

Local Yokel

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

West
Stockbridge

January
2023



*Bovine in the mist.
Photo by Emily Weiland*

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 2005

West Stockbridge Sparkles Brings Magical Happiness

By Cait Graham

On Sunday, December 4, our beautiful town celebrated the spirit of the season with fun for all ages! The festivities began at the West Stockbridge Historical Society, where they hosted a cozy open house with many delicious goodies, the perfect place to warm up and visit with neighbors on the way to the parade route.

This year's Sparkles parade was a team effort from West Stockbridge Parks & Recreation, the West Stockbridge Police Department, the West Stockbridge Fire Department, and a number of enthusiastic and joyful community volunteers. Santa and Mrs. Claus arrived with their North Pole elves just in time to lead about a hundred caroling revelers up to the Town Offices where the town tree was lit amid much magical happiness.

Following the tree lighting, Santa and Mrs. Claus visited with all of the children and handed out presents while everyone enjoyed hot cocoa, cookies, and some evening playtime on the playground. Our wonderful West Stockbridge Public Library was also in the holiday spirit. They hosted a book walk and open house during the festivities. All in all, a happy time was had by all!

We at Parks & Rec would like to thank everyone who helped make Sparkles 2022 a fantastic event. A special shout-out to the Department of Public Works, for always going an extra mile to help, and to The Floor Store, for volunteering to transport Santa and his North Pole entourage for the parade. What a wonderful town we have!



Transporting Santa & Company is Joe Roy at left with Peppermint, Snowflake, Mrs. Claus, Santa Claus, and Gingerbread. Special thanks to Courtney Rousseau, Taylor Lamme, Cait Graham, Chief Marc Portieri, and Lisa Parker. Photo courtesy of West Stockbridge Parks & Recreation

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 November 3, 2022

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

Other Guests: Curt Wilton, Director of Public Works

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

Project/Task List - Kathleen Keresey

Kathleen presented a list of projects/tasks in progress or to be completed for the Town. The Board discussed and reviewed each task. The list of items included the following:

Town Bylaw Amendments – review and update

Procedural Reviews - All Boards/ Committees Minutes – review and update

ARPA - Determine allocation of remaining funds

Senior Work - Off Tax Abatement Program

Gt. Barrington Road - paint double lines

Traffic Calming - Traffic Issues/Speeding

Municipal Right of Way – Unclear or Missing Easements and Titles - Various properties not limited to:

- Gaston Property / Town Aquifer
- Day Farm Road
- Road to Water Tank off Lenox Road
- Spencer Place
- Oak Street
- Moscow Road
- Deer Hill / Birch Hill
- South Street
- Van Shaak

Noise Bylaw next steps

Capital Planning - Infrastructure - Waste Water Treatment Plant

- Roof repair
- Potable water availability
- Air handler relocation

...continued on page 5



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health & happiness
in the New Year!*



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Shaker Mill Books Is Going Green

By Eric Wilska

Like many of you, I've been thinking a lot about what I can do to help mitigate the effects of climate change. After educating myself about the carbon footprint of Shaker Mill Books, I've decided to *decarbonize* the bookshop—that is, I've removed our circa-1980s oil-burning furnace and replaced it with a commercial-scale electric heat pump, powered by a brand-new 10,000-kilowatt rooftop solar array. We no longer burn fossil fuels in this building, and we believe that we will soon be a net zero energy business, generating more renewable electricity than we consume.

I won't lie to you. This is a heavy lift for a small store like us, but I am confident this is both the right thing to do for the planet and the right thing to do for the financial future of our store. By generating our own electricity and getting off the roller-coaster of global fossil fuel prices, we are going to save some real money. Incidentally, many healthy state and federal incentives are now available for decarbonizing homes and businesses, and I'd be happy to share with you how we made it work. Stop on by.

My next project is to install a bicycle rack and solar-powered electric car charger for customer use. Thank you for supporting our independent bookstore as we do our small part to accelerate the clean energy transition and ensure a livable future for our children and grandchildren.

For more information, visit
<https://www.shakermillbooks.com/>.



Our new heating source:
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Photos courtesy of
Shaker Mill Books



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...continued from page 3

- Signage - Wayfinding
- Housing
- Town Hall solar roof array
- Community Preservation Commission
- Moscow Road Park Development
- Digitization of old records
- Beautification
- Record keeping
- Grants (Specific Grants and Overall oversight of application and implement)
 - Complete Streets
 - Green Communities
 - USDA Grants

Swamp Road – Redo power lines/water line?

