

Local yokel

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

West
Stockbridge
December
2022



*Happy
Holidays*

*Frost and fog shroud
farm fields and barn.
Photo by Emily Weiland*

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 2005

December Art Calendar

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

2022

Nov 18-Dec 4, "Color, Texture, & Form" at Art on Main Gallery. Feat. Sally Lebwahl, Margie Skaggs, & Sarah Morrison. 38 Main Street, West Stockbridge, MA. See show flyer for times.

December 1, Best Practices, 1:30-3pm, "How to Host and Sell at an Opening or Gallery". Join a discussion hosted by David Honneus.

December 2, TKG First Friday Reception, 5-8pm. Holiday Show featuring local work that would make great holiday gifts! TKG Realty in Pittsfield. Zoom link available.

December 6, Photo Editing Workshop, 1:30-2:30pm. Mobile photo editing online.

December 6 & 20, Positive Critique, 7:30-8:30 p.m. Join Michele Caplan for a positive critique session for Guild members via Zoom.

Dec 7-14, "Perspectives" at Art on Main Gallery. Feat. Barbara Barron, Allan Greenberg, & MJ Gelsomino. 38 Main Street, West Stockbridge, MA. See show flyer for times.

Dec 17-Jan 4, "First Birds" at Art on Main Gallery. Feat. Lori Bradley. 38 Main Street, West Stockbridge, MA. See show flyer for times.

December 27, Meet the Artist, 3pm. TBD.

December 20, Berkshire Photo Gathering. No meeting, see you in 2023!

Wednesdays, Art Together, Join GBA artists together.

*published events are subject to changes due to artist and volunteer availability.



Artists of the Guild Berkshire Artists bring reasonably priced treasures from their studios to you! Find unique gifts at amazing prices!



Holiday Show

Great Gift Choices featuring

Local Art, Photos, and Artisanal Items on display at TKG Realty
137 North St., Pittsfield, MA
Reception w/First Friday Artswalk:
December 2, 5-8pm

WEST STOCKBRIDGE

Sparkles

SUNDAY
DECEMBER 4TH
4:30 - 6PM

Everyone is invited to gather at 4:30pm in front of the Congregational Church, and join Santa in a joyful parade to the town hall! This will be followed by music, a tree lighting, and gifts from Santa for the kids!

This is a free community event sponsored by WS Parks & Recreation, with help from WSPD and WSPF



WINTER PARKING BAN



The West Stockbridge "Winter Parking Ban" will be in effect from NOVEMBER 15TH to APRIL 1ST between 11pm and 7am for all Town roads. Violation of the ban may result in a \$25 fine for parking in a prohibited area as well as a \$50 fine for impeding snow removal. The vehicle may also be towed at the owner's expense for impeding snow removal.

Municipal parking is located on Hotel Street and Center Street. Snow removal in these areas will be between 7am-8am.

Thank you for your cooperation

West Stockbridge Police Department

(413) 232-8500

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

Please check our website www.ahavathsholom for information about our Zoom services, events and updates.

See our new Marketplace section featuring a selection of books, craft items and art works by our members. A portion of each purchase will be donated by the synagogue to the Southern Berkshire area People's Pantry.

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OBSERVANT JEWS
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PASSIONATE JEWS
HIGH-HOLY-DAY JEWS
ARTISTIC JEWS
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ahavathsholom.com North St., Great Barrington

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 email notification of town events and meeting agendas by subscribing at <http://weststockbridgema.virtualtownhall.net/subscriber>].

Select Board Meeting Minutes October 11, 2022

Quorum present: Select Board Members Kathleen Keresey, Chair, Andrew Potter and Andrew Krouss and Town Administrator Marie Ryan

Kathleen called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and listed Select Board members present.

Approval of Minutes:

Andy Potter made a motion, seconded by Andy Krouss, to approve the Minutes from September 27, 2022.

All Select Board members voted to approve.

Zucchini Festival:

Marjorie Powell, Cultural Council Member, requested that the Select Board support the return of the Zucchini Festival. Marge has the full support of the Vision Committee as well as the Parks and Recreation Commissioners. Marge told the Board that she was optimistic that there was a lot of interest from potential volunteers and that the Festival would be a success.

The Board was in full support and Marge thanked them. She will keep the Board updated as the planning progresses.

Right of Way Easement for 7 Main Street Property:

Attorney Jeremia Pollard spoke to the Board and explained that the Maslowski family is in the process of selling their property at 7 Main Street. The property uses a right of way through the Town owned parking lot behind the Old Town Hall although the original deed to the Town did not include language for an easement. The current buyers requested that the deed be corrected to include the easement language. Town Counsel agreed that the correction should be made and the SB were in support of it.

Great Barrington Road Double Lines Requested:

Lisa and Wayne Tenney, residents of Great Barrington Road, presented a petition signed by residents of Great Barrington Road requesting that the Town paint double solid lines through the intersections of Great Barrington with Cobb Road, Pixley Hill Road and Glendale Road. The Board agreed.

