

Local yokel

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

West
Stockbridge

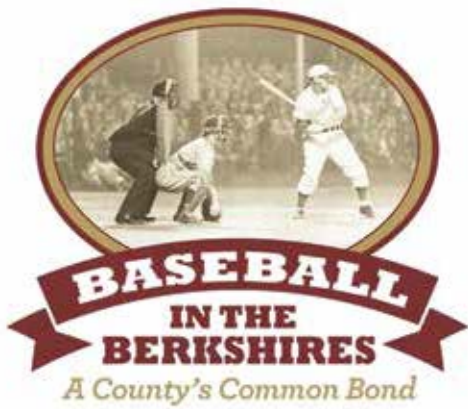
April
2024

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 2005



Swans at Flat Brook. Photo by June Biggs

ANNUAL TOWN CLEANUP APRIL 20



Baseball in the Berkshires Not Your Ordinary Teams: The Unknown Story

The game of baseball has a long and storied history in the Berkshires: from the “broken window bylaw” of 1791 to the first college game ever played in Pittsfield in 1859, 60 years of minor league teams calling the Berkshires their home, to 40 major-league players coming from the Berkshires (two of them are in the National Baseball Hall of Fame). Just when you think you have a grasp on those stories, someone asks, How about women’s baseball and Black baseball in the Berkshires?

Going back to the late 1800s, both the history of women and people of color have some strong roots here. Baseball in the Berkshires’ newest exhibit “Not Your Ordinary Teams: The Unknown Story of Baseball in the Berkshires,” an exhibit of the history of Black and women’s baseball in Berkshire County, comes to the West Stockbridge Old Town Hall from April 18 to 21.

Sponsored by the West Stockbridge Historical Society, the exhibit is open to the public. It opens on Thursday, April 18, for a sneak preview from 5 to 8 pm. On Friday, April 19, the opening reception is from 5 to 8 pm with a presentation on the history of Black and women’s baseball at 6:30 by Larry Moore, director of Baseball in the Berkshires. Special guests on Friday are Bryan House, former Pittsfield Cub who spent seven years playing minor-league baseball, and Joe Bateman, Pittsfield native who had an 11-year career playing professional baseball.

The exhibit continues on Saturday and Sunday afternoons from 12 to 4 pm. On Saturday an ongoing hands-on presentation, “Innovation: What’s New in Baseball,” will be featured. On Sunday, the presentation will be “Tools of the Trade: The History of Baseball Equipment.” Both presentations are appropriate for all ages, and the free exhibit is open to the public Thursday through Sunday.

*Photos and image courtesy of
Baseball in the Berkshires*



1909 Philadelphia Giants



Springside Girls' Baseball Team



Billy Hart



Grant Frank



Star Bloomer Girls, early 1900s

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 January 29, 2024

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

Kathleen opened the meeting at 6 PM.

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

Treasurer Break in Service – Ben Gelb

The current Treasurer, Ben Gelb explained that he is working in two different Towns that use two different county retirement systems. He must retire from one and resign from the other for a one-month break before he can start earning wages again. He will still work for the Town for the one-month break without pay. After the one-month period is over, the Board will need to officially appoint Ben again.

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy Potter to accept Ben's break in service for one month.

All were in favor, motion approved.

Acquevo, LLC Annual All Alcohol Liquor License Public Hearing

Kathleen opened the public hearing for an Annual All Alcohol liquor license for Acquevo, LLC. Acquevo LLC's attorney William Martin introduced the applicants Liza and Valentino Pagliari, who were on zoom. Liza stated that the family-style restaurant will be open for lunch and dinner, from 12 PM until 11 PM. They would like to have outdoor seating as well, which was permitted on the original special permit for the restaurant.

Andy Potter made a motion, seconded by Andy Krouss to approve the liquor license for Acquevo, LLC.

All were in favor, motion approved.

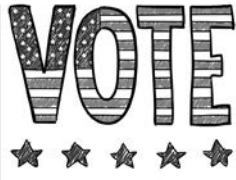
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Save the Dates!

**Annual Town Meeting:
Monday, May 6, 6 pm**

**Annual Town Election:
Monday, May 13, 10 am–7 pm**

**Location:
Town Offices,
21 State Line Road**

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

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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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WS Parks & Recreation to Hold Forum on Memorial Day Observance

By Cait Graham



The Parks & Recreation Commission will meet at 5 pm on Thursday, April 4 (on Zoom and in person at the Town Offices). One item on the agenda is Memorial Day in West Stockbridge. We understand that many residents have strong feelings regarding the observance of this tradition. We invite community members to come to the meeting and share their preferences. It is our fervent desire to honor our fallen veterans in a way that everyone in our town feels is appropriate.

April Donor Roll Call

Tim & Linda Fitzgerald,
in memory of Michael Skorput

granniemENDS

John & Ruby Korte,
in memory of Michael Skorput

Anne & Joe Roy Jr.

