

# Local yokel

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

West  
Stockbridge  
November  
2023

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 2005



*Just before sunrise on the Williams River. Photo by Emily Weiland*

# Small Works

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*Margie Skaggs*

*Reception: Saturday November 18, 2-4PM*



Guild of Berkshire Artists

Guild of Berkshire Artists | [BerkshireArtists.org](http://BerkshireArtists.org)

# 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 September 18, 2023

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

Kathleen opened the meeting at 6 PM.

### Approval of Minutes:

Andy Potter made a motion, seconded by Andy Krouss, to approve the minutes from August 21 and September 5, 2023.

All were in favor, minutes approved.

### Citizen Speak:

None.

### Special Town Meeting Approval:

Andy Potter made a motion, seconded by Andy Krouss, to hold a Special Town Meeting on October 23, 2023 to vote on the 8 Town Regional School District Merger.

All were in favor, motion approved.

### Set Trick or Treat Date and Time:

Andy Potter made a motion, seconded by Kathleen, to set the Treat or Treat on Tuesday, October 31<sup>st</sup> from 4 PM – 6 PM and allow the Parks & Recreation Commissioners to also host a party at Town Hall starting at 6 PM.

All were in favor, motion approved.

### Methods of Disseminating Information to the Public:

Kathleen asked the Board for any thoughts they may have on how to get information out to the Public in a more efficient way.

Andy Potter suggested that the Town purchase and use Code Red. Code Red is used in many other towns and this process sends out messages to the public through emails, text and calls using whatever information each resident puts in the system. The public needs to sign up for the service but the Town pays to have it maintained. Marie will gather information on the program and the cost. Andy Krouss and Kathleen both agreed this sounds like a great idea.

...continued on page 7

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**In commemoration of Veteran's Day**, the *Local Yokel* is beginning a series of profiles of local veterans to honor their service. We invite veterans in West Stockbridge to share their stories. If interested, please contact Renee McCormick at [dreneemccormick@gmail.com](mailto:dreneemccormick@gmail.com) or text her at (914) 629-6314 so we can include you in future issues. All it takes is a short meeting to discuss four aspects of your service: *why you joined, a memorable event, what lessons you took away, and life after the service.* We look forward to hearing from you and telling your story!



**Wayne E. Cooper**  
 U.S. Marine Corps: 1973–1977  
 Marine Corps Air Station,  
 New River, North Carolina  
 Marine Barracks, Newport,  
 Rhode Island  
 Rank: Corporal



***What influenced you to join the service?***

“My number was 1 in the 1973 draft, so I volunteered to join the Marine Corps since it had the best education.”

***What was a memorable experience?***

“We were part of the security command for the Bicentennial Celebration in Newport in 1976. It was exciting and fearful—fearful because everything had to be perfect, and we had to be pristine. All the tall ships were coming in from all over the world, Germany, Britain, Spain, Brazil, Japan, some from Africa and the Middle East. It was exciting when Queen Elizabeth’s yacht, the *Britannica*, pulled in. We were all standing there in platoon formation, holding swords for the salute, and the military bands were playing—all in celebration of America’s 200th birthday.”

***What was an important life lesson you took from your time in the service?***

“The most important thing, especially for the Marine Corps, goes along with the motto: *Semper Fidelis*—always faithful, like my dedication to the town, dedication to my loved ones. Right now, I’d die for a loved one.”

***Life after the service***

Wayne returned to West Stockbridge and worked in various jobs before earning a certificate in addiction counseling (CAC) from UMass. He worked as a counselor at McGee Union Pittsfield and at the Albany Citizen Council on Addictions.

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**John W. Korte, Jr.**  
U.S. Army: 1943–1946  
Served in Italy and Southern France  
Rank: Corporal



***What influenced you to join the service?***

John was drafted at age 18 and inducted into the army in December 1943.

***What was a memorable experience?***

Going into his first battle as squad leader of the 45th infantry division, called the Thunderbirds, “I had to be the boss of everyone, even though I was only a kid myself.” After many more battles, John and his squad were badly injured when one soldier stepped on a “Bouncing Betty” landmine in a battle at St. Helena, France (1945). John was airlifted to Marseilles and remained in a coma for several months before recovering and sailing back to the United States in March 1945. John received many ribbons and medals, including a Purple Heart.

***What was an important life lesson you took from your time in the service?***

“Serving with men who would give their life for each other...you become friends for life.” John and his squad member Dick, who was taken as a POW in the last battle at St. Helena, met for lunch every year into their nineties. Over the years, they could look back and even joke about that last battle, with John telling Dick that he wasn’t caught because he “could run faster.”

***Life after the service***

John returned to West Stockbridge and entered the plumbing business. In 1948, he married Angelina Dioli at the Congregational Church Parsonage followed by a reception at Card Lake Hotel. They lived in an apartment over Baldwin’s Hardware until 1953, when they built a house on Albany Road, a few houses down from his childhood home where he lives today.