Fire Department

8 Town Regional School District Planning Board

Broadband / Charter / Spectrum

Downtown Public Internet Availability

Housatonic Water Company

Berkshire Community Action Commission

Sister city with Stockbridge

Shared services with Stockbridge and Richmond

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Participant

West Stockbridge 250th Anniversary celebration

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Merritt Way Easement

Zoning Amendments - Special Permit Granting Authority

Zoning Amendment - Sign By-Law Permit Granting

ARPA -Meet with BRPC

HCA - WiseAcre Farm

Human Resources

Shared EMT/Ambulance with Richmond

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant with Richmond

Police Union Contract

Open Space and Recreation Plan

Hazardous Mitigation Plan

Emergency Management Plan

Municipal Parking Lot in center of Town

Town Hall HVAC System Repair

PENDING MORE INFORMATION

Mill Pond Trailer Park

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

All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 7:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Y. Ryan

Marie Y. Ryan

Town Administrator

Select Board Meeting Minutes

November 21, 2022

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

Other Guests: Curt Wilton, Director of Public Works, Community Preservation Committee Chair Sue Coxon and National Grid Representative Steven Hayward.

Kathleen called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM and listed Select Board members present.

Andy Potter made a motion, seconded by Andy Krouss, to approve the minutes from November 3, 2022.

Roll Call Vote:

Kathleen Yes

Andy Potter Yes

Andy Krouss Yes

Motion Approved.

Community Preservation Update: Sue Coxon, Chair

The Community Preservation Committee has had four meetings. Their application to receive funding has a deadline of December 30th, 2022 and is available on the website. They have not received any applications to date but intend to advertise in the Berkshire Eagle. The Committee will determine which applications they support to receive the funding by the end of March. Their

...continued on page 7


Girdler Electric
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 owner

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- ❖ The Local Yokel
- ❖ Pet Partners of the Tri-State Berkshires
- ❖ West Stockbridge Farmers Market
- ❖ West Stockbridge Fire and Rescue Services
- ❖ West Stockbridge Historical Society
- ❖ West Stockbridge Parks & Recreation

*Gift totals will be reported in
our February issue!*

Community News & Events

Stockbridge Grange Dinner

On Sunday, January 8, the Stockbridge Grange will serve a takeout-only dinner at the Grange Hall at 51 Church Street, Stockbridge. The dinner will be baked beans and ham with apple and chocolate pies for dessert. Cost is \$15. Extra beans are available for \$5 per container. Pickup time is 12 to 1:30 pm. To place an order, call (413) 243-1298 or (413) 443-4352. The deadline for ordering is Saturday, January 7. Please call if the weather is iffy. If the dinner is canceled, it will be moved to Sunday, January 15.

Council on Aging

The Council on Aging will meet at noon on Wednesday, January 11, in the Community Room at the Town Offices. Bring your lunch and drink so we can continue our discussion on the "new normal." See you then, as long as the weather permits.

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.

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.*

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

...continued from page 5

recommendations will then need to be voted on and approved at the Annual Town Meeting in 2023. The Parks & Recreation Commission have mentioned several ideas which include a gazebo off Center Street near the restrooms, a dog park near Card Pond and housing behind the Tennis Courts at Town Hall. The next meeting will be January 4, 2023.

The Board thanked Sue for the update.

National Grid Pole Location- Steve Hayward, National Grid Representative

National Grid Representative Steve Hayward requested the Board to approve a pole location on West Center Road for service to 25 West Center Road, Baldwin Farm. Curt Wilton, Department of Public Works Director stated he had no issues with the placement of the poles.

Andy Potter made a motion, seconded by Andy Krouss, to approve the pole location for National Grid on West Center Road.

Roll Call Vote:

Kathleen	Yes
Andy Potter	Yes
Andy Krouss	Yes

Motion Approved.

Select Board Speak:

Andy Potter gave an update to the Board on the 8 Town Regional School District Planning Board. He said the Board had a meeting last week to facilitate discussion between the two groups working on the Committee, Berkshire Hills Regional School District towns and the Southern Berkshire Regional School District towns. The Board is currently working on a new mutual agreement between the Districts. Andy will keep the Select Board updated as things move along.

Andy Krouss informed the Board that he has been in contact with the State in regards to the broadband issue in western Massachusetts. He said that they are working on what the State calls the "last mile." The State knows there are issues and are working hard to address them. Andy will also reach out to the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) for any resources available that may help in the quest for better broadband and internet services in the area. He will keep the Board updated.