...continued on page 8

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skirts. ALL CLOTHING MUST
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Complete Streets Project Updates

By Nicholas Russo, BRPC

On Tuesday, November 8, members of the West Stockbridge Complete Streets Committee joined with staff from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) and Foresight Land Services to explore the locations of proposed Complete Streets projects (see the November issue of the *Local Yokel* for more details).

The air was crisp and the sky was clear, a beautiful afternoon to explore the village center. For me, a Berkshires native, it was an opportunity to see parts of Western Massachusetts heritage I had not experienced before. I love doing the work of transportation planning and Complete Streets. I so enjoy hearing the stories of the people in the towns we partner with and working to make our neighborhoods safer and easier to explore by walking, rolling, and cycling.

Now that we documented present-day conditions at our study sites, Foresight will provide cost estimates on the projects. Based on the site conditions we saw and the work we are proposing, each of the 15 projects will have a rough estimate applied in our final report to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). All project planning and cost estimating will be complete by December 31.

MassDOT will then review our list of projects and return with comments or issue final approval. West Stockbridge may then request Complete Streets grant funding to begin the projects on the list. That process is entirely up to the town. A total of \$500,000 over four years is available to start the 15 projects on the list that are deemed a high priority or most shovel ready.

You can learn more about the projects, ask questions, or offer comments by email at nrusso@berkshireplanning.org or by calling me at (413) 442-1521, ext. 19.



From left to right, Joe Roy, Jr. (Zoning Board of Appeals, Vision Committee); Karen Carmean (Vision Committee); Curt Wilton (West Stockbridge Highway Department); Nick Russo (BRPC); and Marc LeVasseur (Foresight Land Services) at the corner of Main Street and Swamp Road discussing traffic-calming measures. Photo by Anne Roy

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- Lawn & Field Mowing
- Fall & Spring Cleanups
- Building & Maintaining Gardens
- Firewood

Results of the 2022 Midterm Election: How West Stockbridge Voted

By John Parker

Data sources: Ronnie Barrett, Town Clerk; MA Secretary of State website; US Elections Project and fivethirtyeight.com.

The results of the 2022 midterm election are in, and West Stockbridge voters again turned out in substantial numbers. Of a total 1,164 registered voters, 747 (64%) cast ballots. This compares favorably with the 70% turnout for the last midterm (nonpresidential) election in 2018. Statewide voter turnout in the 2022 midterms was 49.3%; national turnout is estimated at 47%.

In key races, Maura Healy and Kim Driscoll were elected governor and lieutenant governor, respectively. Andrea Campbell was elected attorney general, and William Galvin was reelected to another term as secretary of state. Richard Neal was reelected representative in Congress. Paul Mark won the race for state senator, and Smitty Pignatelli repeats as state representative from the district. Sara Bourla won with 34 write-in votes for West Stockbridge School Committee.

Governor and Lieutenant Governor

Geoff Diehl & Leah Allen 129
Maura Healy & Kim Driscoll 587
Kevin Reed & Peter Everett 16

Attorney General

Andrea Joy Campbell 593
James McMahan 136

Secretary of State

William Galvin 593
Rayla Campbell 105
Juan Sanchez 29

Treasurer

Cristina Crawford 80
Deborah Goldberg 613

Auditor

Anthony Amore 153
Diana Dizoglio 481
Gloria Caballero-Roca 39
Dominic Giannone, III 20
Daniel Riek 20

Representative in Congress

Richard Neal 606
Dean James Martilli 116

Councillor

John Comerford 127
Tara Jacobs 580

Senator in General Court

Paul Mark 593
Brendan Phair 101

Representative in General Court

Smitty Pignatelli 649
Michael Lavery 60

District Attorney

Timothy Shugrue 622

Sheriff

Thomas Bowler 638

School Committee, West Stockbridge

Sara Bourla (write-in) 34



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Parks and Rec Update: Exploring a Dog Park and/or Community Garden

As we solicit ideas about what townspeople would like to see added to our town, two projects keep popping up: a dog park and a community garden.

Many people like the idea of adding a dog park to our town grounds. Planning and constructing such a park is actually simple. The hurdles are the cost of the initial project and the continued maintenance. Fencing and installation could run from \$10,000 to \$15,000. The other challenge is forming a dog park committee to maintain the area and also create and enforce guidelines for the park. Public works can handle the general mowing and maintenance, but it is too much for Parks and Rec alone. A separate committee is needed of dog lovers willing to take on the responsibility of the dog park and upkeep. The dog park committee will likely require about four to six active members to keep up with rules and maintenance.

The former community vegetable garden was located between the cemeteries on Route 41 north of town. It was popular for a while but hard to find volunteers. The challenges were lack of a water source and consistent interest in the garden to help with maintenance. Initial research shows the Card Pond field near the parking lot would be a much better location with reliable access to water.

We are contacting the community to get opinions on this idea and see if a group of people is willing to start a committee to construct and maintain a garden. Many people in town are very knowledgeable and experienced gardeners. They have said they would offer advice and planning of the new garden if such a project gets started.

The initial cost of the garden can vary tremendously, roughly between \$3,000 and \$7,000. The big challenge is maintaining the garden. A committee of volunteers will be needed to work in the garden except in winter. And if interest flags, volunteers would be needed to deconstruct and clean up the area. We estimate a committee of three or four active members would be needed to run the community garden committee, in addition to at least a dozen active volunteers to help with seeding, mulching, weeding, harvesting, and cleanup during the growing season.