*Note: John’s family members joined the interview to share the stories he told through the years.*

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**Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA) Membership:** Marie  
**Background:**

When we joined the Great Barrington Transit program (Tri-Town Connector) we were able to give them use of our Council on Aging van that was handicap wheelchair accessible. After we gave the van to them it started to have mechanical issues. We brought it back to Troy's Garage but after they looked it over, due to the age of the van and the amount of work that needs to be done, it is not worth fixing at this time. The Tri-Town Connector receives Federal funds and they have use of two handicap wheelchair accessible vans. The condition for them to use federal funds and use the BRTA vans is that each town that is part of the program either has have their own wheelchair accessible van or have a membership with BRTA, we have neither now so we can no longer be in their program at this moment.

I am asking the Board to vote to become a member of BRTA at no immediate cost to the Town. Once we vote in favor, I will send a letter in regard to the vote and their Board will vote to accept at their meeting on September 28<sup>th</sup>. When we are members of BRTA we can again be part of the Tri-Town Connector. This means our residents that are seniors (over 60 years old) and /or have a disability with mobility impairments will have two available modes of transportation and all other residents may use the Tri-Town Connector.

This is under MGL Chapter 161B Sec. 3 (attached).

**Benefit:**

The senior residents (over 60 years old) and all persons with mobility impairment disabilities are able to sign up for services as a user of the BRTA Para-transit Service with an application. This service will pick them up and drive them wherever they request. The cost to them is \$7.50 for the first town they drive through and \$2.50 for every town after that. When they sign up they will have an online account set up with their bank account information, that is where the money will be deducted from each time they use the service. At the end of the year the Town will be accessed a small fee for the number of users of the service (ie: last year Sheffield was charged \$164.00). This amount is deducted from our Cherry Sheet money at year end.

Once we are approved, the Select Board will need to appoint a representative to the BRTA Board which will have voting rights and should attend all their Board meetings (6-7 per year).

Andy Potter made a motion, seconded by Andy Krouss, for the Town of West Stockbridge to join the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority to enable residents of the Town to use the BRTA's services per MGL 161B Section 3.

All were in favor, motion approved.

**Select Board Speak:**

Kathleen informed the Board that at their Special Board meeting on September 28<sup>th</sup>, she has invited Leigh Davis, Great Barrington Select Board member, to give a presentation on Real Estate Transfer Fees that could benefit the Affordable Housing Trust. These are fees that are paid for by the buyer and seller of a real estate transaction over a certain threshold. Kathleen will be asking the Board to vote at their regular meeting on October 2nd whether or not to place this as a warrant article for the Special Town Meeting on October 23rd. She stated this is not binding if it goes to Town Meeting and passes, but it allows the Town to file a home rule petition with the State Legislature, which would allow the Town to decide at a later date whether or not to institute the program and what the specifics would be. She will contact the Affordable Housing Trust Chair, Mark Webber and fill him in on the issue for further review and possible support by the Affordable Housing Trustees.

Andy Potter made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Andy Krouss at 6:20 PM. All were in favor, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

*Marie Y. Ryan*

Marie Y. Ryan  
Town Administrator

**Select Board Meeting Minutes**  
**September 28, 2023**

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

**Others Present:** Leigh Davis, Co-Chair of Great Barrington Select Board

Kathleen opened the meeting at 6 PM and introduced Leigh Davis who will speak about the Real Estate Transfer fee concept.

Leigh thanks the Board for the opportunity to discuss the Real Estate Transfer Fee and explain how this process works. She has been working on the housing issues in Berkshire County for several years.

She stated that reasons for all her work on housing are:

1. Rapidly escalating home prices negatively impact Berkshires economy, workforce, quality of life, and social identity.
2. A new, effective and equitable tool to support the creation and retention of affordable and workforce housing is needed.
3. The Real Estate Transfer Fee to Support Affordable and Workforce Housing

Leigh has been working closely with Amherst, Nantucket, Somerville, Martha's Vineyard Commission, Western Mass Network to End Homelessness. She said we currently find ourselves with a need to protect and expand affordable and workforce housing. To do this, we must pursue bold and creative avenues for revenue generation without causing further challenges to those seeking to buy average-priced homes in Great Barrington. Under current state law, Towns of cannot institute a transfer fee without the approval of the State Legislature. Therefore, she was seeking the consent of the Great Barrington Selectboard to include a Home Rule Petition article on the Special Town Meeting Warrant.

If Town Meeting votes in the affirmative, the Special Act will go to the Legislature to be filed. If the Legislature approves, we will have the opportunity at that time to craft the bylaw that will guide the implementation and regulation of the fee. This bylaw will then need to be passed at Town Meeting.

The proposed bylaw that would subsequently be written would allow the town to impose a transfer fee on the sale of properties exceeding a purchase price to be determined, and subject to a number of exemptions. This approach gives Town Meeting the authority to regulate the proposed fee by bylaw instead of locking the Town into set parameters at the state level. It also allows flexibility to assess metrics and adjust in the future if needed.

She explained an example of this program would work. A1% Fee will be applied to all real estate transactions exceeding a purchase price of \$1 million. After the first year, the \$1 million threshold will annually be adjusted to reflect the Consumer Price Index for the area, thereby protecting homeowners as their nest eggs grow. The Fee will be split between the buyer and seller; each is responsible for one-half of one percent of the sale price.