Wayne & Lisa Tenney

John Tremblay & Eileen Quinn

Anonymous: 1

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

Designer for Moscow Road Property – Kathleen Keresev

Kathleen requested that the Board approve her to apply for Community Preservation (CPC) funds for seed money to get the Moscow Road park area project started and help cover some of the cost to develop the Town owned parcel. The Town had previously received design plans for that property during COVID, however there has been no movement on the project since then. She will present the design plans to the Board for approval and then using the CPC funds, begin to have the property developed.

Andy Potter made a motion, seconded by Kathleen, to apply for \$25,000 in CPC funds for the development of the Moscow Road property.

All were in favor, motion approved.

Wisacre Farm Annual Report and Update – Jon Piasecki

Jon informed the Board that Byers Scientific has worked with Wisacre Farm to develop an odor mitigation plan. Jon has purchased a large specialized fan to direct any odor away from the neighborhoods towards the swamp area. He will add fencing to seal the area as well. The plan calls for the fan to also blow micro sized molecules containing water and organic plant-based enzymes into the air that will capture the odor molecules. Jon stated these chemicals are completely environmentally safe and will cause no hazards.

This year Byers will test the air and send samples to the lab for analysis. They will also install a weather station that will monitor the odor and get real time odor compound levels. This will also be available on an app as well and Jon can see what the odor levels are at any given time. These plans will all be in place in August prior to the flowering season.

Jon plans to continue to hold community meetings and invite Byers employees to attend for questions and answers. He will plant more aromatic plants to mask the odor as well. He said this mitigation plan is continuing and ongoing and can change as advancements happen in the odor mitigation field. He hopes for fewer complaints as time goes on but does not expect total elimination of the odor.

The Board stated that they would like an independent third-party consultant to review the plan. Jon and his attorney, Aaron DuBois, agreed that Wisacre would pay the cost for that consultant but would like to be included in the process. Jon specifically suggested that the Board use an Industrial Hygiene Engineer to evaluate the mitigation plan.

Select Board Speak:

Andy Krouss informed the board that the Town has earned the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) designation. This will allow the town to apply for more grant money offered by the State.

Andy Potter stated that the Library Trustees have developed and approved a Collection Policy. He also thanked the Department of Public Works on their great job clearing the roads during the last snowstorm.

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy Potter, to adjourn at 7:46 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Y. Ryan

Marie Y. Ryan

Town Administrator

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

Kathleen opened the meeting at 6 PM.

Andy Potter made a motion, seconded by Andy Krouss, to approve the minutes from January 16th and 22nd.

All were in favor, minutes approved.

Citizen Speak:

Curt Wilton mentioned the passing of longtime resident Michael Skorput. Michael was involved in many aspects of Town government and served on many committees and boards and will be greatly missed.

Public Works Update – Curt Wilton, Public Works Director

Curt gave an update on grant activity to the Board.

He informed the Board that the Town did not receive a grant from their Complete Streets application. He will work with the Complete Streets subcommittee to re-submit for grant money again to either the same grant or another available grant that the projects may qualify for after the Committee meets again. He and Marie will be meeting with the Complete Streets Grant Coordinator to review the application and see why it did not receive approval for funds.

...continued on page 7

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West Stockbridge Historical Society Presents: Susan Hagen Koussevitzky Bass Concert Saturday, April 27, 5 pm at the West Stockbridge Congregational Church

Since the founding of Tanglewood in 1940 by Serge Koussevitzky, the BSO's longtime music director and conductor, the Berkshires and Koussevitzky have become synonymous with world-class music. The year 2024 marks the 150th anniversary of Koussevitzky's birth. The West Stockbridge Historical Society is hosting a concert featuring renowned bassist Susan Hagen, who will be playing Koussevitzky's famous instrument.

Susan Hagen, principal bassist of the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra and first alternate bassist for both the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Boston Pops Orchestra, is honored to be loaned the famed Koussevitzky bass for a series of commemorative concerts this coming spring. Susan and renowned British bassist David Heyes have curated a program of music expressly commissioned to honor Koussevitzky. In addition to the newly commissioned compositions, their program will also include several other pieces for bass by composers such as Giovanni Bottesini. Accompanying the two bassists will be pianist Rebecca Plummer and soprano Sarah Poole.

Join us for a memorable concert on Saturday, April 27, at 5 pm at the Congregational Church, 45 Main Street, West Stockbridge. Tickets can be purchased at the West Stockbridge Historical Society website at www.weststockbridgehistory.org.

History of the Bass

The Karr-Koussevitzky bass, or Amati bass, is a famous double bass that previously belonged to Serge Koussevitzky and Gary Karr. Now generally referred to as the *Karr-Koussevitzky* rather than the *Amati*, until recently the bass was attributed to the Amati brothers, but now it is generally believed to have its origins in France. It is renowned for its tonal quality in solo music but considered difficult to play.