Please contact us at weststockbridgeparks@gmail.com if either project interests you. Parks and Rec can help form the new committees, share our research and findings, and (hopefully) help financially. We hope to hear from you!

The Parks and Rec Team

December History Quiz Question:

The topography of West Stockbridge is basically a valley surrounded by hills with streams that drain into the Williams River, or in West Center that drain into the Green River. In a 2021 survey, the Housatonic Valley Association identified 57 streams or watercourses crossing under roadways in town. The survey comprehensively detailed each crossing's physical, stream, and road features. It was a major undertaking, and the town used the results to plan bridge and culvert repairs and reconstruction (and obtain grants to fund them).

Many of the 57 culverts and bridges are not obvious when driving around town. Others, like the three bridges in the center of town and the bridge on Route 41 near Cobb Road, are obviously new. One bridge/stream crossing, well outside of the town center, pre-dates all the others. It has historical significance, not only for West Stockbridge but for all New England, and it figures in the town's early history. Where is that crossing, and why is it important?

(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. Email info@weststockbridgehistory.org or call (413) 232-4270.



**West Stockbridge
Historical Society**
Incorporated in 1994



ART on MAIN
Gallery

38 Main St. West Stockbridge
Guild of Berkshire Artists

December at ART on MAIN Gallery

ART on MAIN promises to be a lively, engaging spot in West Stockbridge this month. At least seven members of the Guild of Berkshire Artists will be showing their work at various times during December and into the first week of January. Here is the schedule for upcoming shows, artists, and their works at the Gallery on Main Street:

December 2–4: COLOR, TEXTURE, & FORM

Friday, Saturday, Sunday: 11 am to 4 pm daily

Reception Saturday, 2–4 pm

Sally Lebwohl: Pastels

Sarah Morrison: Acrylics and Felting

Margie Skaggs: Ceramics

December 9–11: PERSPECTIVES

Friday, Saturday, Sunday: 11 am to 4 pm daily

Reception Saturday, 2–4 pm

Barbara Barron: Fiber and Textiles

Allan Greenberg: Storytelling in Photography

MJ Gelsomino: Watercolors

December 17–January 4: FIRST BIRDS: SYMBOLS OF RESILIENCE AND CHANGE

Dec. 17–18; 21–24; 28–31 and Jan. 4, 1–4 pm daily

Lori Bradley: A Focus on Nature in Works in Oil or Acrylics



Lori Bradley, *Winter Transient*



MJ Gelsomino, *Trees and Bench*

...continued from page 3

Select Board Speak:

Kathleen told the Board that Patrick White, Stockbridge Select Board Chair had reached out to her to ask if West Stockbridge would be interested in joining the Town of Stockbridge in becoming a Sister City with Stockbridge, England. Patrick is working on coordinating this effort. The Board agreed to join Stockbridge.

Kathleen would like the Select Board to participate in a joint training meeting with the Finance Committee before the FY24 budget meetings begin. The Board agreed. The date is set for November 19th.

Andy Potter would like the Select Board to see how they can support the residents in Housatonic who get their water from the Housatonic Water. The Board agreed and Andy will draft a letter from the Select Board.

Andy Potter made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Andy Krouss.

All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 6:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Y. Ryan

Marie Y. Ryan

Town Administrator

**Select Board Meeting Minutes
October 18, 2022**

Quorum present: Select Board Members Kathleen Keresey, Chair, Andrew Potter and Andrew Krouss and Town Administrator Marie Ryan

Other Guests: Patricia Mullins, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Kathleen called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and listed Select Board members present.

Presentation by Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) on American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA):

Patricia presented an overview of ARPA. There are four major categories eligible for use of ARPA funds; public health, premium pay for essential workers, revenue loss due to the pandemic and broadband and sewer and water related expenses. Patricia suggested that the Board decide on a goal and use the funding for that. The Town of West Stockbridge has been awarded \$375,726. The Town has committed \$105,500 for water & sewer repairs and \$40,000 for the Town's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grant match. This leaves the Town a remaining balance of \$230,226.

...continued on page 9

Community News & Events

Stockbridge Grange Dinner and Council on Aging

There will be no Stockbridge Grange dinner or COA meeting in December.