## Santa's Wish List Preview

Each December, the *Local Yokel* presents Santa's Wish List, an opportunity for community members to support local organizations and agencies that provide important programs and services. Last year a total of \$10,810 was raised on behalf of these recipients:



- ❖ Friends of the Library
- ❖ *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
- ❖ West Stockbridge Zucchini Festival

To inquire about adding an organization to this year's list, please contact Vicki Grayson at (413) 232-6131 or [vicki.grayson@rocketmail.com](mailto:vicki.grayson@rocketmail.com).

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 MIXED UP JEWS  
 NON-JEWS  
 LGBT JEWS  
 CREATIVE JEWS

Please check our website [www.ahavathsholom](http://www.ahavathsholom) for information about our Zoom services, events and updates.

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

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 HAVEN'T-BEEN-IN-SHUL-SINCE-MY-BAR-MITZVAH-JEWS

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## November History Quiz Question:

The church played a vital role in community life in the 18th and 19th centuries. The early Congregational Society was the dominant religion in Massachusetts and West Stockbridge. The West Center church served as a meetinghouse and community center. Local taxes went to the church, attendance was mandatory, and the local minister managed education. It wasn't until 1830 that the state dropped its formal relationship with the church.

The increasing prosperity of West Stockbridge was driven in large part by having our own church (and associated taxes). As the town grew and expanded, other religions and their churches came to town. How many different churches were established and chartered in West Stockbridge?

(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](mailto:info@weststockbridgehistory.org) or call (413) 232-4465.



**West Stockbridge  
 Historical Society**  
 Incorporated in 1994



Fee revenue would replenish the Affordable Housing Trust Fund each year, providing a reliable annual revenue stream to leverage additional funds and better plan strategically. Exempt from the fee shall be, among other things, transfers between family members, transfers for a value of less than \$100, transfers as a result of marital dissolution, transfers between governmental units, and transfers for affordable housing. Annual Reports will detail Transfer Fee revenue and housing impacts.

With worsening housing costs and unaffordability trends, Governor Healey is anticipated to introduce an omnibus housing bill this fall, including language for all pending Real Estate Transfer Fee Home Rule Petitions to move forward. Joint Housing Committee Chair, Senator Lydia Edwards, also indicated this building momentum during her visit to Great Barrington last week. Leigh has been invited to a meeting with Secretary of Housing Ed Augustus to discuss the Real Estate Transfer Fee- this is significant - Boston is listening to Western Mass.

Amherst is currently the only municipality outside the Cape, Islands, or Eastern Massachusetts to file a Home Rule Petition. Western Massachusetts is being left out of the conversation. The more Western Massachusetts municipalities that file petitions, the more our region's interests and needs will be considered.

In short, Berkshire County Towns should be at the table to negotiate the omnibus housing bill and should have its home rule petition considered at the earliest opportunity.

Passage of the Home Rule Petition would mean a foot in the door and a seat at the table. The opportunity to influence legislation to suit our needs once the local option-enabling bill is passed. (rather than it being Boston-Cape centric). The bills H 377 and S 868 would allow communities to opt in without filing special acts. The Omnibus housing bill is expected to be filed this legislative session.

Andy Potter made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Andy Krouss at 6:53 PM.

All were in favor, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

*Marie Y. Ryan*

Marie Y. Ryan

Town Administrator

### **Select Board Meeting Minutes October 2, 2023**

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

Kathleen opened the meeting at 6 PM.

#### **Approval of Minutes:**

Kathleen stated minutes will be approved at the next meeting.

#### **Citizen Speak:**

Neal Pilson, Richmond Select Board member spoke to the Board in regard to an odor issue coming from Wiseacre Farm on Baker Street. Kathleen explained that there have been several complaints from residents that live in Richmond and one in West Stockbridge about the strong odor coming from Wiseacre Farm. Neal requested that the West Stockbridge Select Board take the next steps to investigate the issue and provide a remedy while working with the property owners. Richmond will assist in any way needed to mitigate the odor for the residents.

Sheila Thunfors informed the Board that she is part of a working group that is researching different ways to assist the senior residents, which have limited income resources, with their property tax burdens. She said there are many programs that most people are not aware of that may help them with their taxes. The group would like to provide information to the residents and assist in the process of completing forms. Sheila said that the group will also be meeting with Mary Stodden, Assessing Clerk, to gather more information.

Andy Potter thanked Sheila and her group for their research. He said that the Affordable Housing Trust may also be able to assist them. Once this group has gathered all their research, he would like to have a single location on the website to make it easier for residents to find the information.

#### **Appointment of New Town Treasurer - Benjamin Gelb**

Marie explained that the current Town Treasurer, Karen Williams, is retiring and her last day will be Thursday, October 5<sup>th</sup>. She and the Human Resource Director, Sophia Beltsos, advertised for this position and asked the Board to Appoint Benjamin Gelb. Marie introduced him and explained that he has experience with the same software programs we use in West Stockbridge. He will begin working on Tuesdays all day and will fill in with additional hours as needed starting Tuesday, October 10<sup>th</sup>.

Ben thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve West Stockbridge as the Treasurer. He stated that he also works part-time in Rowe as the Treasurer/Collector and in Washington as the Treasurer. He looks forward to working here.

Andy Potter made a motion, seconded by Andy Krouss, to appoint Benjamin Gelb as the new Town Treasurer for a three-year term.

