

Local yokel

West
Stockbridge

July
2022

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



Musician Walter Aaskov, occasionally seen playing slide guitar outside Queensboro Wine and Spirits on Main Street, West Stockbridge. Photo by John Parker

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 2005

About the Artist: Gary Schieneman

My first encounter with making art was some 50 years ago when I was a young accountant living and working in Paris. The beauty of the city was inspiring and got me going. I began sketching in charcoal and bought a book that taught me perspective. I began a number of charcoal drawings, including ones of Notre Dame and several chateaux of the Loire, that I was asked to include in a small exhibit at the American Church in Paris.

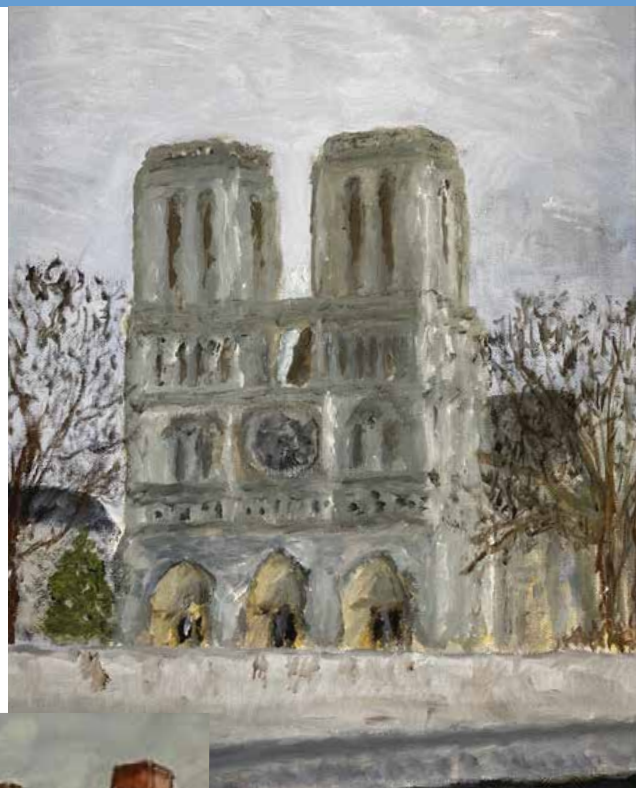
I returned from France, and art took second place to building a career, first as a partner in a Big Eight accounting firm, then Wall Street, and finally as one of seven board members on the Financial Accounting Standards Board that sets U.S. accounting standards. During this period I had one brief encounter with painting at the Parsons School of Design in New York. It was an evening studio session devoted to painting nude models. I was the only neophyte in the class and was way over my head, dealing with both form and color, but it hooked me, and I was determined to pursue art more seriously when I ended my work career.

Following retirement in 2004, my wife and I moved full time to West Stockbridge where we had been weekenders since 1981. The move allowed me to devote more time to working as a ski instructor at Catamount (which I had been doing since 1998). More importantly, I had a chance to fulfill my long-held ambition to become an artist. I turned to IS183 Art School for help. I began with their evening drop-in nude drawing session. When I tried to enroll in a real class, the only one available was pastels taught by June Parker. She became a mentor and continued to critique my work until she moved away several years later.

For me, pastels are like charcoal with color, and they are probably my best medium. I went on to study watercolor with Pat Hogan and oil with Yura Adams. Watercolor is the most difficult medium because it forces me to deal with my mistakes that are very difficult to paint over. I continue to paint in all three media and also have done a series of charcoals and pen-and-ink drawings of Berkshire landmarks. Recognizing the great start IS183 gave me, I served on its board for seven years.

Since I started painting so late in life, I have enjoyed exploring not only these different media, but also a variety of subject matter—landscapes, architecture, still lifes, nudes, abstracts, and even animals. I like them all and will continue with all of them; they add such interest and joy to my life!

Contact Gary at garyshin1@gmail.com



*Notre Dame - oil
Naumkeag - watercolor
Bentley - pastel
Adirondack Winter - watercolor
Photos (from top)
courtesy of artist*

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.virtualltownhall.net/subscriber>].

Select Board Meeting Minutes April 25, 2022

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

Others in Attendance: Director of Public Works Curt Wilton

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

Approval of Minutes:

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Roger, to approve the minutes from the April 11, 2022 meeting with the amendment of a deletion of two sentences under the Master Plan paragraph noted by Roger.

Roll call vote;

Roger Yes
Kathleen Yes
Eric Yes

Minutes approved.

Town Administrator Update:

-The Farmer's Market will begin on May 26th and run through October 6th from 3 PM-6PM every Thursday. Marie asked Curt to make sure the public restroom is open by May 26th.

-Curt and Marie are working with the Town of Richmond to apply for a Municipal Vulnerability Program Grant to assist with stormwater drainage and culvert issues in Town. If awarded this grant, the State will pay 75% of the cost of the projects listed in the application and the remaining 25% will be split between the two towns. Roger requested to see any plans for this grant and Marie said she would forward the draft plan for the application to the Board.

-Marie asked how the Board would like to handle questions at the upcoming Annual Town Meeting. It was agreed that the

Board would have the most qualified person on the subject in question, answer any questions at that time.

-Marie asked the Board if they want to hold their next meeting in person or by zoom. It was agreed to keep the next meeting via zoom.

Police Department Update – Marc Portieri

Police Chief Marc Portieri stated that the Police have been very busy this year so far and gave the following update in regards to the Police Department:

- there have been 1975 calls so far this year
- there have been five arrests
- there is an ongoing investigation involving some residents
- they worked with State Police involved in a standoff on the Mass Pike
- there has been ongoing work with the Drug Task Force in Town
- there have been multiple brush fires in the past few days
- the Bridge academy begins in July and there are 4 eligible officers that can attend
- Marc has submitted a grant application for K-9 support
- the Police Union contract should be finalized in the next few days.

Roger asked Marc if all 4 officers that are eligible for the academy are all interested in attending. Marc responded yes, they all plan on attending.

Historical Society Sign Permit:

Eric stated that the Historical Society has updated their Sign Permit application. They are located in the VCOD Commercial District where the sign regulation size is a maximum of 16 sq. ft. The Historical Society is requesting a permit to put up a 14 sq. ft. sign on the building.

Eric made a motion to approve the Sign Permit for the Historical Society, seconded by Roger.