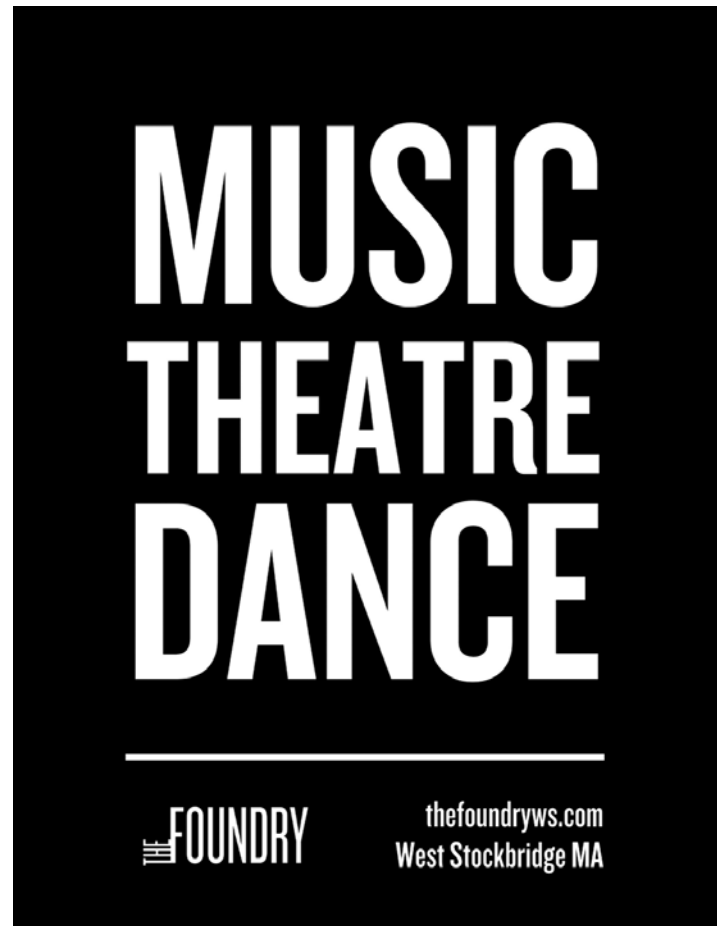
The Knitters Group

The Knitters Group will meet every Wednesday except December 21 from 2 to 4 pm in the Community Room at the Town Offices. All crafts are welcome.

Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Library Committee meets every second Wednesday of the month from 3:30 to 4:30 pm in the Community Room at the Town Offices. All are welcome.

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



...continued from page 8

The Board will make a priority list, think about next steps and discuss at the coming Capital Planning Meeting scheduled with the Finance Committee on for Thursday, November 3rd .

Andy Potter made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Andy Krouss.

All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 6:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Y. Ryan

Marie Y. Ryan

Town Administrator

**Select Board Meeting Minutes
October 24, 2022**

Quorum present: Select Board Members Kathleen Keresey, Chair, Andrew Potter and Andrew Krouss and Town Administrator Marie Ryan

Others Present: Marc Portieri, Police Chief and Randy Thunfors, Chair of the Zoning Board of Appeals

Kathleen called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM and listed Select Board members present.

Approval of Minutes:

Andy Potter made a motion, seconded by Andy Krouss, to approve the Minutes from October 11, 2022.

All Select Board members voted to approve.

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) Update: Randy Thunfors, Chair

The ZBA has had quite a few Public Hearings this past year including multiple meetings for the Williamsville Inn, the Baldwin Farm and the Foundry. The ZBA has a very small budget, however, last budget season they were able to get approval for funding with the Planning Board for a shared administrative assistant.

Police Department Update: Chief Marc Portieri

Marc shared some documents with the Board that included a data report of all the activity of the Police Department during 2022. There have been 29 incidents, 17 arrests, 17 bookings, 99 citations given out, and 13 accidents. He also provided a list of the current Department staff which includes five Full-time officers, one part-time officer and four traffic control officers.

Marc reported that the recent TurnPark event was successful and there were no noise or parking complaints.

Main Street will be blocked off for the Halloween Parade on October 31st.

The Department has been busy with mutual aid assistance to Richmond recently. Marc and the Board suggested communications with Richmond on a type of shared Police services agreement. Marie will contact the Town Administrator Danielle Fillio.

Marc informed the Board that the Police portable radios are currently not up to date with their software which is causing limited or no service when the officers are at an incident. He and Sergeant Mike Renton have received a quote of \$86,818 for 5 portable radios and a base station upgrade. Marc suggested using some ARPA money for this purchase and/or a special article at Town Meeting. The Board requested that this be presented at the Capital Planning Meeting on November 3rd with the Finance Committee.

In 2023, Sergeant Mike Renton, Officers Curt Wilton, III and Matt Sutton will all be attending the Bridge Academy.

The Police Association will be involved with the Helping Hands Program again this year. They have only received one family application to date, however, they provide for seven families each year. Marc is hoping some more families will reach out to them to participate.

Select Board Speak:

Andy Krouss stated that the Vision Committee has reached out to him to be the Select Board liaison on the Vision Committee. Kathleen and Andy Potter both agreed that was a good idea.

Andy Potter informed the Board that the Complete Streets group has created a project list of 15 possible projects in the Town. The group will narrow down and prioritize the list to 5 projects to be completed. They will have a site visit next week in the Town to look at each possible project.

Andy Potter also noted that the 8 Town Regional School District Planning Board has completed a draft for the 8 Town Regional Agreement to be reviewed and finalized in the near future.

Andy Potter made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Andy Krouss.