The bass has been owned by Koussevitzky, his widow Olga, Karr, and the International Society of Bassists. After Koussevitzky died in 1951, the bass remained in Olga's care until 1962 when she presented the instrument to Karr after attending his New York debut recital. She claimed she saw the ghost of her husband embrace Karr on stage and took this as a sign to pass the bass on to him. Karr continued playing the instrument, and it became his main bass for more than 40 years until he donated the instrument in 2004 to the International Society of Bassists, the organization he founded in 1967.



Bassist Susan Hagen. Photo courtesy of Susan Hagen



Koussevitzky with bass. Photo courtesy of the International Society of Bassists

...continued from page 5

Andy Potter also suggested these projects could be submitted for funding through AARP and other available grants.

Curt stated that he and Marie have worked hard spending many hours to earn the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Designation (MVP) for the Town, which was approved recently. This will allow the Town to be eligible for more grants in the future. The largest project he believes that could be funded is a new multi-purpose municipal safety building for the Fire/Police/Department of Public Works. Curt and Marie will be researching the possibility and available funding for this type of project.

Wisecre Farm Next Steps – Kathleen Kersey

Kathleen has done research in regard to consultants that can review the odor mitigation plan presented by Wisecre Farm. State Representative Smitty Pignatelli reached out to her and suggested the Board request the Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) do a comprehensive review of the plan as well. Kathleen did find two companies that could provide a review of the mitigation plan. She asked the Board if they agree this review as a next step and both Andy Potter and Andy Krouss agreed.

Kathleen requested the Board approve Town Counsel Nicole Costanzo become the representative for the town to work with Byers Scientific and a third-party consultant which the Board will hire. Nicole is already doing this type of work for other towns as well. The Board agreed to have Nicole be the Town’s representative and work with both companies. The expense of the third-party consultant will be paid by Wisecre Farm.

Select Board Speak:

Andy Potter stated that he will recuse himself in the public hearing for the trailer park request for rent increase to the Rent Control Board. He stated that he had spoken with a resident where he had

made statements that may not be considered impartial in the process after because this resident put their conversation into a written document. This may appear to be unfair to the petitioner therefore, he recuses himself from the Rent Control Board and all matters related to this public hearing.

Andy Krouss asked Jon Piasecki if any of the complainants of the cannabis odor have come to see him and discuss the issue. Jon stated no, however, he is holding a community meeting on March 25th and Byers Scientific in attendance to discuss the mitigation plan. This meeting will be in person at Wisecre Farm and he will be sending out invitations.

Andy Potter made a motion, seconded by Andy Krouss, to adjourn open session and enter into executive session and not to return to open session.

Anticipated executive session in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A Paragraph 21 (a)(3), to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining, as meeting in open session would have a detrimental impact on the Board’s negotiating position (Police Union Contract)

Roll Call vote to enter into executive session and not return into Open Session.

Kathleen Yes
Andy Potter Yes
Andy Krouss Yes

Open Meeting Adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Y. Ryan

Marie Y. Ryan
Town Administrator

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Mass Cultural Council

The *Local Yokel* is published monthly. Please mail submissions to: **The Local Yokel, P.O. Box 238, West Stockbridge, MA 01266**, email info@thelocalyokel.org, or visit www.thelocalyokel.org. Copy deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the publication. Editors: **John Parker, 394-4368, john.j.parker53@gmail.com;** **Vicki Grayson, 232-6131, vicki.grayson@rocketmail.com;** **Susan Fisher, 232-4443, suefish12@gmail.com;** **Anne Lesser, 717-0277, anne@annelessercommunications.com;** Designer: **Kim Bradway, kim@bloominarts.com.**

The *Local Yokel* is supported in part by a grant from the West Stockbridge Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.



Guild of Berkshire Artists
10 years of supporting creativity in the Berkshires!

ART on MAIN GALLERY is Opening for the 2024 Season!

By Margie Skaggs

Art on Main Gallery opens for the 2024 season on Thursday, April 11, and will feature ongoing shows, typically with two to three artists, until the end of the year. This opening event showcases Chelsea Bradway's photographs of New York and Rachel Kaufman's oil paintings of Great Barrington street scenes.

ANGELS of NEW YORK and SCENES of GREAT BARRINGTON

Thursday, April 11, through Sunday, April 21, 2024, 11 am to 4 pm

ART on MAIN GALLERY, 38 Main Street, West Stockbridge

Chelsea Bradway grew up in the Berkshires and photographs elegant landscapes and people in unusual situations while also capturing the reaction of onlookers. Her New York City black-and-white scenes offer a contrast with Rachel Kaufman's colorful small-town views.

Rachel grew up in New York City and moved to the Berkshires in 2019. She is also a photographer, who then translates her photos into oil paintings depicting street life in Great Barrington. She captures the mood and connection of small-town life through quiet street scenes at sunset, local downtown shops, and lively summer gatherings.

Both artists have similar takes on street life, people, observers, and quirky situations, each rendered in her own personal style.

For more information, visit the guild's website at www.berkshireartists.org.