...continued on page 5

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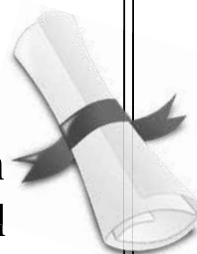
Special Town Election Results May 31, 2022

Andrew Krouss	204
Peter Skorput	150
Total voters	354

Town Finance Committee member Andy Krouss defeated former Select Board member Peter Skorput in a special town election held on May 31 (too late to report in our June issue). Turnout was just over 30%. The special election was made necessary by the resignation of Select Board member Roger Kavanagh, whose resignation came too late for the seat to be contested in the town election on May 9.



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Marco Buffoni

Mikalyn Eichstedt

Grace Fosser

Ashlynn Kimpel

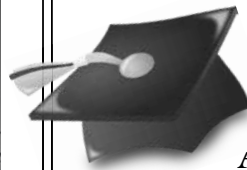
Madison Mullen

Autumn Parker

Carly Sturgis

Anika Thiemann

Nicholas Zanin



July History Quiz Question:

Baseball, America's national pastime, was not always dominated by the big money major leagues. Local semiprofessional teams were common in the 1920s up to World War II, and Troy's Garage was one of the most prominent. The team played at Keresey Field on Route 41, where a plaque honoring the team will be unveiled this July 6 at 5 pm.

Garrett Troy was the quintessential marketeer. He staffed his team with major college stars and former professional players. He recruited local boys to sell tickets and to work in the stands and as batboys. His team played local counterparts in the Southern Berkshire League and semipro teams from adjoining New York State. Troy was always looking for ways to promote the team and sell tickets.

The big draw occurred when the Troy's Garagemen, as they were known, played exhibition games with major touring teams. The most famous was the game against Connie Mack's Philadelphia Athletics in 1935. There were other exhibition games as well. One was the most unique and drew larger crowds than any other visiting team. What was that team, and what made it unique?

(Find the answer somewhere in this issue!)



**West Stockbridge
Historical Society**
Incorporated in 1994

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.

...continued from page 3

Roll call vote;
Roger Yes
Kathleen Yes
Eric Yes
Permit approved.

Merritt Way – Vote to place on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Eric explained that this vote is part of the process to make Merritt Way a public way and for the Town to have an easement on this road. The Board had the road laid out by Foresight Land Services, referred this to the Planning Board, and now the Board needs to vote to place it officially on the Town Meeting Warrant. Marie explained that on the original map layout, it notated that Spencer Way was a public Way. She was notified by a resident that this was actually a private way and should be notated as such. Marie agreed there was never a Town vote to make Spencer Way a public way so she requested that Foresight update the wording on the map to show Spencer Way as a private way. The map has been amended.

Eric made the following motion, seconded by Kathleen;

I move that the Town accept Merritt Way as a public town way in the location ordered by the Select Board and depicted on a plan entitled: “Easement Plan of 15 Feet Right-of-Way ‘Merritt Way’ Prepared for Town of West Stockbridge, Harris Street, West Stockbridge, Massachusetts,” dated April 25, 2022, prepared by Foresight Land Services, and to authorize the Select Board to acquire,

by gift, purchase, or eminent domain, rights in the land within the layout sufficient to use said way for all purposes for which public ways are used in the Town of West Stockbridge, and to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds the sum of \$15,000 for the purpose of acquiring such rights and paying all costs incidental and related thereto.

Roll call vote;
Roger Yes
Kathleen Yes
Eric Yes
Motion approved.

RBC Wastewater Unit – Vote to use ARPA money to pay for repair

Roger stated he was very disappointed that the repairs are now at a state of an emergency repair. In the future he would like to see this department on a capital plan. He requested that representatives from the Water and Sewer Commissioners be present at the Town Meeting to answer any questions. Curt will ask Plant Operator, Mike Buffoni to attend the Town Meeting.

Eric made a motion, seconded by Roger, to approve use of \$50,000 from the Town’s ARPA money to pay for a new RBC Unit at the Wastewater Plant.

Roll call vote;
Kathleen Yes
Roger Yes
Eric Yes
Motion approved.

...continued on page 7

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Keresey Field as it appears today. Photo by John Parker

Historical Sign for Former Baseball Field to Be Dedicated July 6

By John Parker

Thanks to the efforts of local baseball historian and author Kevin Larkin, with an assist by state Rep. William “Smitty” Pignatelli, a historical sign will be installed on the grounds of what was once Keresey Field on Albany Road (Route 41), a quarter mile north of the village.

From 1934 to 1941, Keresey Field was the home of the Troy’s Garage semipro baseball team that hosted games against the Philadelphia Athletics, Cincinnati Reds, and Boston Braves, as well as the Negro League and other regional teams. At a time when the population of West Stockbridge was 1,000, nearly 4,000 fans came to see the Philadelphia Athletics play the Garagemen.

Keresey Field was named for the family that owned the property at that time. It is now part of the state-owned 290-acre Flat Brook Wildlife Management Area. The mounted sign, about 3 by 3 feet, will be dedicated on July 6 at 5 pm with a reception to follow at Crissey Farms at 5:30.

July Donor Roll Call

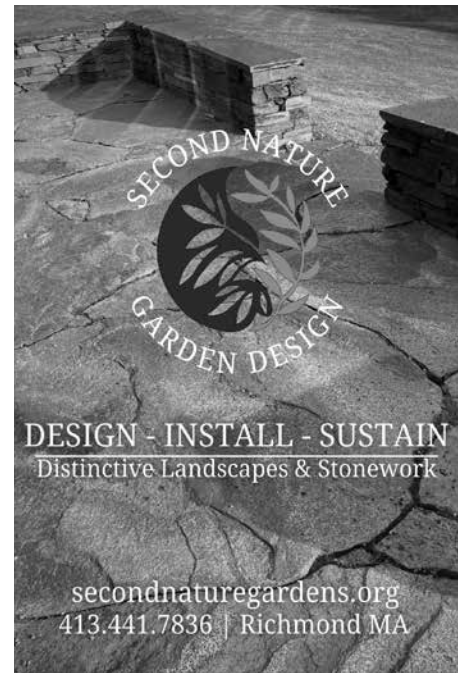
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Tom Platten

Anonymous: 4

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Select Board Speak:

Roger noted that this was his last meeting as a Select Board member.

Kathleen thanked Roger for his service as a Select Board member.

Citizen Speak:

Bob Salerno, Finance Committee Chair, noted that the Wastewater Plant/Water & Sewer Commission should be involved in the Capital Planning with the Finance Committee in the future.

Roger made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Kathleen.

Roll call vote;

Roger Yes
Kathleen Yes
Eric Yes

Meeting adjourned at 6:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Y. Ryan

Town Administrator

Documents:

- Sign Permit application from the Historical Committee
- Merritt Way Layout from Foresight Land Services

**Select Board Meeting Minutes
May 10, 2022**

Quorum present: Select Board Members Kathleen Keresey and newly elected member Andy Potter and Marie Ryan, Town Administrator.