All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 6:57 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Y. Ryan

Marie Y. Ryan

Town Administrator

Local Yokel	<p>Pick up a copy FREE AS ALWAYS at these locations around town:</p>	➔	<p>Berkshire Bank Charles H. Baldwin & Sons Flourish Market Gallery on Main Library Public Market Town Offices</p>	<p>Or you can choose to have the <i>Local Yokel</i> mailed to you for a minimum annual contribution of \$25.</p>
<p>Outdoor distribution boxes: Visitors' Booth, Baldwin Hardware, Shaker Mill Books, The Floor Store, & the Transfer Station</p>				



A New Sign for the Old Town Hall

By Peter Thorne

Bob Salerno and Andrew Krouss asked me to make a sign for the front of the West Stockbridge Historical Society's Old Town Hall. I visited my favorite wood supplier, Ghent Wood Products, and bought three beautiful, straight mahogany boards. Back at the shop, they were planed, sanded, glued up, trimmed to size, and painted.

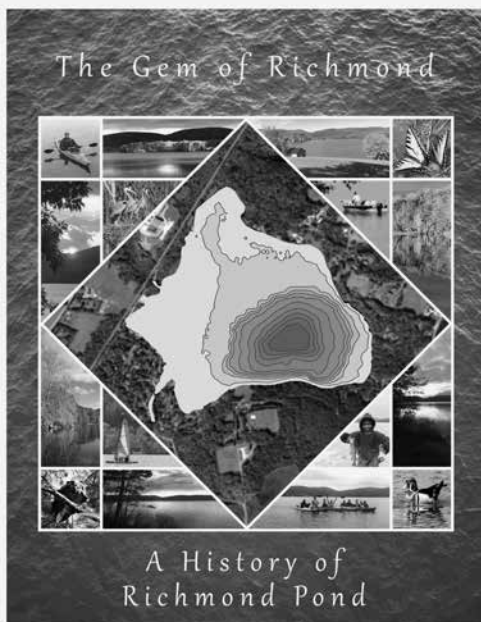
Then I took the 30 × 92-inch board to Fall River, Massachusetts, to Leo Voisine, a retired engineer who has a computer-controlled overhead router. After an hour or two sitting in front of his computer, laying out the letters (font: Times New Roman, all caps), we carefully placed the board under the router and turned the machine on. It took about 25 minutes to cut the letters (the larger ones are ¾-inch deep), and it was fun to watch.

Back at the shop, we put some strips on the back of the sign and two coats of varnish on the letters. It was ready! With the help of Bill Nappo (contractor for the Old Town Hall restoration), some of his workers, and my daughter Lily, we got it hung.

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Photo by Bob Salerno

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Santa's Wish List

Dear Readers,

It's that time of year again! This is our **15th** annual Santa's Wish List appeal. Last year we distributed \$10,445 to support local organizations and agencies that offer important programs and services to our community.



We hope you will donate to one or more of these great organizations: Friends of the West Stockbridge Library, Pet Partners of the Tri-State Berkshires, West Stockbridge Parks & Recreation, West Stockbridge Farmers Market, West Stockbridge Fire and Rescue Services, West Stockbridge Historical Society, and, of course, the *Local Yokel*.

These organizations need your help to continue making our town such a special place to live. Your donations are very much appreciated. Gifts of even a few dollars add up and make a real difference.

To donate, just use the gift tag at the right, fill out your name and the amount on the reverse side, and mail it with your check or checks to: **(IMPORTANT: Make the check out to the recipient organization.)**

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

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

The WSLY Editors



To: Friends of the
West Stockbridge
Library



To: The Local Yokel



To: Pet Partners of the
Tri-State Berkshires



To: Town of West Stockbridge
Parks & Recreation



To: West Stockbridge
Farmers Market



To: West Stockbridge Fire
and Rescue Services



To: West Stockbridge
Historical Society

Friends of the West Stockbridge Library, please accept this gift of

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From: _____

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West Stockbridge
Library*

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From: _____

(Please make check payable to the West Stockbridge *Local Yokel*)

The Local Yokel

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From: _____

(Please make check payable to Pet Partners of the Tri-State Berkshires)

*Pet Partners of the
Tri-State Berkshires*

Town of West Stockbridge Parks & Recreation, please accept this gift of

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From: _____

(Please make check payable to the Town of West Stockbridge and include a note designating the gift to Parks & Recreation)

*Town of West Stockbridge
Parks & Recreation*

West Stockbridge Farmers Market, please accept this gift of

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From: _____

(Please make check payable to the West Stockbridge Farmers Market)

*West Stockbridge
Farmers Market*

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From: _____

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and Rescue Services*

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*West Stockbridge
Historical Society*



8 Town Regional School District Planning Board

GET THE FACTS. BE INFORMED. YOU DECIDE.

By Lucy Prashker, Chair, Regional School District Planning Board

Here is our most recent update (November 15, 2022) on the work of the 8-Town Regional School District Planning Board.

Merger Model Under Consideration: In April, the 8-Town Board voted (16 to 6) to continue developing the merger model recommended by our research team—merging the Berkshire Hills Regional School District and the Southern Berkshire Regional School District into a single pre-K to 12 district, maintaining the existing elementary and middle schools as they are but creating a new merged 9 to 12 high school to be built on the Great Barrington campus.

Enrollment Trends: The enrollment trends that spurred the merger discussions continue. October enrollment numbers show a decline at Mt. Everett of 8.3% from the year before, dropping from 180 to 165 students across grades 9 to 12. At Monument Mountain, the one-year enrollment decline in the high school was 5.3%, dropping from 511 students to 484.