All were in favor, appointment approved.

#### **Appoint Clerk and Secretary of the Select Board:**

Andy Potter made a motion, seconded by Kathleen, to appoint Andy Krouss as the Clerk of the Board. All were in favor, motion approved.

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy Krouss, to appoint Andy Potter as the Secretary of the Board. All were in favor, motion approved.

#### **Discussion of Real Estate Transfer Fee: Kathleen**

On September 28, 2023, the Board had a discussion with Leigh Davis, Great Barrington Select Board member, in regard to the Real Estate Transfer Fee would add money to the affordable Housing Trust from fees collected on real estate transfers. Leigh had a meeting with a legislative member in Boston on Friday, who explained to that the House may be moving legislation on a Housing Bill in the next two weeks. Kathleen suggested that the Select Board hold off on moving forward on this issue until after the Bill has passed and then review how to proceed with next steps.

#### **Select Board Speak:**

Andy Potter mentioned, in memorium, several residents that have passed away in the last few weeks: Tony Balestro, Ruth Bronz and Bob Burke.

Kathleen made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Andy Potter at 6:28 PM.

All were in favor, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

*Marie Y. Ryan*

Marie Y. Ryan

Town Administrator



# Zucchini Festival

Thanks, everyone—you made it happen!

*Thank you to the Select Board for letting us bring back the festival; the Highway, Police, and Fire Departments; the Board of Health, Town Administrator, Town Treasurer, Town Accountant, and many more.*

## Zucchini Festival Volunteers

Fred Adler  
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 Sasha Anderson  
 Scott Anderson  
 Sarita Anzalone  
 Karen Beebe  
 Dorothy Bennett  
 Jim Bennett  
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 Ryan Burt  
 Amy Butterworth  
 Dom Calautti  
 Tyler Campbell  
 David Capeless  
 Matt Cardillo  
 Ilin Cox  
 Sue Coxon  
 Lily Thorne Davenport  
 Simon Davenport  
 Doug Davis  
 Jonathan Davis  
 William Davis  
 Shay Donald  
 Lorena Dus  
 Jerry Elias  
 Julia Erickson  
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 Susan Fisher  
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 Dave Medeiros  
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 Lauren Pacifico  
 Caitlyn Paige  
 Cecily Patton  
 Jon Piasecki  
 Chief Marc Portieri  
 Andy Potter  
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 Chris Powell  
 Marjorie Powell  
 Gary Quadrozzi  
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 Maggie Ramos  
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 Maryann Richer  
 Jason Rosa  
 Lori Rose  
 Alex Roy  
 Anne Roy  
 Joe Roy, Jr.  
 Joe P. Roy  
 Mary Roy  
 Zachary Roy  
 Lynn Ryan  
 Laurie Santhay  
 Scott Sawyer  
 Gary Schieneman  
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 Curtis Thierling  
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 Trai Thu Duong  
 Truc's Orient Express  
 TurnPark Art Space  
 West Stockbridge Post Office

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 Kilpatrick Athletic Center  
 Loeb's Foodtown  
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 Jackie Moffatt  
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 Anne Roy  
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 Sharon Vidal  
 Truc's Orient Express

## Use of Goods/Services

A. W. Baldwin Hardware: Scale  
 Troy's Garage: Golf carts  
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 West Center Construction: Night lighting

## West Stockbridge Zucchini Festival Graphics & Advertising/Social Media

Chris Powell

## Donations of Zucchini's

GB Co-op  
 Gideon's Garden  
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 Stop & Shop, Dan Fox Drive  
 Stop & Shop, Merrill Road  
 Three Maples Market Garden  
 West Stockbridge resident gardens  
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 Unused edible zucchinis were donated to the Food Pantry GB and nonedible for compost

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 Stacy & Debra Gill  
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 Jerry & Karen Waxberg

*Bronze:*  
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 Roni Kramer  
 Marjorie & Bob Powell  
 Bruce & Rhonda Render  
 Chris Tonini  
 Rocky Tonini  
 West Stockbridge Grange  
 Wisdom Lodge Masons

*To donate or volunteer for next year's Zucchini Festival please contact us at [wszucchinifestival2023@gmail.com](mailto:wzucchinifestival2023@gmail.com)*



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](mailto:info@thelocalyokel.org), or visit [www.thelocalyokel.org](http://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](mailto:john.j.parker53@gmail.com); Vicki Grayson, 232-6131, [vicki.grayson@rocketmail.com](mailto:vicki.grayson@rocketmail.com); Susan Fisher, 232-4443, [suefish12@gmail.com](mailto:suefish12@gmail.com); Anne Lesser, 717-0277, [anne@annelesserscommunications.com](mailto:anne@annelesserscommunications.com); Designer: **Kim Bradway, [kim@bloominarts.com](mailto: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.

# Local Author and Musician Releases Audiobook *Murder at the Royal Albert*

By Gerald Elias

Talk about local, Local, LOCAL!

This past summer, I was involved in a unique audiobook project. After my mystery, *Murder at the Royal Albert*, was released earlier this year, I began collaborating with Alison Larkin, founder and guru of Alison Larkin Presents, who lives in Stockbridge and is not only the producer but also the fantastic narrator of the audiobook. It's the eighth installment of my critically acclaimed Daniel Jacobus mystery series, set in the dark corners of the classical music world.