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

Approval of Minutes:

Kathleen requested that the approval of the minutes be postponed until the next meeting.

Town Administrator Update:

-Marie requested and reminded the Board that they both will need to come to Town Hall once a week to sign the warrants.

Discussion/Vote on New Chair

Kathleen began by suggesting that she become the new Chair since the tradition of the Select Board is for the longest serving Board member to become the Chair. Andy made a motion to cancel the next Board meeting and hold off on the Board re-organization until they have a full Board after the Special Election on May 31st. He thinks the best way to re-organize the Board would be to vote just once with a full Board. Kathleen strongly disagreed and did not

want to wait. Marie suggested that they be co-chairs until the first full Board meeting on June 6th. Kathleen did not want to cancel the next meeting and wondered how they could have a meeting with no chair. Andy stated that it is possible to have a meeting with no Chair and that there is not much going on right now so waiting until the June 6th meeting should be fine. He also suggested that they would be able to address anything comes up.

Having no 2nd on Andy's motion and Andy not agreeing to Kathleen being the Chair, Marie suggested that we move on to the next agenda item.

AMICI Sign Permit – Bridget Cappo

Kathleen stated that Bridget Cappo of AMICI has applied for a sign permit. Her business is in the Commercial District which has a limit of a 16 sq. ft. sign. AMICI's sign is 14 sq. ft. so it is within the regulations.

Kathleen made a motion to approve the Sign Permit for AMICI, seconded by Andy.

Roll call vote;

Andy Yes
Kathleen Yes

Permit approved.

Select Board Speak:

Andy stated that he is happy to be on the Board and thanked the voters for their support and trust. He is looking forward to serving the Town for the next three years. Andy thanked Eric and Roger for their service to the Town and hopes that they stay engaged in the Town.

Kathleen agreed with Andy's sentiments.

Citizen Speak:

Joe Roy congratulated Andy on winning the election. He also suggested that the two could co-Chair the Board until the full Board is able to meet. He said it is great to see new faces on the Board and he hopes all goes well.

Kathleen made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Andy.

Roll call vote;

Andy Yes
Kathleen Yes

Meeting adjourned at 6:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Y. Ryan

Town Administrator

Documents:

- Sign Permit application from AMICI



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@annelesserscommunications.com;** Designer: **Kim Bradway, kim@bloominarts.com.**

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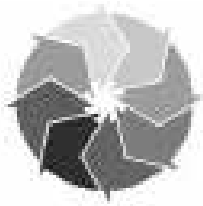
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8 TOWN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT PLANNING BOARD

Contacts:

Lucy Prashker, RSDPB Chair, lprashker@cainhibbard.com, (413) 629-1305

Jake Eberwein, Project Manager, jakeeberwein@gmail.com, (413) 329-4336

The 8 Town Regional School District Planning Board (RSDPB) has taken an important step, voting at its April 26, 2022, meeting to approve its research team's recommendation that the two districts merge to form a single K–12 regional school district among the eight towns, maintaining all existing elementary and middle schools, but creating a new merged grades 9–12 high school to be built on the campus of the current Monument Mountain Regional High School. Among the 23 members of the RSDPB, the vote was 16 in favor, 6 opposed, and 1 absent.

The RSDPB's next steps will be further design and development of the selected model, including the drafting of a new regional school district agreement for consideration by town officials and ultimately the voters in the eight member towns. A new 8 town regional school district will be formed only if a majority of the voters in each of those towns approve entering into a new regional school district agreement.

The April vote of the members of the RSDPB represented the culmination of two years of their work and multiple consultants, including the current research team led by Jake Eberwein, a well-regarded educator who previously served as superintendent of the Pittsfield and Lee public schools. The RSDPB's mandate is to examine the educational and financial advisability of further regionalization in the face of the challenges posed by dramatic enrollment decline, escalating operational costs, flat state aid, and increasing student needs.

In March, the research team delivered a detailed report and recommendation that identified both educational advantages and fiscal efficiencies achievable by combining the districts, including:

- Expanded programming for high school students, including up to eight Career Vocational Technical Education (CVTE) programs;
- Expanded opportunities for all students through additional courses, electives, and enrichment experiences;
- More professional development and support opportunities for teachers;
- A pooling of resources to address the growing support for students' social-emotional needs, special education, and English-language learners;
- Greater variety and support for sports and other extracurricular activities;
- A larger, more diverse student body;
- Alignment of administrative and operational functions, resulting in fiscal efficiencies; and
- Savings in the range of \$1.5 to \$2.1 million annually that could be reinvested in educational enhancements, used to offset increases in town assessments, or some combination of the two.

Although the RSDPB's April vote signals its interest in pursuing the recommended model, much work and community outreach lies ahead. The board agreed to dig into further details regarding transportation, special education, facilities, and food service. It will begin work on drafting a new regional school district agreement with legal and other expert support. The board plans to make expanded community outreach a priority. And the board will begin the work of bringing together educational leaders and other district stakeholders in the framing of an educational vision for a merged district. Town votes on a merged district could occur as early as spring 2023.

As the RSDPB continues its work to further develop the recommended model of a merged district, the Berkshire Hills Regional School District is working with the Massachusetts School Building Authority to secure state funding for a new or renovated high school. Should the eight towns vote to proceed with a merger of the two districts, the new high school could be designed and built as a state-of-the-art facility to serve the students and larger community of all eight towns instead of just the existing three that are part of Berkshire Hills.

The RSDPB's website at www.8towns.org contains copies of all reports and presentations made by the research team and other consultants, a detailed set of FAQs regarding the recommended merger model, and information about upcoming meetings and information sessions. The public is invited and encouraged to attend meetings of the RSDPB, which are held virtually on Zoom and include time for public comment. Recordings of RSDPB meetings are available through the educational channel of Community Television for the Southern Berkshires, ctsbvtv.org. Questions and comments may be submitted through the RSDPB website (using the "CONTACT US" button) or by contacting RSDPB Project Manager Jake Eberwein at jakeeberwein@gmail.com.

Editor's Note: The eight towns involved are Alford, Egremont, Great Barrington, Monterey, New Marlborough, Sheffield, Stockbridge, and West Stockbridge.

A Message from the Community Health Association of Richmond and West Stockbridge

By *Laurence D. Cohen, Board President*

The Community Health Association of Richmond and West Stockbridge (CHA) has ceased operations as of June 30, 2022. Virtually all our former functions will subsequently be managed by the Berkshire Public Health Alliance. We are very grateful to Emilie Jarrett, RN, for her years of dedication as our public face. We also thank the many volunteers who assisted Emilie when one person could simply not manage large events, such as health fairs, lecture dinners, and vaccinations.