Work Planned for Early Winter 2022: Our three areas of primary focus now are educational visioning, the drafting of an 8-Town regional school district agreement, and a more in-depth transportation study.

Our educational visioning will involve faculty/staff from both districts, as well as students, community members, employers, and parents. The goal is to consider how a combined 8-town district would deliver educational programming, create opportunities for the two districts to learn more about each other; and build a shared sense of ownership in creating an educational vision for an 8-town region.

Our plan is to begin with two groups: one for the high school and a second focused on the expanded Career Vocational Technical Education (CVTE) and Career Pathways programs that a merged district could offer. A steering committee will research and evaluate possibilities, to be followed by the meeting of the larger community. We hope later in the school year to hold similar educational visioning forums for the elementary grades (pre-kindergarten to grade 4) and middle grades (grades 5 to 8).

We continue our other community outreach, such as the student-led forums led by the Southern Berkshire Community Health Coalition/Railroad Street Youth Project. We encourage those interested to attend our board and subcommittee meetings and visit our website at www.8towns.org that now has a video overview of our work to date. We welcome your thoughts, and we encourage your active participation in this important initiative.

Funding the Work: Our earlier state funding had to be spent by June 30, 2022. No funds were earmarked in the most recent budget cycle specifically for regionalization, and so we have sought other funding sources. We have received a \$50,000 grant for the educational visioning work from the Barr Foundation, and, with more support from BERK12, we now have enough money to continue our work through 2022. In late August, we had asked each of our 8 towns and two school districts to authorize up to \$15,000 to fund our work through June 2023 to the extent needed. As of this update, the towns of Sheffield, Alford, and West Stockbridge have provided that authorization, and the remaining towns have either placed the request on their respective special town meeting warrants or tabled the request, pending further developments on a Community Compact grant application we have submitted. We expect to know by the end of the year whether we will need the town funds requested.

Timeline: We are targeting January/February for a board vote on a recommendation to the Select Boards of the 8 Towns, and, if the vote is to recommend merger, having the question put to the voters of the 8 Towns at the annual meetings in May/June 2023.



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From all of us to all of you



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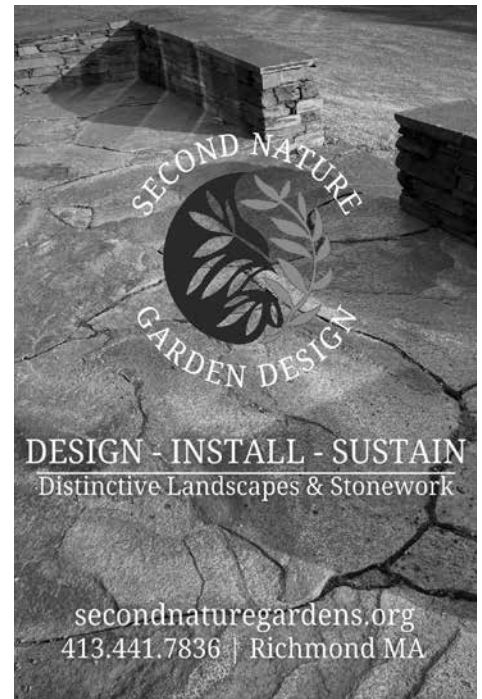
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The *Local Yokel* is published monthly. Please mail submissions to: **The Local Yokel, P.O. Box 238, West Stockbridge, MA 01266**, email info@thelocalyokel.org, or visit www.thelocalyokel.org. Copy deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the publication. 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.



WEST STOCKBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY

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

Mon., Wed., Thurs., and Sat. 10 am–3 pm | Tues. and Fri. 2–6 pm | Sun. Closed

Best wishes to everyone for a joyful and cozy holiday season, from all of us at your community library. We have a gigantic selection of new books this month, so we hope you all have some time to enjoy a good read.

And do you know that Community Health Programs is holding a playgroup right here in the library? Come on in and join us for the fun on Mondays at 10:30 am.

We look forward to seeing you soon! Vicky, Rachel, and Tess!