Kathleen stated that she attended a Vision Committee meeting last week which included discussions on short-term rentals and a Noise bylaw. She suggested the Master Plan meet with the Select Board and give an update on their progress with working on these issues.

Kathleen made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Andy Krouss at 6:42 PM.

Roll Call Vote:

Kathleen	Yes
Andy Potter	Yes
Andy Krouss	Yes

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Y. Ryan

Marie Y. Ryan

Town Administrator

Select Board Meeting Minutes

December 5, 2022

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

Kathleen called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM and listed Select Board members present.

Andy Potter made a motion, seconded by Andy Krouss, to approve the minutes from November 21, 2022.

Roll Call Vote:

Kathleen	Yes
Andy Potter	Yes
Andy Krouss	Yes

Motion Approved.

Citizen Speak:

Truc Nguyen discussed her concerns with the Entertainment Licenses that the Select Board will be approving. She would like the Board to be thoughtful when approving the licenses in regard to the neighbors and the impact that the noise may have. Specifically, she mentioned an event at TurnPark this past year and the increase in the volume of the bass and drums for a prolonged period of time.

Kathleen explained that TurnPark has been diligent in their efforts to minimize sound and that they come before the Select Board prior to each event requesting a One-Day Liquor License. This gives the Board the opportunity to review the event and any effects it may have on the neighborhood prior to the event. She thanked Truc for her thoughts and concerns which the Board will keep in mind.

Annual Alcohol License Renewals:

Truc Orient Express Inc. – Andy Potter made a motion, 2nd by Andy Krouss to approve the Annual Alcohol License for 2023 for Truc Orient Express Inc.

Roll call Vote:

Andy Potter	Yes
Andy Krouss	Yes
Kathleen	Yes

License Approved.

West Stockbridge Public Market – Andy Potter made a motion, 2nd by Andy Krouss to approve the Annual Alcohol License for 2023 for the West Stockbridge Public Market.

Roll call Vote:

Andy Potter	Yes
Andy Krouss	Yes
Kathleen	Yes

License Approved.

Queensboro Wine & Spirits – Andy Potter made a motion, 2nd by Andy Krouss to approve the Annual Alcohol License for 2023 for Queensboro Wine & Spirits.

Roll call Vote:

Andy Potter	Yes
Andy Krouss	Yes
Kathleen	Yes

License Approved.

...continued on page 9

Shaking Off the Seasonal Blues

By Susan Winston

Information about Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) from local psychotherapist Susan Winston: Take SAD seriously, and please get the help you need.

Editor's note: We are reprinting this article that appeared in the December 3, 2022, edition of The Berkshire Edge with permission of The Edge and the author, psychotherapist Susan Winston (<https://theberkshireedge.com/shaking-off-the-seasonal-blues/>). The author reports that the number of people coming to her office with SAD is rising. This form of depression is clinically documented, and there is help available.

I usually write about things that strike me as funny, but this article is about things that are SAD—as in Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Yes, this is a real thing, also referred to as Seasonal Depression. For those who have it, it usually starts as the seasons change, most often the fall ending in early spring or summer.

SAD manifests itself via a feeling of depression most of the day, loss in energy, fatigue, trouble concentrating, a feeling of hopelessness, loss of interest in activities, a feeling of agitation, trouble concentrating, overeating, social withdrawal, and sometimes thoughts of self-harm.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), SAD is a direct reaction to the amount of sunlight available. For example, only 1 percent of those who live in Florida present with SAD, whereas 9 percent of those in New England do. If you are a female, you are four times more likely to be affected by seasonal changes. Scientists believe this may be due to hormonal changes triggered at certain times of the year. Less sunlight causes the brain to make less serotonin, a brain chemical related to our mood. Less sunlight = less estrogen = bad moods. Darkness may produce more melatonin in the body; a hormone in the body that helps control sleep-wake cycles. People with SAD may feel sleepier. People with SAD may produce less Vitamin D. Vitamin D deficiency may also cause low energy, “brain fog,” mood swings, sleep issues, and yes, ladies, less estrogen.



