconded.

Roll call vote:

Eric, Yes Roger, Yes Kathleen, Yes

Motion Passed.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Y. Ryan

Town Administrator

Documents:

Annual Report Bylaw, Chapter 45, Article 1, Section 45-5 of the Town of West Stockbridge Town Code

Do you have an extra hour a week?

The *Local Yokel* is looking for distributors to deliver copies to our spots around town, then check back a few times that month.

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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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.

The Stockbridge Grange Dinner

No public dinners will be served at the Stockbridge Grange during July and August.

Council on Aging

Council on Aging meetings remain suspended until further notice.

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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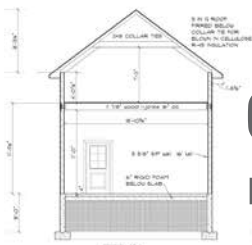
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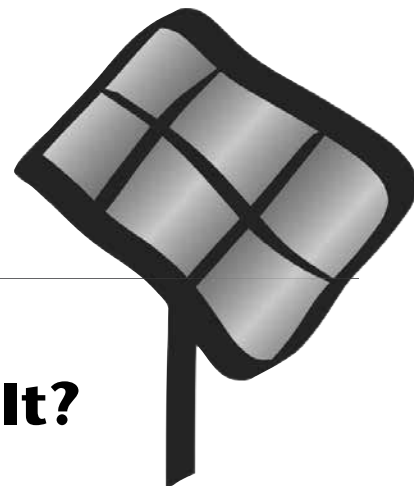
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www.pediatricdevelopmentcenter.org



On the Home Front

By Thom Lipiczky



Are Solar Panels on the Roof Worth It?

Back in 2018 and 2019, I reported regularly on our progress designing and building our new house. I discussed some new developments in building science, new materials, and innovative techniques. In October 2019, I talked about our experience with solar panels. This month, about a year and a half later, I'm updating this and answering the question "Are solar panels worth it?" Like any good contractor, I'll tell you the answer is "It depends."

It depends on how many panels you can afford to put on your house, the arrangement for net metering you make with National Grid (our electric supplier in town), the incentives that the state and federal governments provide for solar power, and how much the sun shines. But I can report that in our situation, it has all worked out really well.

Of the 172 solar energy companies operating currently (get it? *Currently* . . .) in Massachusetts, we ended up working with All Energy Solar, an outfit doing business in the upper Midwest and in our fair state. In fact, they're a top-rated solar company in the commonwealth. This is important because there are lots of reports of companies misleading consumers about the true costs of solar energy. And in the past, shoddy materials in the photovoltaic panels have been an issue, along with poor installation practices. We are happy to report this was not our experience. (Although I did explain in 2019 that the tax credit we were led to believe was coming our way did not work out. Because we are self-employed, we were ineligible. That's another story.)

We have 34 panels on our roof—18 on the east slope and 16 on the west slope. Together over the course of 2020, these cute little guys sucked in photons from the sun and converted them into 11,550 KWh. This is a little more than the amount of electric used by the average house in the United States, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Our tax dollars at work!

In addition, the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) program actually sends us money each month, depending on how much electricity our 34 little guys produce. The program is a long-term sustainable solar incentive that encourages consumers to invest in solar energy.

Bottom line: In 2020 we sent \$1,269 to National Grid for electricity. We use it to heat and cool our house with air-source heat pumps (mini-splits), so essentially this amount covered the bulk of all our utilities. Our 34 little guys over the year earned us \$1,333 in SMART rebates. That means in effect we produced \$64 more electric than we used over the year.

Of course, we had to pay for the panels, but we qualified for a reduction in the overall cost and a low-interest loan. I estimated it would take 10 years to pay off the loan, and then we'd have essentially free electric from there on. It's true that the initial cost of solar panels is the biggest drawback, but with rebates and incentives, plus the sense that it was the right thing to do, we decided to go ahead. We're glad we did.

I might have to name our 34 little guys.

Please send questions, comments, rants, and suggestions for naming the panels to info@thelocalyokel.org

Looking to
Buy a Berkshire
House

Hello. My fiancé and I are looking to buy a house private sale in the Berkshires, MA. Must be in good condition - 3 BR ideal.

Please call
631-553-9129.



History Quiz Answer:

Austin Elkay (or Elkey) was an African American who owned a triangular piece of land on the east side of Route 41, running roughly from where the Catholic church is now north to the bridge by the trailer park and over to the Shaker Mill Pond. Born in Granby, Connecticut, in 1798, his family lived in Stockbridge. Austin was a farmer and a stone mason, considered a highly skilled trade. He likely worked at the marble mill in town, carving gravestones and other marble features for buildings. Because his property abutted the railroad and the intersection of Albany Road (Route 41), it was natural to call it Elkay's Crossing. His house is still there.