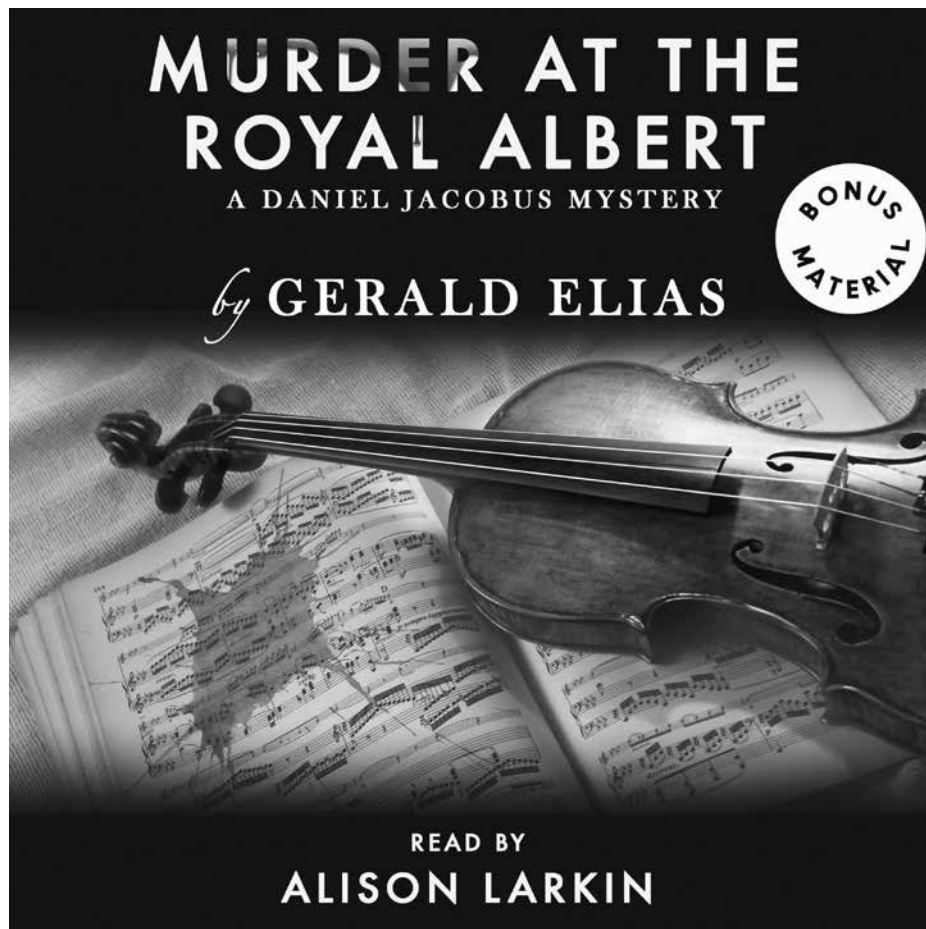
For those of you who don't know me, I'm a former BSO violinist and have owned a residence in West Stockbridge since 1976. Jacobus, my protagonist and amateur sleuth extraordinaire, is a curmudgeonly, reclusive blind violin teacher whose shabby cottage just happens to be in the exact location as our little (not quite as shabby) farmhouse in the woods.

Once Alison finished recording her narration, I then worked with Jason Brown, master recording engineer of BMA Audio (Berkshire Media Artists), spending an afternoon in his Sheffield studio to integrate some spectacular music performed by—you guessed it—the Boston Symphony into Alison's reading of the diabolical plot. During our breaks, Jason and I were entertained by the merry pranks of Higgins, his energetic little terrier.

The *Murder at the Royal Albert* audiobook from Alison Larkin Presents was released to great acclaim at the end of October and is available on Audible. What better way to support your local Berkshire enterprises and enjoy yourselves with a classy whodunnit than with a one-click visit to Audible?



*Alison Larkin and Gerald Elias*





# HVA Auction for the Environment

The Housatonic Valley Association is on a climate-ready mission to restore and protect clean, cold waters and a sweeping woodland corridor across the entire Housatonic Valley, and friends like you make it possible! Attending HVA's Auction for the Environment celebrates and supports this mission and has a profound impact on the environmental health of this place we love. Please join us again this year!

**Christine Baranski** is our entertaining and beloved host, and we have a select set of fabulous live and silent auction items available for your bidding pleasure! Auctioneer Sherry Truhlar, back by popular demand, promises a fun and lively afternoon of bidding. We know you love South Farms as we do, and we're thrilled to return this year. Seating is limited, so get your tickets today!

Our **silent auction** is also open online to everyone free of charge, whether you attend in person or not. To learn more, visit the tickets page at <https://secure.qgiv.com/event/hvaauctionfortheenvironment/register/>.

**Sunday, November 19, 2023**  
**South Farms, Morris, CT**

2 pm: Cocktails and Silent Auction  
2:45 pm: Christine's Welcome  
3 pm: Live Auction

When you reserve your ticket as a Defender or Champion, you receive select seating in the venue and you're invited to enjoy a special reception hosted by Christine just before the event.