Some funds remained in our coffers, reflecting years of fundraising as well as contributions from our two towns. CHA declined much of the town funding after we decided to close the organization last fall. We also returned money to individual donors who were unaware of the circumstances and continued to contribute without solicitation.

The board deliberated over the course of the past year and decided to transfer the money to Berkshire Community College (BCC). The funds will be disbursed by the BCC scholarship committee to any worthy student, *residing in either of our two towns*, who is entering a field related to a career in nursing, allied health, and/or human services programs at BCC.

Board members:

Eugene Della, Alan Thiel, June Biggs, Mitchell Greenwald, Gloria Morse, Jill Pixley, and Joseph Roy, Jr.

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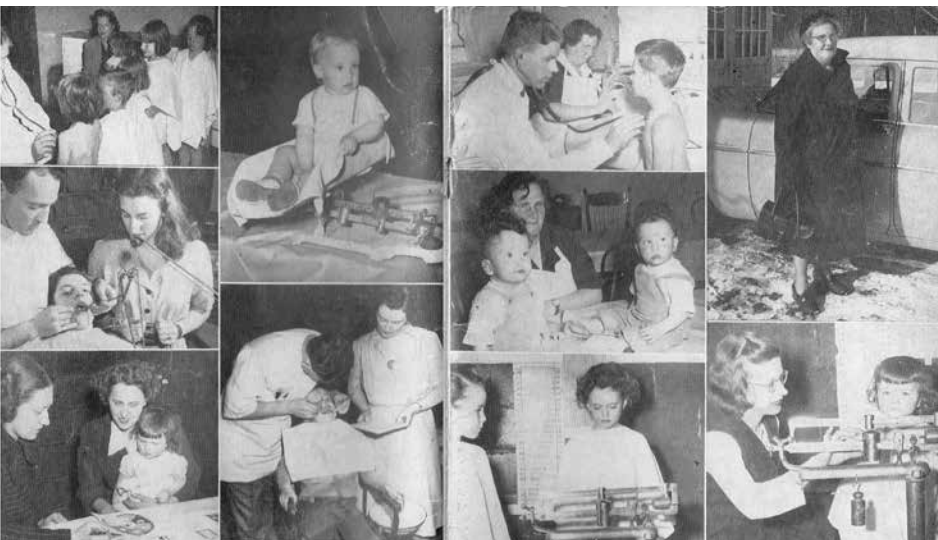


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Thanks to Community Health Association for 94 Years of Service

By Gloria Morse

Before the Community Health Association (CHA) became a reality in the 1920s, immunization rates for

schoolchildren were low, and preventive dental care and nutrition education and care of homebound older adults were sadly lacking. But very slowly, well-child appointments, free toothbrushes for students, and PTA-supplied hot meals began to make an impact.

By 1928, Richmond was ready to invest in more community health care. A proposal to hire a full-time nurse passed at the town meeting, but no one took the job. Then in January 1929, Mary Fairweather (Kirk), from Adams, a graduate of St. Luke's School of Nursing, became the first CHA nurse, as well as the school nurse. Money was raised from local donations to pay her salary.

The following year, West Stockbridge joined with Richmond to promote better health care. In 1932, the organization's name was changed to the Community Health Association of Richmond and West Stockbridge. Board members from both towns were recruited, and many served several years.

By the 1950s, more immunizations were required by the state; polio was the big item. Tuberculosis was on the rise, and more testing began; a mobile van came to both towns to provide chest X-rays. Adult-onset diabetes also became more prevalent, and education and testing were offered. In the 1960s, oral polio, measles, rubella, mumps, and chickenpox immunizations were added.

By this time adults were being helped as well as children, with a push for better health in both towns. CHA professionals also raised awareness about illicit drug use and its consequences.

The CHA became a certified home health agency in 1966 and a Medicare provider in 1970. An impressive 697 home visits were logged that year.

The association held its first health fair in 1970 that became a very popular event. But stricter health care and insurance requirements made it impossible to continue the fairs; the last one was held in 1992. Flu clinics continued to be offered and were well attended.

The CHA also sponsored informative talks by local physicians. For example, Dr. Stephanie Beling's series on cholesterol control encouraged testing and new recipes for healthier diets. Board member Dr. Laurence Cohen offered timely information on osteoporosis and joint replacement surgery.

Health funding and regulation were beginning to change, and smaller agencies struggled to survive. CHA had been working with Elder Services to provide more care for older adults. By 2000, CHA was no longer associated with Medicare and kept nurses and aides busy with Elder Services.

The CHA board had to become very creative to keep the association going. Home visits and blood draws for the homebound were still being offered, along with flu clinics and work with the Board of Health officials in both towns.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, director and nurse Emilie Jarrett was stretched to her limits with all that was required to keep our communities healthy. CHA also began long-range planning for mass inoculations that had been established a few years earlier.

And now in 2022, as we bid a fond farewell to CHA, we extend our heartfelt thanks to these directors of nursing: Mary Fairweather Kirk (33 years of service), Helen Bassett, Hazel Dickson, Harriet O'Neal, Natalie Mara, Ellen Murray, Jane Kelley, Marilyn Ratcliff, Mary Ann Dus, Susanne Hatch, and Emilie Jarrett.

Among many home health aides too numerous to recall them all, we appreciate Joanne Fairfield, Joan Baker, Freida Wiglesworth, and Gloria Morse. Secretaries also were crucial to keep CHA running smoothly: our thanks to Nancy Benedict, Nancy Hall, Lisa Martin, Sue Nichols, and Paula Ciskowski.

A truckload of volunteers was also needed, along with the board of directors, who offered good business and health sense. Many other health professionals volunteered their time and skills. We are grateful to you all for your service.

Sad as it is to lose CHA, life will go on, with just a different twist to keep us healthy.

Editor's Note: As reported in the May Local Yokel, "As of July 1, 2022, the towns of Richmond and West Stockbridge will contract with the Berkshire Public Health Alliance for public health nursing services. You can reach Alliance Administrative Coordinator Lydia Shulman at Alliance@berkshireplanning.org or (413) 442-1521, ext. 60, with any general questions. Or you can reach out to public health nurses, Nancy Slattery, RN (nslattery@berkshireplanning.org) or Leslie Drager, RN (ldrager@berkshireplanning.org) directly."

Photos by Clem Moore



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The 34th Annual Stone House Properties LLC Scholarships to*

MADISON MULLEN CONGRATULATIONS and BEST WISHES!!