Very often history research leads in unexpected directions. Learning about Austin, we found an interesting backstory. Peter Elkay, Austin's father, successfully sued two white men from Wallingford, Connecticut, in 1793 for kidnapping his two daughters and holding them as slaves, even though officially they were "free blacks." The federal circuit court in New Haven found for Peter, citing the behavior of the defendants as "very reprehensible," and fined them \$250. (Although we assume the daughters were released, there is no later record of them in the 1800 census.)

In addition to the human issue, this case was significant. It was one of the first times that a free black was considered a citizen for purposes of Article III, Section 2, in the Constitution and thus able to sue in court.

Even though the court found for Austin's father, this "free blacks as citizens" definition was still denied or ignored, particularly in the slave and border states. The worst reading was the terrible Dred Scott decision in 1857 that accelerated the move to the Civil War. Chief Justice Roger B. Taney ignored the decision and decided the Founders did not consider free blacks as citizens, contrary to the Elkay case. Citizenship was finally officially settled with the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868.

Austin died at age 88 in 1886 in West Stockbridge and was buried in the Village Cemetery. There is no record that Austin ever met his older sisters or if they came to West Stockbridge.

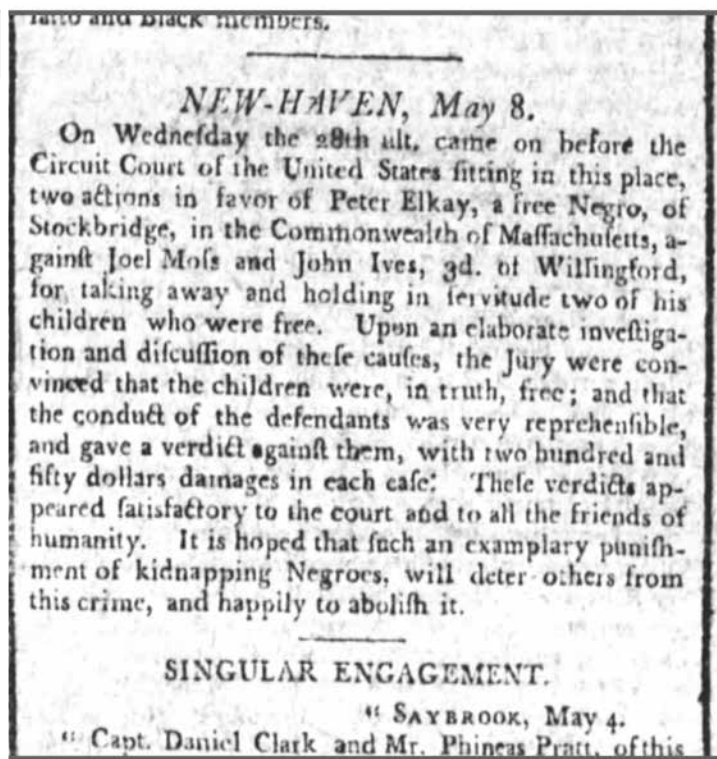


Image courtesy of West Stockbridge Historical Society

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"We Remember When . . ."

Growing Up in West Stockbridge in the 1950s

A Series of Recollections by John Bormolini and Friends

High School Sports

In previous installments of this series, we featured the transition from West Stockbridge Elementary School to Williams High School (WHS). I recall that sports was an important part of this change. Jesse Wade was the physical education teacher for all classes and the coach for all team sports, junior varsity (JV) and varsity. He had his hands full, to be sure. Looking back, I can only wonder why Coach Wade never hired an assistant. The closest that he came to that was team managers.

At WHS, the fall sport for men was soccer because we did not have football like the larger schools did. For the men, basketball was the winter sport followed by baseball in the spring. Basketball was by far the most popular sport at WHS during the 1950s. Following the soccer season was a short cross-country season for both men and women in preparation for basketball. And then there was cheerleading. Women who vied for either JV or varsity cheering had to be very athletic. Their season lasted from the first weeks of school to the last day, cheering for all of the teams.

For all of us freshmen, soccer was the most challenging sport. Most kids had some experience with basketball and baseball, but I can't recall anyone playing soccer for fun. If you were interested in playing a fall sport, it was soccer or nothing. I was the only freshman from West Stockbridge in 1956 to take the plunge. Sophomores, juniors, and seniors had at least one year behind them as soccer players.

From the 1960 *Konkapot Yearbook*:

Again, for the second straight year, 1959, soccer at Williams provided added thrills and spills for the fans. The talent-laden Williams team started fast and kept their pace throughout the season, losing only once in league competition. This fine record was good enough to procure the first Championship Team since 1946.