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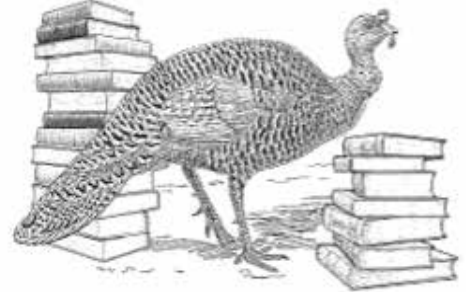


# WEST STOCKBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY

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

Greetings to all and best wishes for a happy Thanksgiving break! The library will be closed on Wednesday, November 22, and Thursday, November 23. Regular hours will resume on Friday, November 24: 2 pm to 6 pm, and Saturday, November 25. Come on in to your library for some reading or computer time, printing, photocopying, or getting assistance starting your free eBook and streaming audiobook accounts. And so much more!



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

\*\*\*\*\*

### NEW ADULT FICTION

- Acevedo, *Family lore*
- Donoghue, *Learned by heart*
- Groff, *The vaster wilds*
- Habeck, *Shark heart: A love story*
- Harrow, *Starling house*
- Heller, *The last ranger*
- Jewell, *None of this is true*
- Kerin, *Night's edge*
- Kim, *Happiness falls*
- Koryta, *An honest man*
- Krueger, *The river we remember*
- Madievsky, *All-night pharmacy*
- Morton, *Homecoming*
- Priddy, *Fall*
- Sims, *How can I help you*
- Smith, *Fraud*

### NEW ADULT NONFICTION

- Kissinger, *While you were out: An intimate family portrait of mental illness in an era of silence*
- Macnaughton, *How to say goodbye*

### NEW TITLES FOR YOUNG READERS AND THE YOUNG AT HEART

- Cummins, *Our pool*
- Dewdney, *Llama llama red pajama*
- Grimes, *A walk in the woods*
- Jensen Shaffer, *Emergency kittens!*
- Schertle, *Little Blue Truck: board book*
- Schertle, *Little Blue Truck's Halloween*

### NEW DVDs

- Endeavour Seasons 8 and 9; Past lives; Master gardener; Spider-Man across the spider-verse*



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

1. On what subject did Eric Wilska, owner of the Bookloft, present a program in 2014 sponsored by the Friends of the West Stockbridge Library?
2. In May 2014, Berkshire Hills Regional School District made a \$4 million cut in their renovation budget. Who accepted it, and what did it mean?
3. In June 2014, Chamber Players performed a concert in the historic 1854 West Stockbridge Town Hall on Main Street. It was a benefit for what organization?
4. In June 2014, Hillcrest Educational Centers hired Katrina Slosek for what job?

1. "The Changing Landscape of Publishing and Book Retailing"  
2. Massachusetts State Building Authority (MSBA), and they committed to preserving the state funding level  
3. West Stockbridge Historical Society, for the restoration of the historic Town Hall  
4. Director of communications



This program is supported in part by a grant from the West Stockbridge Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

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*When you drink, plan ahead and do not drive !!*

## November Art Calendar

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

2023

**September 19 - December 23, "Near & Far"**, Art show at the Colonial Theatre. Featuring 10 works from 8 local artists. See Website for hours.

**November 17 - December 3, "Small Works"**. Reception Nov 18th. Group art show featuring 5 local artists. Art on Main Gallery, West Stockbridge, MA.

**November 19, Berkshire Photo Gathering**. Last of 2023. See web: [berkshirephotogathering.com/online-meetings](http://berkshirephotogathering.com/online-meetings)

**November 24, Art Book Gathering, 10-11am**. Share a favorite book, artist, or process.

**November 28, Meet the Artist, 3pm**. Shany Porras, Acrylic Painter. Link to watch to be shared on website.

See [www.berkshireartists.org](http://www.berkshireartists.org) for all the in-person and online events offered by the Guild of Berkshire Artists!



38 Main Street, West Stockbridge

### Small Works

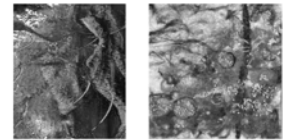
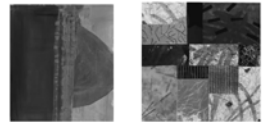
November 17th - December 3rd

Nancy Harrod | Marion Grant

Margie Skaggs

Karen Carmean | Sarah Morrison

Reception November 18th



## Community News & Events

### Stockbridge Grange Dinner

On Sunday, November 12, the Stockbridge Grange will serve a takeout-only dinner at the Grange Hall, 51 Church Street, Stockbridge. The dinner will be roast pork with apple and chocolate cream pies for dessert. Cost is \$15. PLEASE ORDER BY FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10. To place an order, call (413) 243-1298 or (413) 443-4352. Pickup time is 12 to 1:30 pm.

### Council on Aging

The Richmond/West Stockbridge COA Craft Group will meet at the West Stockbridge Town Offices on the second Tuesday of each month. Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, November 14, at 10 am in the Community Room. It is such a fun time—come and find out what you are missing! Hope to see you there.