We'd like to extend continued Best Wishes to past West Stockbridge Recipients:

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Emma Wolfe
Peter Thunfors
Andrea Sartori

Matthew Lopez
Sarah Guss
Kerry Biggs
Francesca Anderegg
Peter Anderegg
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Amanda Hanley
Joshua Kohler
Kristin Kruszyna
Joseph Barrett
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Whitney Shook
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Ethan Oberwager
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Corey Baldwin
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Anna Lucia Lister
Tara Korte
Lily Michaels
Shawna Norton
Keegan Baldwin
Anna Campetti
Dylan Cole-Kink
Candice Slosek

Peter Oggiani
Juri Kiin
Brianna Davis
Hannah Korte
Tristan Alston
Robert Baldwin
Aubrey Blanchard
Adam Boscarino
Charles Medeiros
Sophia Tenuta
Olivia Thiemann
Gabriella Thierling
Liam O'Gara

Darren St Aubin

PATHWAY TO THE TRADES SCHOLARSHIP

Awarded to a Chatham High School graduate who is continuing their education and training in the trades.

Brian Cella

PATHWAY TO THE TRADES SCHOLARSHIP

Awarded to a Monument Mountain Regional High School graduate who is continuing their education and training in the trades.

Scott Duma

SOULES-ASTORE SCHOLARSHIP

Katie Soules and Jeff Astore award to a Wahconah High School graduate who has maintained a high academic record and has made significant contributions in sports, arts, leadership, volunteering, internships, or work.

Wilder Dunaj

SOULES-ASTORE TRADES SCHOLARSHIP

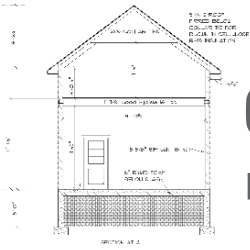
Katie Soules and Jeff Astore award to a Lee High School graduate who is continuing their education and training in the trades.



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On the Home Front

By Thom Lipiczky

“Cultivate Your Garden”

This is how Voltaire’s satirical novel *Candide* ends. After all his misadventures, Candide ends up coming home to cultivate his garden. So that’s what we’re doing here on the shores of majestic Mud Pond. We moved all of two miles to our new house to downsize, and the house is certainly smaller and easier to maintain than our old place, an 1812 farmhouse. But downsizing the outside? Not so much.

One new trend we’re practicing is “Less lawn, more meadow.” We recently removed the sod in front of our house to plant more perennials and did the same on a spot where we had a small garden shed for a year. Now the latter is “the meadow,” where we’ve sown seeds of a wildflower mix and have moved in some other sun-loving plants like milkweed, a butterfly magnet.

Pollinators (bees, wasps, some moths, etc.) are not doing well. By some measures, the insect population of the planet (roughly 80% of all animals) is down 40% over the past 30 years. This is due to habitat change and insecticides used for commercial farming. So we’re doing what little we can to help out the pollinators. Without them, our food crops would crash quickly, a disaster, especially given the effect of the current crisis in Ukraine on the grain and cooking oil supply for many in the eastern Mediterranean region and in Africa. And a shortage there will doubtless have ripple effects elsewhere, economically and politically.

We’re growing some of our own food, too. In our small raised-bed vegetable garden we’ve got lettuces, beans, eggplant, tomatoes, and cukes, and some winter squash. No zucchini, though, even though I love it. I often say the only reason to lock your car in the summer around here is so people won’t put zucchini in it. And we’ve got to support the real farmers, some of whom show up for our local Farmers Market on Thursdays. Thank you to all the volunteers who make that happen all season!

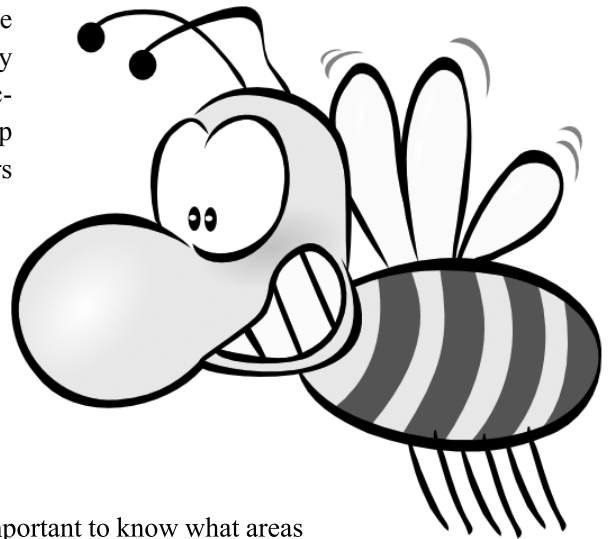
But I think the real reason I like gardening is that digging in the dirt—sorry, Ron Kujawski, I mean *soil*—is spiritual nourishment more than anything for me. Planting a tree or a bush is a practice in faith and patience. There’s something generous about planting something that I, in my late 70s, will never live to see come into maturity. But *someone* will. And I do like feeling connected now to microorganisms in the soil that will soon enough have their way with me.

Practical things: It’s important to learn about your soil conditions. And it’s important to know what areas are in shade, part shade, and sun as the day progresses. And it’s important to plan the garden so you don’t have one kind of plant here and another kind over there. Massing the same plants makes a much better display. We recently went on a tour of gardens in Columbia County and were impressed by the “Repeat. Repeat. Repeat” practice of the successful gardens we saw there. We’re learning as we go, and that’s another wonderful feature of gardening.

And remember: A “weed” is just a plant that’s out of place. A rosebush in a cornfield is a weed.

A propos of gardening, as a member of the town’s Vision Committee, I can report that a rebirth of the West Stockbridge Zucchini Festival is in the planning stages, thanks to Marge Powell and the Cultural Council. So, gardeners, get ready for next summer!

You can send comments, questions, and rants to info@localyokel.org.



No. Six Depot Roastery and Café to Re-Open (Yay!)

According to information posted on the popular café and gathering place on Depot Street in West Stockbridge, “We’re shooting for the week of June 20th. But it will be different . . . a lot more coffee-focused. We’ll have a full drinks (coffee, espresso drinks, and other) café, lots of snacks, baked goods, some savories, smoothies, and other healthy goodies, but we will not be doing our full menu of panini and salads. We’ll also have full shelves of our coffees and teas, new brewing equipment, lots of merch, new gear and pantry items, and a super-friendly and knowledgeable staff.” For more information, visit <https://sixdepot.com/>.