Images courtesy of the artists



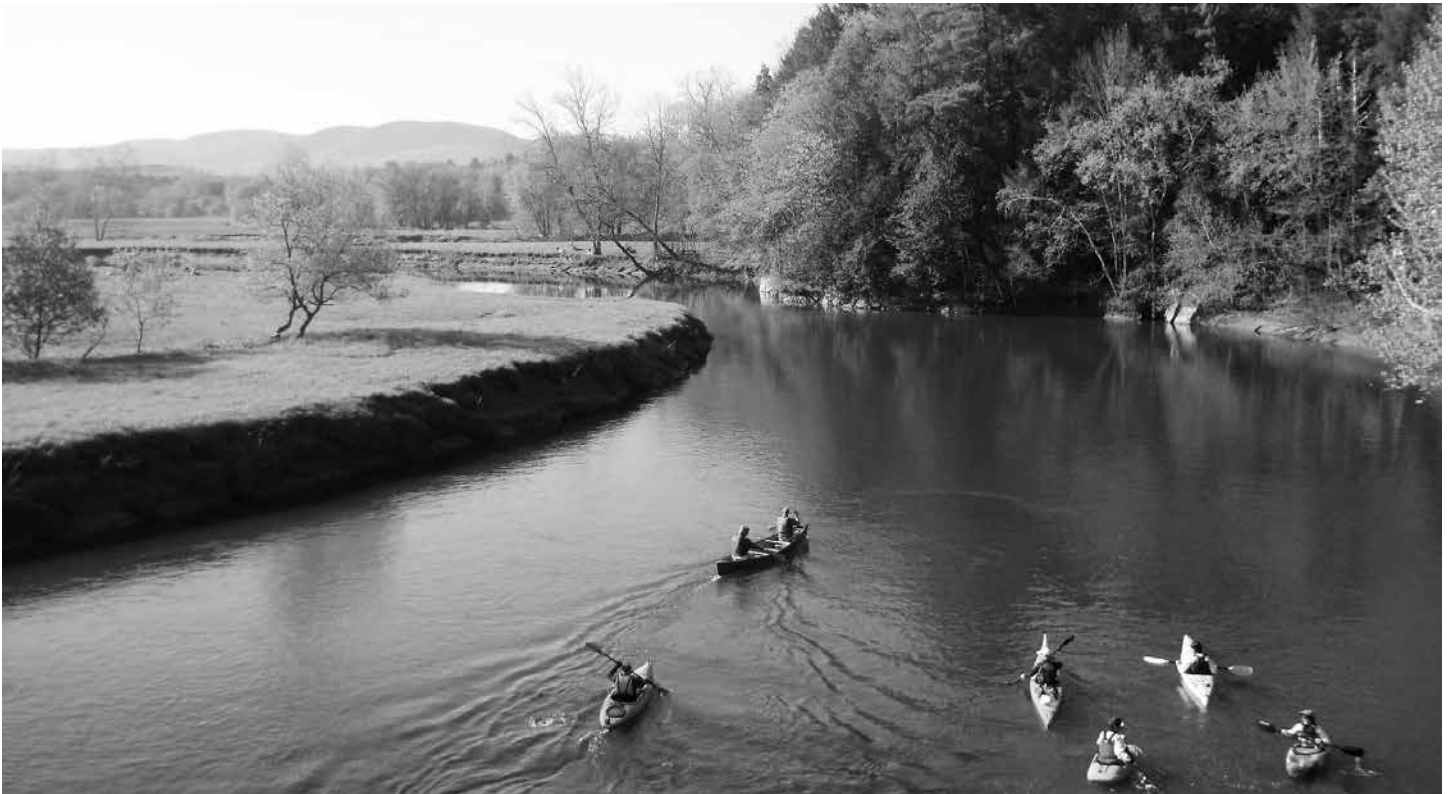
Rachel Kaufman, Oil Painting



Chelsea Bradway, Photography

HVA Announces “Celebrate Our Watershed” Event

By Kelley Hall

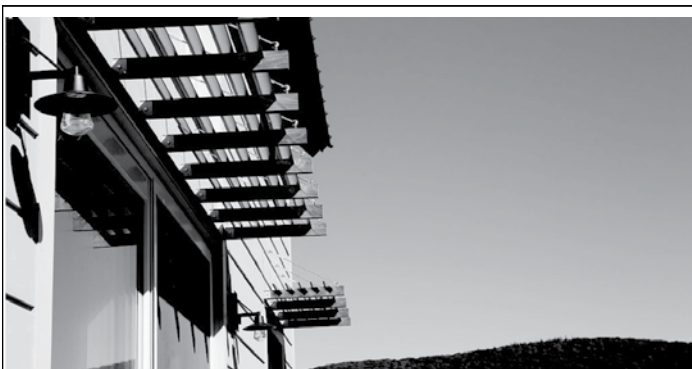


Paddling the Housatonic on a spring afternoon. Photo courtesy of HVA

The Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) is excited to announce that “Celebrate Our Watershed” is back! From April 27 through July 8, we’re celebrating the beautiful Housatonic Valley by paddling down the Housy, hosting fun community events and outdoor activities, and bringing people together for great food and drink.