NEW ADULT FICTION

- Atkinson, *Shrines of Gaiety*
- Baldacci, *Long Shadows*
- Box, *Treasure State: A Cassie Dewell Novel*
- Boyd, *The Lemon*
- Bulawayo, *Glory*
- Child, *No Plan B: A Jack Reacher Novel*
- Christie et al., *Marple: Twelve New Mysteries*
- Cleeves, *Rising Tide: A Vera Stanhope Novel*
- Crais, *Racing the Light*
- Crane, *Keeping Two*
- Erlick, *Measure*
- Flynn, *Oath of Loyalty: A Mitch Rapp Novel*
- Galbraith, *Ink Black Heart*
- Goade, *Berry Song*
- Gregory, *Dawnlands*
- Grisham, *Boys from Biloxi: A Legal Thriller*
- Harris, *Devil's Blaze: Sherlock Holmes 1943*
- Hoover, *Verity* [Book on CDs]
- Hoover, *It Starts with Us*
- Karunatilaka, *Seven Moons of Maali Almeida*
- King, *Fairy Tale*
- Kingsolver, *Demon Copperhead*
- Li, *Book of Goose*
- Lux, *Sign Here*
- Macomber, *Christmas Spirit*
- McCarthy, *Passenger*
- Mah, *Jacqueline in Paris*
- Mayor, *Fall Guy: A Joe Gunther Novel*
- Nethercott, *Thistlefoot*
- Osman, *Bullet That Missed*
- Patterson, *Blowback*
- Picoult, *Mad Honey*
- Raybourn, *Killers of a Certain Age*
- Sandford, *Righteous Prey*
- Serpell, *Furrows*
- Shapiro, *Signal Fires*
- Stephenson, *Sometimes People Die*
- Turow, *Suspect*
- Verble, *When Two Feathers Fell from the Sky*
- Wells, *One Woman's War: A Novel of the Real Miss Money Penny*
- Wilson, *Now Is Not the Time to Panic*
- Zevin, *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow*

NEW ADULT NONFICTION

- Barba, *American Wildflowers*
- Belcourt, *Minor Chorus*
- Brown, *Looking for the Hidden Folk*
- Campbell, *All the Living and the Dead*
- Davis, *Finding Me: A Memoir* [Book on CDs]
- Delmont, *Half American: The Epic Story of African Americans Fighting WWII at Home and Abroad*
- Gay, *Inciting Joy: Essays*
- Horowitz, *Year of the Puppy: How Dogs Become Themselves*
- Kumar, *Conversations with Birds*
- Mukherjee, *Song of the Cell: An Exploration of Medicine and the New Human*
- Proulx, *Fen, Bog and Swamp*
- Samatar, *White Mosque: A Memoir*
- Waters, *Gathering Dark*

NEW ALL-AGES READERS


- Blackall, *Farmhouse*
- Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu, *The Little Book of Joy*
- Brown, *Wild Symphony*
- Wahl, *Little Witch Hazel: A Year in the Forest*
- Watson, *Maya's Song*
- Willems, *Frustrating Book!*



Scrapbook Questions/created by Paula Farrell TEST YOUR TRIVIA KNOWLEDGE!

1. In 1913, how many years had the West Stockbridge Farmers Market been running?
2. Why did Carly Sturgis host a lemonade stand?
3. What year did a major tornado roar through the neighborhood and truck stop?
4. NWS Albany is at the head of disseminating uninviting weather information. Then what do they do?

1. Two years; 2. To raise funds for childhood cancer research; 3. 1973; 4. They relay the proper advisories, watches, and warnings to the general public through social media and media partners to prepare against inclement weather.


 This program 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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"We Remember When . . ."

Growing Up in West Stockbridge in the 1950s

A Series of Recollections by John Bormolini and Friends

Christmas Traditions

*By John Bormolini with help from
Lori (Censato) Salvi, Bruce Morelli,
Louise Faggioni, and John Masiero*

One of the traditions most people observed during the holidays was sending Christmas cards. In West Stockbridge, you could merely put the name followed by "Town" on the envelope. I was the designated card writer because my mother Anna had trouble writing in English. In 1955, the cost of a first-class postage stamp was \$0.03, the equivalent of \$0.31 in 2022 dollars.

One West Stockbridge entrepreneur was Denny Raspuzzi. Along with his uncle, Joe Angelini, they would make Christmas wreaths. Joe provided the transportation to the woods to get the running pine used to make wreaths. Their quality product sold well to buyers in town and elsewhere.

Some yearly events were traditions for their families. Jim Salvi and John Capelli were best of friends. They had different full-time jobs, but together they made an excellent team of carpenters. During the winter they worked at Crane Lake Camp, updating and remodeling the cabins that housed campers during the summer. Their friendship continued when deer hunting season opened in Vermont and Massachusetts. Out hunting, they would come across pine trees that ended up in their homes for Christmas, with the permission of the property owners. And they always harvested a few deer!

John Masiero sent me this memory of Christmas aromas and traditions: "I recall the aromas of seasonal cooking as my mother made various flavors of fudge, date candies, and caramel popcorn balls. She baked fruitcakes, cookies, and other favorites. Some years she made gingerbread houses and "snow-covered" candles from blocks of paraffin. I helped by licking spoons and sampling the raw ingredients. So many memories of simple times—simple for the children but trying for adults putting their lives together after living through the Great Depression, World War II, and then Korea."

Lori (Censato) Salvi shared some Christmas memories. She now lives in New Hampshire. Her husband Steve grew up in West Stockbridge; Lori grew up in Richmond. Lori remembers people in the 1950s as more empathetic about the needy and poor. There was more of a sense of community compared to now when fewer residents have lived here most of their lives.

Lori described several Christmas traditions. The two churches in town, St. Patrick's Catholic Church and the Congregational United Church of Christ (current name), each had its own Christmas decorations. Donors were always quick to help with the costs. The nativity scenes and other decorations at the churches were quite beautiful and symbolic of the season. Lori remembered that people bought chestnuts to bake in the oven, after first cutting a notch in the nut so it wouldn't explode during cooking!