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Guild of Berkshire Artists Returns to Historic Old Town Hall

By Carolyn Kay Brancato

Art Connects with Everyone on Main Street
in the Guild of Berkshire Artists' July Show



Historic Old Town Hall

9 Main Street, West Stockbridge

The Guild of Berkshire Artists will hold its first indoor art show since the pandemic began at the 1854 historic Old Town Hall on Main Street in West Stockbridge. The show, “ART on MAIN,” will showcase how art is universal and connects with everyone on Main Street, as well as the surroundings. Free and open to all, the show runs from 10 am to 5 pm Friday, Saturday, and Sunday on July 8 to 10 and July 15 to 17.

Margie Skaggs, the show chair, said, “We encourage members of the public—not only in our own community, but throughout the entire Berkshires—to join with us and rejoice in our shared cultural values.” She noted that the 1854 historic Old Town Hall has served as the community and cultural center of West Stockbridge for more than a century and a half. The building has been undergoing substantial renovation and is emblematic of the rich history of the Berkshires, so worth preserving. It is the home of the West Stockbridge Historical Society, whose motto is “Restoring the past, building for the future.” Similarly, the guild’s show relates to our past and current community and its various cultural foundations, even as we look forward to an engaging and positive future.

Thirty-three artists, drawn from the ranks of the guild’s 170-plus Berkshires-area members, will be exhibiting more than 125 works in oil, watercolor, acrylics, stained glass, sculpture, ceramics, mixed media, and woodworking.

Lear Levin, one of the West Stockbridge artists in the show, is exhibiting a photograph emblematic of Main Street: “Boy with Tire.” Other works reflect West Stockbridge artists’ love of our natural surroundings, including realistic pieces showing birds in flight, such as Mitch Greenwald’s photograph “Partners.” Amy Pressman’s encaustic “Winter Trees” evokes a snowy scene that moves from realism into the abstract. A series of three-dimensional ceramics and woodworking pieces round out the show. One of Margie Skaggs’s ceramics, “Sentina,” has a distinct Japanese *yin* and *yang* flavor, solid but with wavering handles, suggesting a touch of impermanence.

Housed in such a historic site in West Stockbridge, the artists’ works reflect a realistic traditional past that paves the way for a more abstract and perhaps an even more innovative future.



Mitch Greenwald, *Partners*, Photography
Lear Levin, *Boy with Tire*, Photography
Amy Pressman, *Winter Trees*, Encaustic
Margie Skaggs, *Sentina*, Ceramics
Photos (from top) courtesy of the artists

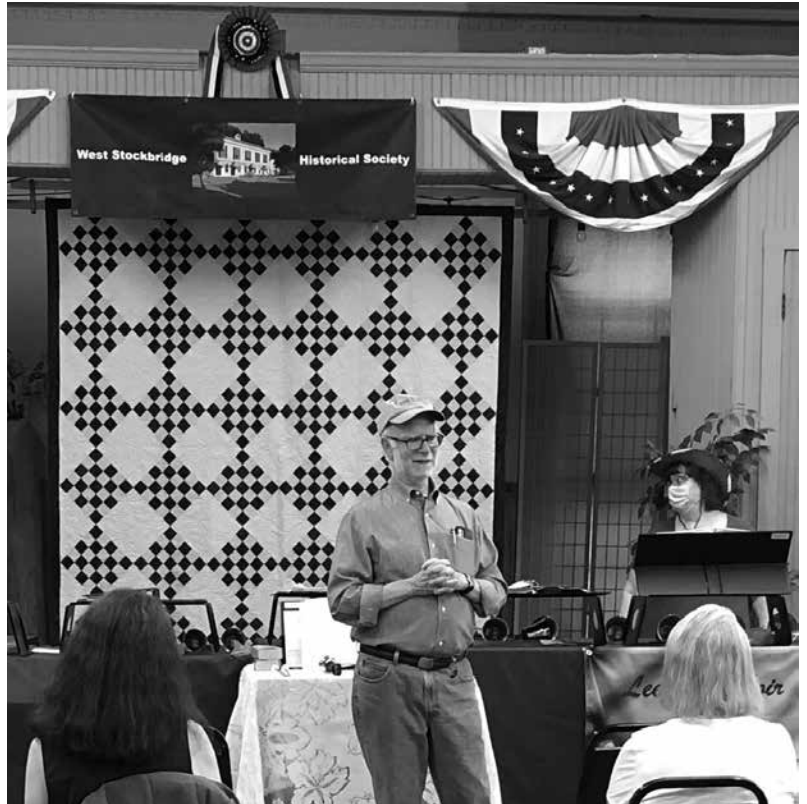
A “Welcome Back” Party at the Old Town Hall

By Liza Bennett

What a joy it was to throw open the doors of the Old Town Hall on the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend and welcome back the community for the first time since the pandemic began. Visitors were able to browse through the collection of historic photographs and memorabilia exhibited around the building, as well as examine the plans, tools, and artifacts that have played a role in the building’s restoration over the last decade.

From the street, one could look up and see the gleaming new metal roof and restored cupola. In the back of the building, the recently landscaped “Overlook” offered newly opened views of the town center, as well as a re-graded pathway lined with a long raised bed of hydrangeas. Old friends and new neighbors mingled and talked—and looked out through the restored windows on the second floor. They also had the opportunity to study the stunning collection of quilts by Lucy Bellville that was on display.

As the members of the Lee Bell Choir finished setting up for their concert, Robert Salerno, president of the West Stockbridge Historical Society, welcomed the crowd that had gathered upstairs in Vaber Hall. Behind him hung Lucy Bellville’s “Building Blocks” quilt that she had donated to the society. “We thank Lucy for this beautiful and generous gift,” Salerno said. “It will be an important part of our growing collection.” The bell choir then took the stage to offer a rousing concert of patriotic anthems and favorite songs, the perfect ending to the open house and beginning of the long holiday weekend.



Robert Salerno thanked Lucy Bellville for her quilt donation seen in the background. A visitor looks over photos of the old Village School. The Lee Bell Choir offered a rousing concert. Photos (from top) by Liza Bennett



Knowing the Rules Is Everything!

THE COMBINED RICHMOND AND WEST STOCKBRIDGE LUNCH-AND-LEARN SERIES IS BACK!

**On Thursday, July 21, 2022, the combined Councils on Aging will host a
lunch-and-learn at St. Patrick's Church Parish Hall, Route 41, West Stockbridge**

The subject of the talk will be essential estate planning documents everyone needs, the rules regarding community-based and nursing home Medicaid, and obtaining cash and health care benefits from the Veterans Administration (VA).

Our speaker will be Paula Almgren, an attorney with offices in Lenox. Paula is past president of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (Massachusetts chapter). Her team consists of attorneys, a nurse/care coordinator, and VA and public benefit coordinators who work together to support and advocate for their clients.