As the only conservation organization working across the entire 2,000-square-mile Housatonic watershed, HVA works to protect the natural character and environmental health of the entire river valley from the Berkshires, eastern New York and western Connecticut, to Long Island Sound, for today and for future generations.

We’re kicking things off Saturday, April 27, with a paddle in Pittsfield, and we hope you can join us. Visit hvatoday.org to learn about the rest of the “Celebrate Our Watershed” events and learn how you can be involved.



Dana Bixby ■ Architecture

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Local Group Advocates for Property Tax Relief for Eligible Senior Residents

In the fall of 2023, June Biggs, Louise Faggioni, Frank Landsberger, Jill Pixley, Sheila Thunfors, Rocky Tonini, and Sharon Vidal formed a citizens' discussion group to pursue avenues of relief for seniors struggling to pay their property taxes. After much research and discussion, the group decided to focus on avenues that already exist in the Commonwealth's Mass General Laws (MGL), Chapter 59, Section 5, that have not yet been adopted by the town. The Select Board agreed to include our proposal as a ballot question at the annual town election on May 13, 2024.

If the ballot question is approved, the specific provisions of the senior property tax exemption under Clause 41C1/2 of MGL, Chapter 59, Section 5, will be voted on at a special town meeting to be scheduled shortly thereafter. The following provisions will not appear on the ballot but will be on a warrant at that special town meeting:

- Applicant must be 65 years or older*
- Applicant must have had a domicile[†] in Massachusetts for 10 consecutive years and have owned and occupied the property for which the exemption is being requested or any other Massachusetts property for any 5 years
- Applicant's household income from all sources cannot exceed \$69,000 (this limit is determined by the state each year)
- Applicants meeting all requirements will receive a \$1,000 real estate tax exemption[‡]

With a \$500 state reimbursement to the town per exemption and other currently existing funding, adoption of Clause 41C1/2 of MGL, Chapter 59, Section 5, will have only minimal or no impact on the tax rate.

We urge all citizens to vote yes on the ballot question on May 13 and then vote for the specific provisions allowed under Clause 41C1/2 at a special town meeting (to be scheduled).

We feel this is the right thing to do.

** West Stockbridge currently provides a very limited tax exemption for those 65 years and older, and we do not want to change that eligibility age and take away from those currently qualifying at age 65. The ballot will state 70 years, which we will vote to change to 65 at the special town meeting.*

† A domicile is defined as "where your principal and legal home is located, your family, social, civic and economic life is centered, and you plan to return whenever you are away. You may have more than one residence, but only one domicile."

‡ The very limited tax exemption currently in use provides a \$750 tax exemption. The exemption amount can range from 5% to 20% of the average assessed valuation of residential property in West Stockbridge. The ballot will state 5%, which we will vote to change to \$1,000 at the special town meeting.

April History Quiz Question:

In 1924, West Stockbridge was 150 years old. The town was changing, along with the country. The Great War was over, the Roaring Twenties were in full swing, and the ensuing national exuberance rolled down to the local level. In July 1924, West Stockbridge had a three-day celebration to mark the founding of the town.

What was the town like by 1924 at 150 years old? How did it evolve from the earlier 19th-century industrial-based village? Did the celebration reflect the town's character?

(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) 232-4465.



**West Stockbridge
Historical Society**
Incorporated in 1994

West Stockbridge Library Receives Grant for Accessible Doors at Town Offices

The West Stockbridge Public Library (WSPL) has received a \$10,000 grant to install accessible doors specifically designed for patrons with disabilities. This funding, part of the Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities initiative by the American Library Association, enables the library to advance its mission of enhancing accessibility and inclusivity for all members of the community.

Library Director Rachel Alter expressed her enthusiasm for the project, stating, "This is a great step forward for making the library more accessible and inclusive. We are deeply committed to ensuring that everyone, regardless of ability, can fully participate in and benefit from the library's resources and services."

The accessible doors will be fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. They will improve accessibility both within the library and at the Town Offices.

The WSPL is one of 240 libraries nationwide selected to participate in the initiative. The library staff looks forward to furthering their mission of offering equitable access to information, resources, and programming for all community members. For more information, contact Rachel Alter at (413) 232-0300 or weststockbridgelibrary@gmail.com.



The West Stockbridge Village
Congregational Church is sponsoring a

Sound Bath

Saturday, April 13th at 6pm

Kripalu instructor Antoinette Simms
will be presenting this music
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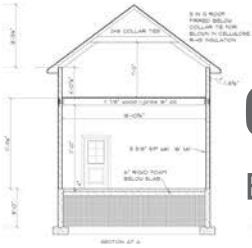
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— Jackie Moffatt at C. H. Baldwin & Sons



On the Home Front

By Thom Lipiczky

Spring!