Aside from hoping for our rare bluebird winter Berkshire days, there is treatment for SAD:

1. **Light therapy** — The role of light therapy is to replace the lack of sunlight by sitting in front of a lightbox that filters out ultra-violet rays. These lights can be purchased on Amazon and can be very effective. The NIMH suggests 10,000 lux of cool-white fluorescent light. Amazon offers a plethora of options.
2. **Vitamin D supplements** work for some, not for others, but are harmless and worth a try. Supplements are suggested because most of us do not get enough natural Vitamin D which comes first from exposure to the sun, and next by eating fatty fish like tuna, mackerel and salmon. There are Vitamin D fortified foods, like milk. The medical community has mixed views on their efficacy. However, before taking any supplement (and of course before taking any medication) talk to your primary care physician.
3. **Medication** — I am not a pill pusher, but there are times that severe depression or mood swings need a psychopharmacological boost. You would need to talk to your primary care physician who might recommend you see a psychiatrist for medication.
4. This is not a shameless plug, but **CBT, or Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**, is recommended by the NIMH and the Mayo Clinic. CBT helps you identify your negative thoughts and replace them with more positive thinking. A good therapist will also help you find forms of behavior that will get you engaged or re-engaged in activities that bring you joy. Kind of like the Marie Kondo of therapy — clean out all the old useless thoughts and find those things that bring joy.

SAD is real, but I look out today and the pouring rain has turned into the glorious beautiful snowfall. So I'm going to pop some Vitamin D, turn off my sunlamp, and go out and practice skidding down the driveway. This LA kid has not yet mastered the art of driving in snow. Steer clear because right now I feel HAPPY, not SAD.

Do take SAD seriously, and please get the help you need.

...continued from page 7

Amici – Andy Potter made a motion, 2nd by Andy Krouss to approve the Annual Alcohol License for 2023 for Amici.

Roll call Vote:

Andy Potter Yes
Andy Krouss Yes
Kathleen Yes

License Approved.

Annual Entertainment License Renewals:

TurnPark Art Space – Kathleen made a motion, 2nd by Andy Krouss to approve the Annual Entertainment License for 2023 for TurnPark Art Space.

Roll call Vote:

Andy Potter Abstain
Andy Krouss Yes
Kathleen Yes

License Approved.

Amici – Andy Potter made a motion, 2nd by Andy Krouss to approve the Annual Entertainment License for 2023 for Amici.

Roll call Vote:

Andy Potter Yes
Andy Krouss Yes
Kathleen Yes

License Approved.

Auto Class II & III License Renewals:

Troy’s Garage – Andy Potter made a motion, 2nd by Andy Krouss to approve the Auto Class II License for 2023 for Troy’s Garage.

Roll call Vote:

Andy Potter Yes
Andy Krouss Yes
Kathleen Yes

License Approved.

Troy’s Garage – Andy Potter made a motion, 2nd by Andy Krouss to approve the Auto Class III License for 2023 for Troy’s Garage.

Roll call Vote:

Andy Potter Yes
Andy Krouss Yes
Kathleen Yes

License Approved.



Kathleen informed the Board that she would like the Board to postpone the vote on the Auto Class II & III and Taxi Licenses for William Kie. She had a discussion with Billy about an improvement plan for his property in regards to the Auto Class III License. Kathleen would like these Licenses for Billy to be discussed at the next Select Board meeting on December 19th. Andy and Andy both agreed.

Select Board Speak:

Andy Krouss informed the Board that he is still working on the broadband issue for the Town. He is currently waiting to hear back from the Massachusetts Municipal Association member Jackie Bird to discussion the situation. He will keep the Board updated.

Andy Potter related information that the 8 Town School District Planning Board meet last week with progress on the 8 Town Agreement. They worked on the make-up of the new School Committee and are close to a final version. He also informed the Board that the newly elected School Committee Member, Sarah Bourla, has been appointed by Gene Dellea as the School Committee Representative on the 8 Town School District Planning Board for West Stockbridge.

Andy Potter asked the Board for their support to begin a project which will be a filed plan for a retention schedule for all Town documents. He will create a spreadsheet of all the documents that are required to be maintained in the Town and begin a spreadsheet to locate who has these specific documents and where they are located. Andy Krouss and Kathleen were both in support of this project and thanked Andy.

Kathleen made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Andy Krouss at 6:58 PM.