Lori also recalls that people were more likely during the Christmas season to pay their respects to those who had passed away, especially those who gave their lives in service of our country. Wreaths and flowers were often placed at the graves. Whenever I am in town, usually for a Williams High School reunion, I always visit the cemetery where my mother Anna, father Joseph, brother Joseph, and Anselmo, the brother I never knew, who died in a tragic vehicle accident in 1940, are buried. One year I left a dollar coin on the gravestone, and it was still there a year later.

For our family's Christmas tradition, besides putting up a Christmas tree and leaving a plate with milk and cookies for Santa Claus, my mother made a big pot of polenta and fried chicken seasoned with garlic and sage. The aroma sticks with me after all these years. After my father died in 1951, my mother became head of the household. She never complained and did the best she could cleaning people's homes or babysitting for many families, her income supplemented by a meager Social Security check every month. Her customers would often offer us goodies for our family. I guess we were poor, but we always had enough.



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



St. Patrick's Catholic Church
<https://avptriparish.org/st-patrick-parish>



Congregational United Church of Christ
<https://www.facebook.com/wscucc/>

Residents of West Stockbridge in the 1950s could be thankful if they had a job and a day off at Christmas to relax, especially the quarry workers. For many Catholics who were not regular churchgoers, Christmas was one of the two days (the other was Easter) when they would go to Mass. Some even went to the midnight service. Others went to a morning Mass and then home to enjoy the rest of the day. A day off from working in the quarries was a treat.

A week later it was New Year's Eve, and the bars and restaurants in our town were jumping! People had their choice of the Stateline Bar, the Square Rigger, the Card Lake Hotel and Bar, and the Social Club. The liquor was flowing and the music was good, especially at the Social Club.

Where have the years gone, and how did I get this old so fast? Be well! John B.

John Bormolini is a West Stockbridge "ex-pat," now living in Leavenworth, Kansas. Readers who would like to share their stories of 1950s West Stockbridge are invited to email John at johnbormo@aol.com.


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History Quiz Answer:

Because West Center was the original settlement area of West Stockbridge, West Center Road was called the "Great Barrington-Stateline" road. It was a main transit route from South County over to New York State and the Hudson River. The drive west on West Center Road to State Line is relatively flat until you reach the steep downhill section to Austerlitz Road. Just before West Center Road reaches Austerlitz Road, it crosses a stream. That crossing you drive over (probably without noticing) is actually a massive stone structure that dates to 1810. It is one of the oldest stone bridges in New England still in use.

The stream underneath begins on Harvey Mountain, flows parallel to Austerlitz Road, then through the stone structure and down into Flat Brook, Crane Lake, and the Williams River. It's named Baldwin Brook (after the farm and family),

but before the 1870s, the upper part was called Whitwood Stream, named after the people who lived near the New York state line. Once it crosses West Center Road, the stream was called Mudge Stream. The streambed drops steeply before going under West Center Road, and it was a major source of early waterpower.

The stone bridge you drive over was a major engineering achievement (remember that no cement or iron rebars were available). Looking at this accompanying picture from the 1890s, you can see the roadbed is more than 40 feet above the stream featuring a 12-foot-high arch within the bridge to carry the stream through. The opening was replaced with a steel tube in the 1930s to protect the bridge and the sides of the bridge were built up, but some of the original stonework is still visible.

The area around the stone bridge was an early industrial hub, given the availability of waterpower and the streambed drop. In the 1780s, the stream had an earthen dam, and later a stone dam was located just west of the bridge to drive a gristmill. Before 1800, the Mudge family ran the mill (along with others from Sheffield to New Lebanon). There was also a clothier alongside the stream and a tavern. This site served as a town center where people regularly gathered and town notices were posted.

The stone bridge has endured at least three major floods where water spilled over the roadbed. The upstream dam was washed away long ago, although some parts of the foundation are still visible. The bridge still stands, a testament to early engineering.



Bailey Brook Bridge. Image courtesy of West Stockbridge Historical Society



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Board of Health	<i>Earl Moffatt</i>	232-0300	ext. 314	Fri. 9 am–4 pm, or by appt.
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Town Clerk	<i>Ronni Barrett</i>	232-0300	ext. 300	Tues. & Thurs. 1:30–3:30 pm
Town Collector	<i>Kellie Bradbury</i>	232-0300	ext. 302	Tues. 3–7 pm; Wed. 7 am–12 pm; Thurs. 1–6 pm
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

December Calendar of Events

Due to the coronavirus health situation, 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.

12/4	"Sparkles" Community Event	4:30–6 pm	Congregational Church, Town Offices
12/5	Select Board meeting	6 pm	Town Offices, 21 State Line Road
12/14	Friends of the Library Committee meeting	3:30 pm	Community Room, Town Offices
12/15	*** Deadline for the next Local Yokel ***		Send to info@thelocalyokel.org
12/18	Hanukkah begins at sundown		
12/19	Select Board meeting	6 pm	Town Offices, 21 State Line Road
12/21	First Day of Winter		
12/24	Christmas Eve		
12/25	Christmas Day		
12/26	Kwanzaa begins		
12/26	Town Offices closed		
12/31	New Year's Eve		