Majestic Mud Pond, March 14. Photo by Thom Lipiczky

As I'm writing this, we're just about at the vernal equinox, the point in the calendar when the tilt of the earth means the sun will now be above the equator for the next half orbit. In the Northern Hemisphere, that means the season is spring. This year it falls on March 19 (which in the Catholic calendar is the feast of St. Joseph, patron saint of carpenters, and I've spent more than half my working life as a carpenter, so YAY).

Of course, here in New England, we call this time mud season, when our dirt roads turn to chocolate pudding. It's also when we start seeing bird migrations, and I've found redwing blackbirds at my feeder for the last two weeks. (They're waiting for tastier bugs to appear, but they'll happily munch on seeds for now.) And yesterday, on a walk to the nearby shores of majestic Mud Pond, we heard frogs chirping away. Not peepers, though.

This time last year we were recovering from 16 inches of heavy snow, proving that Mother Nature always has a custard pie up her sleeve to surprise us. But over the past 50 years that I've lived in the suburbs of greater downtown metropolitan West Stockbridge, I have certainly noted a clear shift in

the start of warmer weather (and hotter summers and drier milder winters). So have the animals and plants around us. Some migrating birds show up to eat their usual plants, only to find the plants have adapted to a new schedule. More ominously for us all, a warming climate means pathogens previously locked in permafrost are now free to spread after 10,000 years.

I remember some years ago when James Inhofe, U.S. senator from the great state of BIG OIL—no, no, I mean Oklahoma—brought a snowball into the Senate chambers, thereby proving *inconclusively* that climate change (then called global warming) was a pinko commie hoax.

Of course, it's not just *warming*. It's "weather weirdness," at least compared to what we've been used to for the past two centuries. I don't think any but the most recalcitrant can continue to deny the climate is changing rapidly. Here in the Berkshires, we could pretend the receding glaciers, shrinking icecaps, increasing desertification and deforestation, warming oceans, mega-hurricanes, droughts and floods, and stuff like that don't affect us. At least for another few daze (*sic*).

And there are those who claim that to do anything about the causes of climate change would be *too expensive, not good for business*. I'm reminded of my days at St. Patrick's parochial school in Chatham, New Jersey. The nuns informed us boys that masturbation (I think she referred to it as "self-pollution") would *definitely cause blindness*. One of my seventh-grade colleagues raised his hand and asked, "Couldn't we do it just until we need glasses?" Senator Inhofe, and the like, will need to read the braille on the wall.

I'm going to quit my rant about this for now. I'm instead going to plant my peas and fava beans in the next few weeks because the soil in my garden is completely thawed. Happy spring!

Questions, comments, and rants can be sent to info@thelocalyokel.org

Community News & Events

Stockbridge Grange Dinner

On Sunday, April 21, the Stockbridge Grange will serve a takeout-only dinner at the Grange Hall, 51 Church Street, Stockbridge. The dinner entrée will be stuffed breast of chicken, with chocolate and lemon pies for dessert. Cost is \$15. PLEASE ORDER BY FRIDAY, April 19. 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 10 am on Tuesday, April 23, in the Community Room of the West Stockbridge Town Offices. Our project will be making fancy book-marks. Preregister to reserve your space and materials by calling Heather at Richmond Town Hall, (413) 553-7793. The class is free to residents of Richmond and West Stockbridge. It's a fun time—hope to see you there!



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.

Please 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.

April Art Calendar

Guild of Berkshire Artists | BerkshireArtists.org | infoberkshireartists@gmail.com 2024

April 11 - 21, "Angels of New York, Scenes of Great Barrington: A Journey of Discovery" featuring Chelsea Bradway & Rachel Kaufmann. Art on Main Gallery, West Stockbridge, MA.
Reception: Saturday April 13, 5PM

April 23, Meet the Artist, 3pm. Timothy Sleeper, oils/watercolors/egg tempera/graphite. Link to watch to be shared on website.

April 25 - May 5 "Abstracting from Nature" featuring Katherine Borkowski-Byrne & Cindy Mathias. Art on Main Gallery, West Stockbridge, MA.
Reception: Saturday, April 27, 3-5 PM

April 26, Art Book Gathering, 10-11am. Share a favorite book, artist, or process.

April 28, Berkshire Photo Gathering. See web: berkshirephotogathering.com /online-meetings

February 2 - April 2024, "Woods and Water". Art show at the Colonial Theatre. Featuring 9 works from local artists. See Website for hours.

See www.berkshireartists.org for all the in-person and online events offered by the Guild of Berkshire Artists!



*Angels of New York,
Scenes of Great Barrington:
A Journey of Discovery*
feat. Chelsea Bradway & Rachel Kaufmann
April 11 - 21



Abstracting from Nature
feat. Katherine Borkowski-Byrne
& Cindy Mathias
April 25 - May 5



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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



West Stockbridge Library has been selected as one of 240 libraries to participate in Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities, an American Library Association (ALA) initiative that provides community engagement and accessibility resources to small and rural libraries to help them better serve people with disabilities.