**Lunch will be provided at no cost, so please make your reservation by
calling (413) 441-1106 or via email at coa@richmondma.org.**

**Phyllis LeBeau, Director
Richmond Council on Aging
Richmond Town Hall
1529 State Road
(413) 553-7793
<https://www.facebook.com/townofrichmondma/>**

Community News & Events

Due to the coronavirus health situation, 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.

Stockbridge Grange Dinner

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

Council on Aging

Our next luncheon will be outside at noon on Wednesday, July 13, in front of the Town Offices, weather permitting; otherwise in the Community Room. Bring a chair and your lunch.

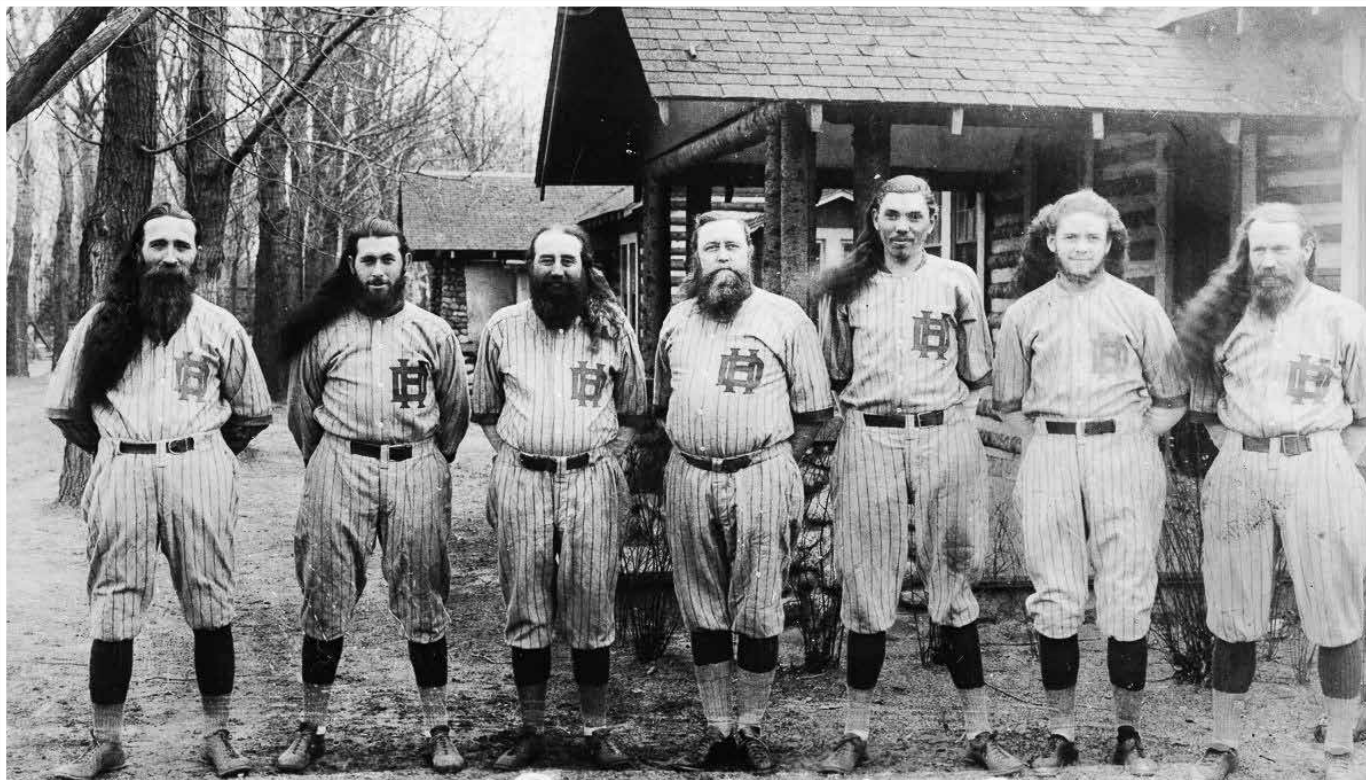
Any questions, please call Paula at (413) 232-4394.

The Knitters Group

The Knitters Group meets every Wednesday from 2 to 4 pm in the Community Room at the Town Offices. All crafts 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.

History Quiz Answer:



House of David team. Photo by Mark Rucker/Transcendental Graphics, Getty Images

During the 1930s with the Great Depression limiting affordable leisure activities, semipro baseball was something everyone could enjoy. Garrett Troy converted a cornfield on Route 41 into Keresey Field with converted bleachers and portable night lights for his Troy's Garagemen baseball team. He drew people from all over the area with crowds well beyond the population of West Stockbridge. The Garagemen regularly played their fellow southern Berkshire teams from Lee, Lenox, Sheffield, and Pittsfield, and adjoining Connecticut and New York counties. The Copake Falls team was a particularly tough rival.

These games drew well, but the bigger ticket sellers were the exhibition games against the traveling teams. In addition to the Philadelphia Athletics, Troy's had exhibition games with other major-league teams, such as the Boston Braves and Cincinnati Redlegs. They also played teams from the Negro leagues, such as the New York Black Yankees and the Mohawk Black Giants, and foreign touring teams, like the Puerto Rico All Stars and Cuban All Stars of Havana.

The best touring team, however, was the House of David. The House of David baseball team was organized by a religious colony in Benton Harbor, Michigan, in 1913. They played national exhibition games to make money for the colony and to share their beliefs. Team members wore long hair and beards, and they were of an imposing size for baseball players. They were also very good baseball players. Troy's played this team seven times over the eight years, winning only two games.

The House of David team invented "pepper" baseball tricks, sort of like the Harlem Globetrotters for baseball. When they played at Keresey Field, they regularly would draw crowds over 3,000 people, half again as large as other popular games there. No wonder Garrett Troy regularly tried to book them to play his Garagemen!

Semipro baseball in West Stockbridge ended with World War II. Garrett Troy died in 1944. Keresey Field went back to being a cornfield and is now owned by the state Department of Conservation & Recreation. Through the efforts of Kevin Larkin, on Wednesday, July 6, at 5 pm, a plaque will be unveiled at the field honoring the field and team.

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

Please check our website www.ahavathsholom.com 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
 NON-HEBREW-READING JEWS
 PASSIONATE JEWS
 HIGH-HOLY-DAY JEWS
 ARTISTIC JEWS
 AGNOSTIC JEWS
 HAVEN'T-BEEN-IN-SHUL-SINCE-MY-BAR-MITZVAH-JEWS

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thelocalyokel.org

Every issue costs us about \$1,300 to print and distribute! Please help us keep the *Local Yokel* coming!