### West Stockbridge Plant Exchange

The West Stockbridge Plant Exchange meets on the first Sunday of each month to exchange seeds, cuttings, plants, and advice. It's a great way to meet people in the community and exchange indoor and outdoor gardening knowledge. We meet in the Community Room at the Town Offices from 2 to 4 pm. For further information, please contact Alisa Desmond at (561) 235-4392.

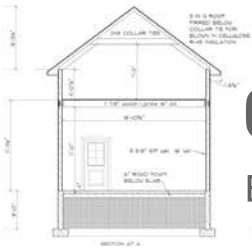
### The Knitters Group

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](mailto:info@thelocalyokel.org), or visit [thelocalyokel.org](http://thelocalyokel.org).*



# On the Home Front

By Thom Lipiczky

## On the Shores of Majestic Mud Pond

We're leaning into our fourth autumn here at "the new house," as many of our friends call this place. As both of my readers know, after 45 years, we left our 1812 farmhouse (the Sylvester Spencer house, for you history buffs) on Route 41 a mile or so south of town and built a new smaller place, also on Route 41, just a mile north of town. West Stockbridge, we just can't quit you.

We bought the piece of land (formerly the town gravel pit) in spring of 2018 and designed a 1,700-square-foot house to go on top of my new woodworking shop (the house keeps the rain out of the shop). We broke ground in August 2018 and had our certificate of occupancy by mid-April 2019. Fastest house I've ever built! I think the great contacts I developed during my years as a building contractor made it easier getting reliable help in and out efficiently.

The house is very easy to live in. With 34 solar panels and net metering, we pretty much don't have to pay for electricity. And that's with two heat pumps/mini splits providing heat and AC, an all-electric kitchen, and a level 2 charger for our electric Ford Mustang. The house is super insulated and has triple-pane windows. We designed it to accommodate our pretty modest lifestyle, but we do like to cook, so the kitchen is the heart of the house in many ways. Anne has a roomy, light-filled office, and I have my spacious woodworking shop below (walkout double doors) along with a garage/storage space.

In the past few years, we've turned our attention to the outside. We put in a small raised-bed vegetable garden and planted some perennial borders. Then we opened up an area closer to the waterfront that had at one point been the site of some outbuildings belonging to the old Mooney farm. The area, overgrown with an impenetrable jungle of invasive honeysuckle and Japanese knotweed, is what we saw from our front door, so we set about to reclaim the "brownfields." And yes, we got the OK from the Conservation Commission.

What we found when the jungle was cut back a bit was a debris field of rubble left from the demolition of the outbuildings and the 200-foot-long two-story chicken coop that burned down in the 1970s. I know some men in town who used to work at the farm when they were teenagers, and they say the smell from the farm before and after the fire was considerable. (Part of our driveway is the foundation of the chicken coop, so we at least got something out of the disaster.) After some backhoe work to bury the debris and spread a few truckloads of soil, we seeded the area with grass. We now call this area "the park."

This past summer I built a small post-and-beam teahouse that overlooks Majestic Mud Pond where it joins Shaker Pond. It's a wonderful view across the field toward the water, where we see lots of turtles, ducks, geese, a great blue heron, and a pair of swans. More plantings will happen in and around the teahouse and neighboring shade garden. I expect we'll spend lots of time out there.

All this reminds us how remarkably fortunate we are to live here, among some great people, in such peace and beauty. Such stark contrast to what many in the world are now experiencing. We don't take our situation for granted. But—for now—we're happy, comfortable, and grateful. We wish the same to you in this season of thanksgiving.

For questions, comments, and rants, visit [info@thelocalyokel.org](mailto:info@thelocalyokel.org).



*View from the park. Photo by Thom Lipiczky.*

## History Quiz Answer:

The first church in West Stockbridge was the West Center Congregational Church. Built in 1787 on a rise overlooking the valley, it served as the center of the community. A classic New England style building, it was the only place of worship until 1838 when the Congregational Church in the village center was built. The West Center Church served as a functioning church with local worshipers until it was hit by lightning in 1956 and burned to the ground. The wonderful location, known as the West Center Outdoor Chapel, is still used for special services and weddings.

As the village center became the locus of commerce and population, a separate congregation formed in town in 1833. Five years later, the group chartered the Congregational Society and erected a church in donated space above Main Street. That first church burned down in 1881. The current church was constructed shortly after that.

During the mid-1800s, Irish immigration swelled our population. Fleeing famine and British oppression in Ireland, West Stockbridge offered work in the railroad, quarries, and farms. At first, Catholic congregants had to travel to Albany or Pittsfield to attend mass. Later they met for services in a private home on Lenox Road. Our second place of worship, Saint Patrick's Catholic Church, was finally built in 1869. Catholics no longer had to travel all day to get to mass.

The third church building is on Swamp Road. The Methodist Church was built in 1928, the same year as the village Congregational Church. The Methodist congregation combined the Richmond and Queechey Lake parishes. The church served its worshipers until 1910 when it closed and was sold to the Grange. The building, now in private ownership, is on the National Register of Historic Places. It still retains many of its original features inside and out.