This highly successful league showing was equally matched when Williams was invited to play in the Western Massachusetts soccer tournament in Ludlow, Mass., with the winner assuming the title of the "Western Massachusetts Champs." Four teams were entered, with Williams drawing the powerful Ludlow High School team. In a game that wasn't decided until the final whistle, Williams High bowed out to the final winner: Williams 0-Ludlow 1.

I found soccer to be fun and continued to play in future years. I was privileged to be awarded a varsity letter all four years that I played soccer at WHS.

In the United States, soccer has become a popular sport. Youth soccer is the fifth most widely played sport in this country, appealing to boys and girls beginning in elementary school. The coined term "soccer moms and dads" is well known.

Looking at photos of the women's basketball team and the men's soccer team, I am in awe of the maturity they exhibited from elementary school to high school. Both teams played at the varsity level because there were not enough students to field a JV and varsity team.

Most of the athletes started playing in their freshman year and continued through their senior year. Because we were a small high school with a limited student body, many students who played sports or were cheerleaders also participated in other school activities, such as glee club, library staff, office staff, or the *Konkapot* staff working on the annual yearbook.

Some athletes held jobs that required considerable after-school or before-school time, most notably those who were enrolled in a Future Farmers of America (FFA) curriculum. They often had to assist with the chores at the family farm or worked for other farmers as part of their FFA curriculum.

Whether they played one year or multiple years, all worked hard to improve their athletic skills. Coach Wade was always ready to help. One of Coach Wade's idiosyncrasies was to sit on the sidelines and prop his feet up on the medicine chest. When something needed to be improved on the floor or in the field, you always knew he was there as he beat on the medicine chest with both feet to get your attention!

It's funny how you remember small details from so long ago. Coach Wade kept Juicy Fruit gum in the medicine chest for the team, and to this day when I buy a pack of fruit gum, it brings back memories of high school athletics and Coach Wade beating on the medicine chest. He was the best.

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.

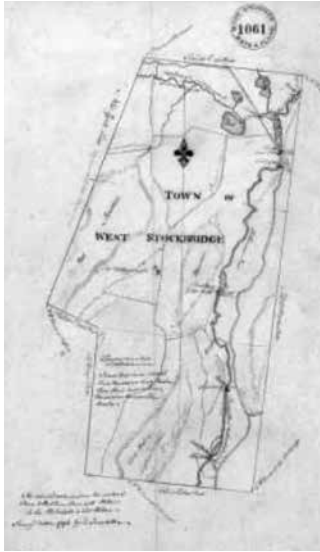


*1956-57 Soccer Team
from 1957 WHS Konkapot Yearbook*



*1956-57 Women's Basketball team
from 1957 WHS Konkapot Yearbook*

Town of West Stockbridge Announcements



The Town of West Stockbridge is updating its Master Plan, and WE NEED YOUR INPUT!

To help us shape our town's future by completing a short survey, please visit www.surveymonkey.com/r/weststockbridge.

If you'd prefer a paper survey, please contact Town Administrator Marie Ryan at 232-0300, ext. 319.

Town Government PO Boxes Closed

All West Stockbridge town government offices and departments have closed their post office boxes. Please address all mail, including tax payments, to the appropriate office at 21 State Line Road, West Stockbridge, MA 01266. This change is effective June 1.

Join us for the annual West Stockbridge Card Pond Party

Sunday, July 18th
11am-1pm

Enjoy hotdogs, chips, watermelon, and more! This is a free community event sponsored by WS Parks & Recreation.



July Donor Roll Call

Judith Bodnar

John Bormolini, in memory of
Anna Bormolini

Brenda & John Elling

Hal & Jill Gaffin

Anonymous: 1

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.)

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Pick-up slow pitch softball. Ages 10 to 80.

Summer Sunday mornings. Greene Park, Monterey.

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Every issue costs us about \$1,300 to print and distribute!

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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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July Art Calendar

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

2021

May 26 - Sept 22, Into the Light. Online Art Show. Visit www.berkshireartists.org for more info.

July 5 & 19, Procrastinator's Challenge!
10-11am. GBA members can join Diane Firtell for a jumpstart on their creative productivity via Zoom.

July 12, Collage & Mixed Media Workshop,
1-3 p.m. Join Marion Grant for Collage & Mixed Media online using Zoom.

July 13 & 27, Positive Critique, 7:30-8:30 p.m. Join Michele Caplan for a positive critique session for Guild members via Zoom.

July 24 - 25, Art @ Arrowhead: A Whale of a Show! 10am - 5pm. Two-day public art show at Arrowhead, Pittsfield. Visit www.berkshireartists.org for more info.

July 25, Berkshire Photo Gathering, 2-4pm. Online. See following webpage for more information: berkshirephotogathering.com/online-meetings

July 29, Art Book Gathering, 9:30-11am. Share a favorite book: artist, or process. RSVP: berkshireartists@gmail.com

TUESDAYS, Snapseed Workshop,
1:30-2:30pm. Work on mobile photo editing with others via Zoom.