Roll Call Vote:

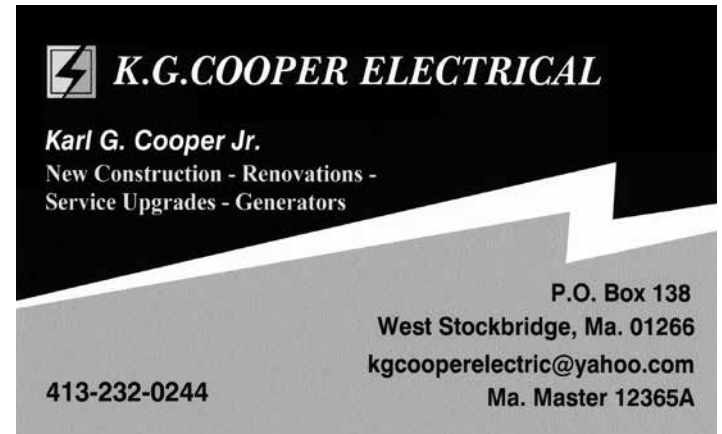
Kathleen Yes
Andy Potter Yes
Andy Krouss Yes

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Y. Ryan

Marie Y. Ryan
Town Administrator



January Donor Roll Call

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

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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**.**

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.

January History Quiz Question:

West Stockbridge village does not have that classic Rockwellian New England postcard look. Many of the houses built in the mid-1800s have a similar style: traditional neoclassical Greek revival with columns, pediments, and capitals. Fortunately, we have a mix of eras and architectural styles that adds to the quaint non-Disney, natural feeling of the town.

One of the houses in the village center, at 7 Stockbridge Road, of the early colonial style, differs from the buildings around it. It is one of the oldest houses in town and still retains much of its original style and character. Like most houses, this one has a history. What is the story of the house and owner that adds to its character and makes it interesting beyond the style?

(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

“We Remember When . . .” Growing Up in West Stockbridge in the 1950s

A Series of Recollections by John Bormolini and Friends

New Year’s Eve in the “Old Town”

By John Bormolini with Patricia Barry (Girdler) and Louise Faggioni

In the mid-1950s, I was in my teens. At that point in my life, New Year’s Eve meant just one thing to me: tagging along with my mother Anna to her baby-sitting job. My older brother Joseph (Joe) always ushered in the New Year somewhere he could dance, typically the Italian American Club in Pittsfield.

My mother usually had a baby-sitting job at one of two homes: the Girdlers, who lived behind the new school, or the Pattons, who lived in Richmond. Mr. Patton picked us up and, after returning home sometime around midnight, he would drive us home. By then, I had probably dozed off. I received the following email from Pat Barry (Girdler) sharing her memory of that time:

Hi John,

You may remember baby-sitting with your mother for the Girdlers. I am the second oldest. I have a memory of your mother baby-sitting, and Gail, Ruby, and I would sit around the kitchen sink watching her wash her long silver hair, braid it, and wrap it in a bun that I have never been able to figure out. There were 6 of us. I don’t have a memory of the three younger children being there, but they probably were. Sometimes you would come over to keep her company. You taught us how to play 52-card pickup. Sometimes you would sneak up the stairs in the dark and turn on the lights and scare us because we were still talking. I now have long hair, hoping it will all turn silver like your mom’s. I remember her with great fondness. I agree with all your memories of more snow, more ice, and more fun.

Patricia A. Barry

Each venue had its own clientele for New Year’s celebrations. The Square Rigger had its lineup of regulars, plus other customers who would come out for New Year’s. Because the next day was a holiday, many of the patrons got an early start, sometime around 5 pm after the workday. For most, the evening ended early or soon after midnight. Music was available from the jukebox. People could select songs from boxes at each seating area. The Hide-Away, south of the town center on Route 41, also closed early on New Year’s. The owners, Edie and Lou Raspuzzi, would make their way uptown to either the Italian American Social Club or the Card Lake Hotel. There was a jukebox for private parties.

“The Line,” aka the State Line Restaurant and Bar, owned by Joseph Morelli and Eddie Tognini, would serve traditional homemade Italian specialties such as polenta and homemade sausages. The Line had two advantages over the other venues in town. The drinking age in New York State was 18 versus 21 in Massachusetts, which brought in many patrons to take advantage of the lower drinking age. The Line also stayed open well into the early hours, bringing in revelers long after the Massachusetts bars closed.

The Card Lake Hotel and Bar on Main Street was the destination for many regulars. The owners, Tedla and Chiso Marzatto, always had New Year’s Eve dining specialties, like spaghetti and lasagna with homemade sauce. Burgers were always available. They would even cook up a steak if requested. People loved to mingle around the cozy bar. Like the other venues, Card Lake had a jukebox with a variety of current 1950s music. Occasionally there would be a beautiful white horse hitched outside while its unnamed rider enjoyed himself inside!