There were two other churches in town that many don't know about. When the West Center Congregational Church was being built, land on the northwest corner of the lot was donated to the Baptists. Before that time, both religions worshipped together. By 1793, the Baptists petitioned to establish the Baptist Society of West Stockbridge. Five years later, a formal Baptist church was built on the donated land. This congregation thrived for a few years, but as the population changed, it closed. The church building materials were used in a private family's barn further north on West Center Road. The Baptist Society rechartered in 1847 and met in a private home near Glendale for three years before closing.

The other less known church was a small chapel on Route 102 in State Line, a large hamlet in the late 1800s with many immigrants working for the railroad and the iron pits. Travel to town was tough, especially in the winter. In 1901, a former mine manager's office was moved and repurposed as a chapel. The State Line Union Chapel served both State Line residents and people from Austerlitz and Canaan who lived along Route 22. It started as a branch of the village Congregational Sunday School but grew to have services with shared pastors from West Stockbridge, Pittsfield, and Lanesboro. It was active in serving the area until 1935. By then, roads were paved and travel to the village center much easier. The chapel was sold to a private owner and converted to a cottage.

Photos courtesy of West Stockbridge Historical Society.



*Old Congregational Church*



*West Stockbridge Grange*



**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.*

**Yes!** I want to support the Local Yokel.  
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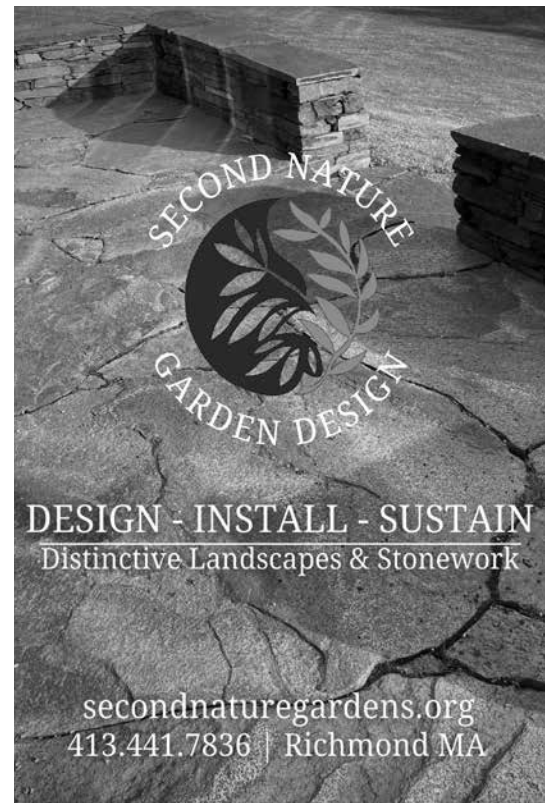


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**November Donor Roll Call**

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- Sally Kimball
- Jimmy & Paula Law
- Robin Lazarow
- Bob Lee
- Christopher O' Connor

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(See response form on page 17.)



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Town Offices Main Number (413) 232-0300 • Fax 232-7195				
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>Kelli Bradbury</i>	232-0300	ext. 302	Tues. 1-5 pm; Wed. 7 am-12 pm; Thurs. 1-6 pm
Town Historian	<i>Robert Salerno</i>	232-4465		
Town Treasurer	<i>Benjamin Gelb</i>	232-0300	ext. 316	Tues. 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](http://weststockbridge-ma.gov) • Community and Business Website: [visitweststockbridge.com](http://visitweststockbridge.com)

**November 6-10** is collection week for the



WEST



# STOCKBRIDGE FOOD PANTRY

Helping Hands is on a mission to restock the shelves of the West Stockbridge Food Pantry (located at the town hall), and we need your help!

**Specific needs are:**

peanut butter, pasta/rice, canned tuna, mayonnaise, coffee/tea, cereal, kleenex, toilet paper, shelf-stable milk and laundry detergent

All donations can be dropped off in the food pantry collection box in the entryway at the town hall or at the congregational church. To arrange a drop off elsewhere, email [wstockhelpinghands@gmail.com](mailto:wstockhelpinghands@gmail.com)



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5	6	7	8	9	10	<b>11</b>
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	<b>23</b>	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

November Calendar of Events	11/5		
	11/5	Daylight Savings Time ends: set clocks back 1 hour	
	11/5	Plant Exchange meeting	2-4 pm Community Room, Town Offices
	11/6	Planning Board meeting	7 pm Town Offices, 21 State Line Rd.
	11/6-10	Collection week for West Stockbridge Food Pantry	Town Offices & Congregational Church
	11/8	Friends of the Library meeting	3:30 pm Community Room, Town Offices
	11/10	Town Offices closed for observed holiday	
	11/11	Veterans Day	
	11/12	Diwali	
	11/12	Stockbridge Grange takeout dinner	See Community News for details
	11/13	Select Board meeting	6 pm Town Offices, 21 State Line Rd.
	11/14	Council on Aging Craft Group meeting	10 am Community Room, Town Offices
	11/15	*** Deadline for the next <i>Local Yokel</i> *** Send to <a href="mailto:info@thelocalyokel.org">info@thelocalyokel.org</a>	
	11/16	Finance Committee meeting	6 pm Town Offices, 21 State Line Rd.
	Select Board meeting	6 pm Town Offices, 21 State Line Rd.	
11/23	Thanksgiving Day: Town Offices closed		
11/28	Giving Tuesday		