TUESDAYS, Demo or Seminar, 3pm. Watch an artist demonstrate their creative process each week via Zoom.

Art Together: Join GBA artists together online using Zoom. See website for times.
WEDNESDAYS & FRIDAYS

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

Summer Online Art Show

29 artists | 53 works

www.berkshireartists.org

On Display Online:
May 26 - Sept 22

ART@ Arrowhead
A Whale of a Show!
Sat & Sun July 24-25 10am-5pm
Herman Melville's Arrowhead 790 Holmes Rd. Pittsfield, MA
Guild of Berkshire Artists

See our website
www.berkshireartists.org
for more information!

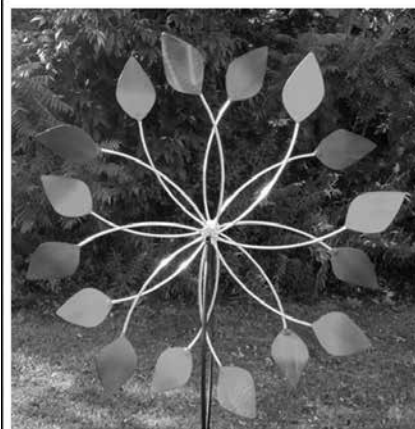
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| | | | | |
|--------------------------|--|------------------------------------|----------|--|
| Animal Control | <i>John Drake</i> | 464-2148 | | As Needed |
| Assessors Office | <i>Mary Stodden</i> | 232-0300 | ext. 303 | Tues. 1–5 p.m.; Thurs. 9 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 | Mon., Wed., Thurs., and Sat. 10 a.m.–3 p.m.; Tues. and Fri. 2 p.m.–6 p.m.; closed Sun. |
| 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

Congratulations!
**Monument Mountain
Regional High School
Graduates – Class of 2021**

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Izabella Castro
Myles Gennari
Sarah Harding
Tyler Kibbe
Madeline Mason
Beck Mathews
Liam O’Gara
Konstantin Stanmeyer
Logan Tonini
Amber Troiano



BOOK SALE!

Sponsored by the Friends of the West Stockbridge Library

Saturday, August 28, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Town Offices Gymnasium, 21 State Line Road, West Stockbridge

A select offering of fiction, nonfiction, children’s books, and cookbooks, including the beautiful Dudney collection

No book donations accepted this year—thanks!



**Jazz Series Returns
with Latin Vocalist
Lauren Henderson**

By Adam Phillips



On June 19, Lauren Henderson, the internationally famed Latin jazz vocalist, kicked off the West Stockbridge Historical Society’s jazz series on the outdoor stage at The Foundry in West Stockbridge.

The virtuosity of her voice ranged from sultry love songs to a barely contained roar as she made her way through jazz classics and her own memorable compositions. The evening was a welcome and powerful signal that cultural life in the Berkshires is truly returning to normal after 16 months of lockdown. Accompanying Henderson were Dean Torrey, bass; Isaac Wilson, piano; Dor Herskovits, drums; and Edmar Colon, saxophone.

The event was sponsored by the West Stockbridge Historical Society, in collaboration with The Foundry, as part of its 2021–22 live jazz concert series. Berkshire audiences can look forward to a full and varied schedule, with performances by Ned Rothenberg, Armen Donelian, and Yoko Miwa.

Photos by Jeff Nestel-Patt



| July 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 |



July 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.

| | | | |
|------|---|----------------|--|
| 7/1 | WS Farmers Market | 3–6 p.m. | The Foundry Green, Harris Street |
| 7/4 | Independence Day | | |
| 7/5 | Independence Day observed ; Town Offices closed | | |
| 7/8 | WS Farmers Market | 3–6 p.m. | The Foundry Green, Harris Street |
| 7/12 | Parks & Recreation Commissioners meeting | 5:30 p.m. | See town website for details |
| 7/15 | *** Deadline for the next Local Yokel *** | | Send to info@thelocalyokel.org |
| 7/15 | WS Farmers Market | 3–6 p.m. | The Foundry Green, Harris Street |
| 7/18 | Card Pond Party | 11 a.m.–1 p.m. | Card Pond |
| 7/19 | Eid al-Adha (begins at sundown) | | |
| 7/20 | Vision Committee meeting | 6 p.m. | See town website for details |
| 7/22 | WS Farmers Market | 3–6 p.m. | The Foundry Green, Harris Street |
| 7/26 | Select Board meeting | 6 p.m. | See town website for details |
| 7/29 | WS Farmers Market | 3–6 p.m. | The Foundry Green, Harris Street |