Across the Williams River, the Italian American Social Club occupied the building where the Orient Express Restaurant is today. It was the preferred destination on New Year’s Eve for many people. The lure was dancing to the music of a live band. Many of the musicians were active in the West Stockbridge Band. There was a trumpeter, sax player, guitarist, banjo player, drummer, pianist, and someone on vocals. As a special New Year’s Eve treat, renowned accordionist Al Noli from Pittsfield joined the band. Most requested song for Al was “Lady of Spain.”

You didn’t need a partner to dance because group dances were fashionable in the 1950s. Favorite dances were the jitterbug, boogie-woogie, the twist, the stroll, and, for the more energetic, the polka. New Year’s Eve was not the only night that dancing was on the menu. A band was there every Saturday night until 1 am. Music from the club spilled over to the surrounding homes, but no one complained. In fact, they would often clear the chairs out of the kitchen and do a little dancing at home themselves. And so it was on New Year’s Eve in West Stockbridge in the 1950s.

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.



*Girdler children, ca. 1955.
Courtesy of Patricia (Girdler) Barry*



Bar at the Card Lake Hotel. Courtesy of Patricia (Girdler) Barry

Fire Department News

By Lt. Jim Hallock



We are on a *volunteer drive* and would love to show anyone who's interested around the trucks and firehouse. We can walk you through the different levels of volunteering as firefighter (e.g., first responder, auxiliary, etc.), and of course we welcome EMTs and paramedics. Drill nights are every Monday at 6 pm. We have a few classes coming up, so give us a call before stopping by to make sure we aren't out at a class. Call Jim Hallock at (413) 329-2332 to learn more or to meet at a different time.

A *huge* thank you to all who have donated so far toward a new off-road vehicle (ORV). Our old one was no longer usable. We're hoping by the next issue of the *Local Yokel* we will have a picture of our new ORV to show off!

Reminder: If you didn't change the batteries in your smoke detectors and CO detectors at daylight savings time, now's the time. Also, make sure you check the expiration dates on your sensors; most have a 10-year life.

Happy New Year from your WSFD volunteers!



Bark Mulch
Topsoil
Compost

DELIVERY

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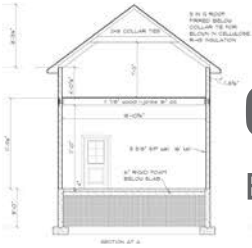
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On the Home Front

By Thom Lipiczky

Happy New Year to both of my readers!

I'm hoping both of you made it through the holiday safely and happily. As I was looking over my previous columns for ideas for the January 2023 (!) column, I noticed the very first of my On the Home Front tirades was in February 2017. That means I've been doing this for six years. Here's a partial list of some of the topics I've written about over this time:

- * Building permits: why you may need one, and what's expected.
- * Zoning and environmental regulations: why those jack-booted government thugs in black helicopters actually help your community.
- * Dealing with building contractors: don't look them in the eye—they can sense fear. And why you should get references.
- * Housing: affordable, workforce, senior, etc., including discussions about ADUs (accessory dwelling units). Watch this space! The town Planning Board is currently proposing changes in our zoning bylaws that will move this topic forward.
- * The Airbnb effect and how this impacts our neighborhoods and the availability of “affordable” housing.
- * Housing design over the years: from small farmhouses to McMansions to tiny houses to the impact of COVID on our thinking about “home.”
- * Kitchens: the heart(h) of any home—design, size, and function. And—oddly—several columns on countertops.
- * Building science: nerdy information about the ongoing changes in the best practices of how we build our homes.
- * Energy efficiency: insulation, efficient appliances, electric vehicles, energy-saving windows, LED lighting, and clean energy incentives from those jack-booted government thugs.
- * Solar panels on the home: I wrote a lot about this and will continue to do so. You can't stop me.
- * Septic systems: always a good idea to know what happens when you flush the toilet.
- * Lawns: the move from meadow to manicured lawns and back again. Oh yeah, and why you should be careful on hills when on a riding mower.
- * Trees: what covers 75% of where we live.
- * General home maintenance and seasonal chores: be nice to your home and it'll be nice to you.
- * The pandemic: and how I spent my spring/summer/fall/winter/spring/ . . . vacations at home.
- * Anne and Thom's Excellent Adventure: the process and ongoing (Sheesh, please make him stop writing about this!) progress of designing and building and living in our new house. Four and half years ago, we bought a piece of land on the shores of Majestic Mud Pond, on the site of the old town gravel pit, with a driveway made out of the foundation of a 200-foot-long chicken coop that burned down 50 years ago.
- * A sense of place: Berkshire County has been shaped over the past 40,000 years, since the ice sheets receded, and inhabited by different communities of people all that time, doing a wide variety of activities. I am so grateful to live where I do, among some amazingly terrific people in such a beautiful landscape.