The award comes with a \$10,000 grant that will help the library install automatic doors at both the library entrance and the main entrance to the Town Offices.

We are so proud to be chosen for this amazing opportunity. This grant will allow WSPL to get to know our neighbors with disabilities better. It will help us improve our services to ensure this population feels welcome and comfortable in our local library.

Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities is an initiative of the American Library Association (ALA) in collaboration with the Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL).

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

NEW ADULT FICTION

- Croft, *The extinction of Irena Rey*
- French, *The hunter*
- Gonzalez, *Anita de Monte laughs last*
- Henriquez, *The great divide*
- Martin, *Mrs. Gulliver*
- Murray, *Bee sting*
- Orange, *Wandering stars*
- Tintera, *Listen for the lie*
- Zhang, *Land of milk and honey*

- Philip, *Beaverland: how one weird rodent made America*
- Ralph, *Sito: an American teenager and the city that failed him*
- Swanson, *The Deerfield Massacre: a surprise attack, a forced march, and the fight for survival in early America*

NEW YOUNG ADULT AND CHILDREN'S

- Black, *The prisoner's throne*
- Citro, *Merhorses and bubbles*
- Citro, *Monsters and mold*
- Citro, *Dragons and marshmallows*
- DiCamillo, *Ferris*
- Elliott, *Bo's magical new friend: a branches book*
- Frazee, *In every life*
- Reynolds, *There was a party for Langston*

NEW ADULT NONFICTION

- Dearborn, *Carson McCullers: a life*
- Coll, *The Achilles trap: Saddam Hussein, the C.I.A., and the origins of America's invasion of Iraq*



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

1. Where did the program "Bridging the Gap," about autism spectrum disorders, move from Monument Mountain Regional High School in 2014?
2. What was taught at this program?
3. What were the 10 fastest shrinking towns in Berkshire County in 2014?
4. Why were they shrinking?

1. A home located at 18 Fairview Terrace in Great Barrington
2. Life skills
3. Clarksburg, North Adams, Williamstown, Hinsdale, Adams, Lanesboro, Richmond, Pittsfield, Great Barrington, and West Stockbridge
4. The declining birth rate, known as the "Silver Tsunami."



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:

In the first week of July 1924, West Stockbridge went all out with a three-day celebration of its founding in 1774. It began with firing a cannon and "other noisemakers," a parade with bands and floats, vocal performances from campers at Crane Lake Camp, an afternoon baseball game, and nighttime dancing on Main Street. The next day featured historical performances by more than a hundred of the town's elementary school children. The final day ended with speeches and a service at the West Center Church. It was a big celebration with many attendees and participation from towns and organizations in the county.

West Stockbridge was a very different place from 50 years before when the population had peaked and industrial activity was strong. By 1924, our resident population dropped almost by half from 1,900 to 1,050. The marble quarries were closed, and the lime industry with its quarries and kilns was shutting down. The two iron pits on State Line Road were still active as the largest employers in town, but competition from Michigan and other western mines closer to the mills in Pittsburgh forced them to close just a few years later.

The village center still had Troy's Garage, Baldwin's Extracts, and Baldwin's Hardware going strong. There were two grocery stores, a butcher, drugstore, furniture store, travel agency, funeral home, and coal dealer. The post office and barbershop were in a little building next to the Old Town Hall. The Shaker Mill was generating electricity for streetlights and some houses.

We were still a rural village with a shrinking industrial base. All roads were unpaved and treated with oil to keep the dust down. The seven rural schools still had outside privies and coal furnaces. (Williamsville got the first chemical toilet, a celebrated sanitary improvement.) The bridges were wood planks that had to be replaced every few years.

Prohibition was in place, in theory at least. There was a countywide chapter of the Anti-Saloon League, although it's not likely the members had much impact in West Stockbridge. Every year, we received a train car load of grapes from California, and somehow, a lot of local wine and grappa, along with hard cider, was available. Also, water from the quarries was rumored to be excellent for distilling whiskey, gin, and other so-called medicinal kinds of alcohol.

The 1920 census shows the town's ethnic mix starting to shift from Irish to Italian. All the town government positions, and many of the business owners, were second- and third-generation Irish. Italians had starting coming to West Stockbridge in the early 1900s. Not in positions of power, they were working in the quarries or on the farms. Many had large families with their children enrolled in the local schools.

The 1924 report by the school superintendent called out the lack of English skills holding back elementary students. He cited 81 of the 123 students as "foreign in their inheritance" and behind in three grades. The superintendent requested a special English teacher to help these students improve their English language skills (but it was never implemented). The National Immigration Act of 1924 limited immigration from southern European countries (i.e., Italy and Greece). National xenophobia was on the rise. It was even rumored there was a Ku Klux Klan rally in neighboring Canaan.

The 150-year celebration was a major event, a forerunner of the next phase in the town's evolution. Shortly after, the town's leaders started promoting West Stockbridge to outsiders as a place to visit and vacation, helping join us with the rest of the world.