With increased printing and postage costs, we need your help more than ever. To get the latest town news, please contribute to the *Local Yokel*. For your donation of at least \$25.00 per year we will mail each issue to you (unless you prefer otherwise). The *Local Yokel* will continue to be available free at selected locations as long as possible, but we hope you will contribute anything you can. The West Stockbridge Local Yokel, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization, and all contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Please check with your employer, or former employer if retired, for matching gift programs.

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Animal Control	<i>John Drake</i>	464-2148		As Needed
Assessors Office	<i>Mary Stodden</i>	232-0300	ext. 303	Tues. 1–5 pm; Thurs. 9 am–1 pm
Board of Health	<i>Earl Moffatt</i>	232-0300	ext. 314	Fri. 9 am–4 pm, or by appt.
Select Board	<i>Kathleen Keresev, Andy Krouss Andy Potter</i>	232-0300	ext. 319	
Town Administrator	<i>Marie Ryan</i>			Mon.–Thurs. 7 am–3 pm Fri. 7–11 am
Building Inspector	<i>Brian Duval</i>	232-0300	ext. 313	Leave Message for Inquiries
Conservation Commission	<i>John Masiero</i>	232-7063		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 329-7153 (non-emergency)		Mon. 6:30–9 pm
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 am–3 pm; Tues. and Fri. 2–6 pm; 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 am–7 pm; 7 days/week; Window: Mon.–Fri. 9 am–4:30 pm; Sat. 9 am–12 noon
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. 1:30–3:30 pm
Town Collector	<i>Kellie Bradbury</i>	232-0300	ext. 302	Tues. 3–7 pm; Wed. 7 am–12 pm; Thurs. 1–6 pm
Town Historian	<i>Robert Salerno</i>	232-4465		
Town Treasurer	<i>Karen Williams</i>	232-0300	ext. 316	Thurs. 9 am–4 pm
Transfer Station	<i>Wayne Cooper</i>	232-0307		Tues. & Thurs. 10 am–6 pm and Sat. 8 am–6 pm
Tree Warden	<i>Andrew Fudge</i>	212-9206		
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


TurnPark's Summer Festival Concludes with "Healing Flames"

By John Parker

The annual TurnPark Art Space Summer Festival on June 11 concluded with the dramatic firing unveiling "Earth and Sky," a large-scale ceramic sculpture by renowned ceramicist Sergei Isupov, a Estonian-American sculptor raised and educated in Kyiv, Ukraine. The 8-foot-tall sculpture and kiln was fired and stoked throughout the day. Once peak temperature was reached well after dark, the kiln opened like the petals of a flower. Centered around the theme "Healing Flames," other events during the day-long celebration included an array of multicultural performances, visual artworks, music, and opportunities to support Ukraine through donations and purchase of merchandise.

Firing of "Earth and Sky" reflected in another sculpture. Photo by David Finck





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SEE YOU ON THE FOUNDRY GREEN

July Art Calendar

Guild of Berkshire Artists | BerkshireArtists.org | infoberkshireartists@gmail.com 2022

July 1, TKG First Friday Reception, 5-8pm. "Illuminated Perception: Photographers View The Moment", Bruce Panock, Janet Pumphrey, & Doane Perry. TKG Realty in Pittsfield. Zoom link available.

July 2, Urban Sketching, 9-11am. Join Jill Gustavis to have fun sketching/painting around Pittsfield's downtown. See website for how to register.

July 5, Photo Editing Workshop, 1:30-2:30pm. Work on mobile photo editing with others via Zoom.

July 8-10 & 15-17, 10am-5pm. ART on MAIN. In-person art show at the Old Town Hall in West Stockbridge.

July 9, 3-5pm. ART on MAIN Reception. Old Town Hall in West Stockbridge.

July 10, Potluck, 4-5pm. Join hosts Freya Segal and John and Linda Mancia in person and over Zoom.

July 13, Monthly Meeting, 4-6:30pm. In person at the Old Town Hall, W.Stockbridge. Register for in person or zoom attendance.

July 19, Best Practices, 3pm. Panel discussion with Susan and David Honneus.

July 23-24, 11am-5pm. Art Studio Tours Tour artist studios in & around Pittsfield!

July 24, Berkshire Photo Gathering. Online. See webpage for information: berkshirephotogathering.com /online-meetings

July 26, Meet the Artist, 3pm. Featuring Jill Gustavis, painter.

July 28, Art Book Gathering, 9:30-11am. Share a favorite book: artist, or process.



Art on Main
Old Town Hall West Stockbridge

JULY: Fri 8 Sat 9 & Sun 10 10 AM - 5 PM	JULY: Fri 15 Sat 16 & Sun 17 10 AM - 5 PM
--	--

Presented by: Guild of Berkshire Artists

Art on Main
at the Old Town Hall, West Stockbridge, MA
July 8-10 & 15-17, 10am-5pm
Reception w/Artists Saturday July 9, 3-5pm

Art Studio Tours
*in & around
Pittsfield, MA*
July 23-24
11am-5pm

Wednesdays, Art Together. Join GBA artists together online using Zoom.

July 4 & 18, Procrastinator's Challenge, 10-11am. GBA members can join for a jumpstart on their creative productivity via Zoom.

July 12 & 26, Positive Critique, 7:30-8:30 p.m. Join Michele Caplan for a positive critique session for Guild members via Zoom.

West Stockbridge
Local Yokel
 P.O. Box 238
 West Stockbridge, MA 01266

thelocalyokel.org



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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

July 2022 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.			
	7/4	Independence Day (Town Offices closed)	6 pm	See town website for details
	7/5	Select Board meeting	6 pm	See town website for details
	7/6	Keresey Field historical sign dedication	5 pm	Flat Brook WMA, Albany Rd. (Route 41)
	7/7	Farmers Market	3–6 pm	The Foundry Green, Harris Street
	7/8	Cemetery Commissioners meeting	9 am	Rockdale Cemetery, Route 41
	7/8–10	“ART on MAIN” show	10 am–5 pm	Old Town Hall, 9 Main Street
	7/9	Eid al-Adha (begins at sundown)		
	7/13	COA luncheon	12 noon	Town Offices, 21 State Line Road
	7/14	Farmers Market	3–6 pm	The Foundry Green, Harris Street
	7/15	*** Deadline for the next Local Yokel ***		Send to info@thelocalyokel.org
	7/15–17	“ART on MAIN” show	10 am–5 pm	Old Town Hall, 9 Main Street
	7/18	Select Board meeting	6 pm	See town website for details
	7/21	Combined COA Lunch & Learn	12 noon	St. Patrick’s Parish Hall, Route 41
7/21	Farmers Market	3–6 pm	The Foundry Green, Harris Street	
7/28	Farmers Market	3–6 pm	The Foundry Green, Harris Street	