Note to readers: many of Thom's past columns may be found on our website archive at <https://thelocalyokel.org/>.

Send questions, comments, and rants to info@thelocalyokel.org.

The Chamber Players Winter Concert: An Evening of Musical Delights

By Liza Bennett



Violinist Sheila Fiekowsky and pianist Brett Hodgdon.
Photo by Bob Salerno

The West Stockbridge Congregational Church was filled to overflowing with music lovers on the last Wednesday evening of 2022 for the acclaimed West Stockbridge Chamber Players' annual Winter Concert. "This is their 35th benefit concert for us," West Stockbridge Historical Society President Robert Salerno told the audience before the concert began. "Their generosity and yours has allowed us, even during the pandemic, to move ahead with the restoration of the Old Town Hall." He then went on to dedicate the event to Stuart Kuller, a longtime supporter of the Historical Society, who had passed away that week and whose wife Carol has been instrumental in producing these wonderful concerts.

As the church's candles flickered in the festively decorated church, the Chamber Players' artistic director Catherine Hudgins, clarinet, and Brett Hodgdon, piano, performed Claude Debussy's *Première rhapsodie*, a late piece by the composer that displayed all the bril-

liance of his greatest works. Violinist Sheila Fiekowsky introduced the next piece, Amy Beach's Violin Sonata in A minor, Op. 34, saying how much she loved this composition by the sadly overlooked composer whose remarkable canon includes more than 300 musical works. "This is one of the hardest pieces I've ever attempted," she added. With pianist Brett Hodgdon, Fiekowsky gave a masterful performance, greeted with a standing ovation. For an encore, the audience was treated to Beach's *Romance*.

After an intermission, Sheila Fiekowsky and Daniel Getz, longtime members of the Chamber Players, delighted the audience with a sparkling rendition of Mozart's String Duo No. 1 in G major for violin and viola, K. 423. Catherine Hudgins introduced the final work of the evening: Robert Schumann's *Märchenerzählungen*, Op. 132. She noted that Schumann wrote the short pieces, based on fairy tales, toward the end of his life when his mental health was starting to deteriorate. He told his wife Clara that he thought the audience would find them quite romantic. "By that, I think he meant that you can hear the fairy tales in the music," Hudgins explained, "that it's full of imagination." Along with Brett Hodgdon and Daniel Getz, Hudgins brought Schumann's charming compositions to life.

In the end, the entire program seemed imbued with the warmth and colorful spirit of Stuart Kuller, who had supported and attended these magical evenings for so many years.

Chamber Players Daniel Getz, viola,
and clarinetist Catherine Hudgins.

Photo by Liza Bennett





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21 State Line Rd | West Stockbridge, MA 01266 | In the Town Offices
 weststockbridgelibrary.org | 413-232-0300 ext. 308

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

Happy New Year from all of us here at West Stockbridge Library!

The Monday playgroup, brought to you by Community Health Programs, is back, and it's being held 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

- Armfield, *Our wives under the sea*
- Black, *Book of night*
- Connelly, *Desert star*
- Cornwell, *Livid: A Scarpetta novel*
- Emezi, *You made a fool of death with your beauty*
- Escoffery, *If I survive you*
- Fesperman, *Winter work*
- Fielding, *Housekeeper*
- Newman, *We all want impossible things*
- Osmundson, *Virology: Essays for the living, the dead, and the small things in between*
- Penny, *World of curiosities*
- Ryan, *Before I let go*

NEW DVDs

- Annika: Season 1*
- Dark winds: Season 1*
- The Good house*
- The Power of the dog*
- Lyle, Lyle, crocodile*

NEW ADULT NONFICTION

- Copeland, *Wind at my back: Resilience, grace, and other gifts from my mentor, Raven Wilkinson*
- Kaul, *Chinese-ish: Home cooking not quite authentic, 100% delicious*
- Newman, *Extraordinary life of an ordinary man: A memoir*
- Tucci, *Tucci table*