Participants in the 150-year celebration parade in 1924. Photos courtesy of the West Stockbridge Historical Society



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*.
Enclosed is my donation of \$ _____
made payable to WSLY.

Name (as you want it to appear in acknowledgments)

Address (location you would like the *Local Yokel* and/or bumper sticker sent)

City State Zip

Email

Check any that apply:

- I would like my contribution to remain anonymous.
- Thanks, but don't mail the *Local Yokel* to me. Save the postage; I'll pick it up myself.
- Yes, please do send me a YKL Bumper Sticker for my donation of \$35 or more.



Please mail this form with your check to:

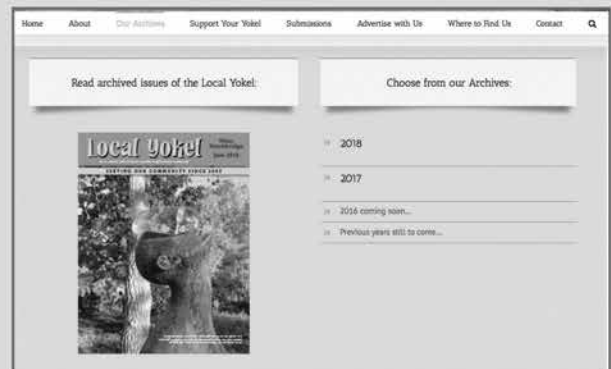
WSLY
P.O. Box 238
West Stockbridge, MA 01266



The *Local Yokel* meets the 21st Century!

Visit our website for past issues, plus information about how to support your West Stockbridge community newsletter, submit material for publication, advertise, contact us, and more!

thelocalyokel.org




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Town Government Boards and Commissions, Phone Directory, and Office Hours				
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>Kathy Korte</i>	232-0300	ext. 300	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>Marissa Mullen</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>Tom Beasley</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

33rd ANNUAL
**WEST STOCKBRIDGE
 TOWN CLEAN UP**
 SAT. APRIL 20

COME TO THE FIREHOUSE
 9-10AM FOR VESTS & BAGS
 BRING YOUR GLOVES! BRING YOUR FRIENDS!

Call Lily @ 413-429-6371 for more info

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 ON THE FOUNDRY GREEN

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 3-6 PM**



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**West Stockbridge
 Zucchini 20
 Festival 24**



SAVE 2' DATE! **Sat. August 10th**

**Upcoming WSZF News, Details,
 Vendor & Volunteer Info at**
www.wszucchinifest.org

Call for WSZF Volunteers!
 Come hang with old pals, new neighbors and every zucchini in betwini and get involved in this year's festival! WSZF is only made possible when all of the great folks in our community come together. This is what it's all about! Any time you can give is welcome!

To get involved, visit wszucchinifest.org
 or email wszucchinifest@gmail.com

And come on down to the next WSZF Planning Meeting!
 Wednesday, April 10th | 6pm | West Stockbridge Town Hall

**Sponsored by the West Stockbridge Cultural Council
 & organized by volunteers, neighbors and friends**



**LIFEGUARD
 NEEDED**

West Stockbridge Parks & Recreation is seeking a part-time summer lifeguard for Card Pond.

Willing to fully sponsor training for candidate who commits to working for us.

Competitive pay, and a season-end bonus to stay through the end of August.

Email Cait Graham at
weststockbridgeparks@gmail.com
 if interested

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

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S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

April Calendar of Events	Date	Event	Time	Location
	4/3	Rent Control Board: Continuation of Public Hearing	6 pm	Town Offices and on Zoom
	4/3	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room
	4/4	Parks & Recreation Commission forum on Memorial Day	5 pm	Town Offices and on Zoom
	4/4	Conservation Commission	7 pm	Town Offices
	4/8	Select Board meeting	6 pm	Town Offices and on Zoom
	4/9	Eid al-Fitr begins at sundown		
	4/10	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room
	4/10	Friends of the Library meeting	3:30 pm	Community Room
	4/13	Sound Bath therapy/meditation	6 pm	Congregational Church, 45 Main Street
	4/15	*** Deadline for the next Local Yokel ***		Send to info@thelocalyokel.org
	4/17	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room
	4/18-21	Baseball in the Berkshires exhibit, reception, & lecture		See details in this issue
	4/19	Library Trustees meeting	5 pm	Town Offices
	4/20	33rd Annual Town Cleanup (pick up vests & bags)	9-10 am	Firehouse
	4/21	Stockbridge Grange takeout dinner		See Community News for details
	4/22	Earth Day		
	4/22	Passover begins at sundown		
	4/22	Select Board meeting	6 pm	Town Offices and on Zoom
	4/23	Council on Aging Craft Group meeting	10 am	Community Room
	4/24	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room
	4/26	Arbor Day		
	4/27	Susan Hagen Koussevitzky Bass Concert	5 pm	Congregational Church, 45 Main Street
	4/28	Orthodox Palm Sunday		

Note: Town Offices (including Community Room and Library) are located at 21 State Line Road, West Stockbridge.