NEW FOR READERS OF ALL AGES

- Bahrapour, *Monsters in the fog*
- Remen, *Birthday of the world: A story about finding light in everyone and everything*
- Sorosiak, *Everywhere with you*
- Tahir, *All my rage*



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

1. How often do you think the Berkshires are hit by a "violent" tornado?
2. "Not since the last passenger train from New York City made its final run to the Berkshires in 1971, has there been such a groundswell of support as there is today for the restoration of commuter passenger rail service." What year did this appear in the *Berkshire Record*?
3. What senator was overwhelmingly voted in by most communities in western Massachusetts in 2013?
4. What was the name of the movie in which special needs film star Peter Johnson had a leading role?

1. *Once or twice a decade*
2. *2013*
3. *Senator Edward Markey*
4. *The Child King*

MC Mass Cultural Council 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.

History Quiz Answer:

The house and attached barn at 7 Stockbridge Road, unlike their neighbors, have a traditional colonial New England look. The building style is formally known as federal architectural; the surrounding buildings are mostly the later Greek revival. Close to the road, with small windows, a center entrance, and massive center stone fireplace and chimney, it also has a mysterious birthdate. Some of the interior construction details indicate a late 1700 building, but a property deed is dated 1815. No building permits were issued back then to clarify the date.

The property was originally a 25-acre farm bought by Amasa Spencer, Jr. in 1815. Amasa's father was a farmer in early Williamsville. By the early 1800s, he had moved into the village center. He ran the inn and tavern in the building now housing Stone House Realty and the Art on Main Gallery. He lived upstairs with his second wife and children. Amasa was also the first person to serve on the school committee in the village.

His son, Amasa Jr, bought the 7 Stockbridge Road house and farm in 1815 from the town lawyer, Robbins Kellogg (see the history question in the February 2022 *Local Yokel*). There is no record if Amasa Sr. fronted the cash for his son to move into town and be nearby. Junior followed in his father's footsteps and started operating the inn down the street. The inn was a major stopping point on the Hartford-Albany Road (Route 102/Main Street). Amasa Jr. married Sally Clark from Connecticut, and they lived at the Stockbridge Road farm. While managing the inn and the farm, Amasa Jr. also became the first West Stockbridge postmaster, with the inn serving as the first post office in town.

The Spencers lived in the farm until the 1850s. Sally outlived Amasa and stayed in the house until 1860, a long time for one family. The house and property were then bought by James Moore, druggist, real estate investor, and neighbor across the street. (James also married into the Spencer family.) The Moores didn't live there but decided to upgrade the place by naming it "The Maple." That's odd because there aren't many maple trees around the farm.

Fortunately, through a succession of owners, the house still retains much of its original design and features, and it is one of the best preserved early homes in West Stockbridge. It adds to the unique character of the village and remains one of our many iconic buildings.



Spencer house, 7 Stockbridge Road. Photo by Bob Salerno

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**Happy
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 to
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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 Keresey 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

❄️ 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

January Art Calendar

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

2023

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.

January 3, Photo Editing Workshop, 1:30-2:30pm. Mobile photo editing online.

January 3, Intro to the Guild and Website, 4:30-5:30pm. Overview and info on the Guild and our website. Online.

January 3 & 17, Positive Critique, 7:30-8:30 p.m. Join Michele Caplan for a positive critique session for Guild members via Zoom.

January 16, Procrastinator's Challenge, 10-11 a.m. Start or work through a current project or art piece!

January 24, Meet the Artist, 3pm. TBD.

January 22, 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.*



First Birds

featuring: Lori Bradley

December 17 - January 4

Wed-Sun 11am -4pm

at Art on Main Gallery

38 Main Street, West Stockbridge, MA

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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

January 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.

1/1	New Year's Day		
1/2	Observed holiday: Town Offices closed		
1/8	Stockbridge Grange takeout dinner		See Community News for details
1/9	Select Board meeting	6 pm	Town Offices, 21 State Line Road
1/11	Council on Aging meeting	12 noon	Town Offices, 21 State Line Road
1/11	Friends of the Library Committee meeting	3:30 pm	Community Room, Town Offices
1/15	*** Deadline for the next <i>Local Yokel</i> ***		Send to info@thelocalyokel.org
1/16	Martin Luther King Jr. Day: Town Offices closed		
1/22	Lunar New Year		
1/23	Select Board meeting	6 pm	Town Offices, 21 State Line Road