

# Local yokel

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

West  
Stockbridge

January  
2024



*Happy New Year!*

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 2005

*Blue barn in winter. Photo by Lear Levin*

# Around Town for the Holidays



*Around Town for the Holidays*

*Photo by John Parker*



*Photo by John Parker*



*Above photos by Joe Roy, Jr. except where noted*

*Photo by John Parker*

# West Stockbridge Holiday Market

By Lily Thorne Davenport

*We had a wonderful holiday market at the West Stockbridge Historical Society on Saturday, December 2. Fourteen local vendors offered beautiful handmade crafts—from marble votives, turned bowls and vessels, to handsewn woolen treasures. Pour Things Coffee served delicious coffee beverages and treats, and Sherry Steiner played music and set the holiday mood. About 600 people came through to shop at the market, plus they spent time downtown checking out the unique stores and our picturesque town. The day ended with a luminary walk through town. Once again, it proved that West Stockbridge has so much to offer, and we look forward to another market next year!*



Photo by Lily Thorne Davenport

Above photos by Bob Salerno except where noted

# Thank You!

. . . for your gifts to these local organizations  
through Santa's Wish List:

- ❖ Friends of the West Stockbridge Library
- ❖ The *Local Yokel*
- ❖ Pet Partners of the Tri-State Berkshires
- ❖ Town of West Stockbridge Parks & Recreation
- ❖ Town of West Stockbridge Plants & Gardens
- ❖ Town of West Stockbridge Zucchini Festival
- ❖ West Stockbridge Farmers Market
- ❖ West Stockbridge Fire and Rescue Services
- ❖ West Stockbridge Historical Society



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

## WINTER PARKING BAN

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

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

\*Thank you for your cooperation\*

West Stockbridge Police Department  
(413) 232-8500

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

Please check our website [www.ahavathsholom](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.

SEARCHING JEWS  
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NON-HEBREW-READING JEWS  
PASSIONATE JEWS  
HIGH-HOLY-DAY JEWS  
ARTISTIC JEWS  
AGNOSTIC JEWS  
HAVEN'T-BEEN-IN-SHUL-SINCE-MY-BAR-MITZVAH-JEWS

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# Select Board Meeting Minutes

[Editor's note: At the town administrator's request, the Select Board minutes here are reprinted verbatim with no editing of text. Official board minutes are available at the West Stockbridge Public Library and on the town website, <https://www.weststockbridge-ma.gov/>. Select Board meetings are on Zoom and may be viewed by clicking on the link in the meeting agenda posted on the town website calendar. Residents can receive email notification of town events and meeting agendas by subscribing at <http://weststockbridgema.virtualltownhall.net/subscriber>].

## Select Board Meeting Minutes November 13, 2023

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

**Others Present:** Police Chief Marc Portieri

Kathleen opened the meeting at 6 PM.

### Approval of Minutes:

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy Potter, to approve the minutes from October 30, 2023.

All were in favor, minutes approved.

### Citizen Speak:

None.

### Police Department Update- Chief Marc Portieri

Chief Portieri stated that the Sparkles event will be held on Sunday, December 3, 2023, beginning at 4:30 PM at Town Hall.

The Helping Hands program will also be purchasing gifts for four families this year.

The Department has been very busy recently by assisting with a Federal warrant, which has been complicated and time consuming.

He reported the Department statistics to date:

405 vehicle stops

31 arrests

32 criminal offenses reported

24 accidents

The Department has two officers on duty during the 4 PM- 12 PM shifts, which are very busy. The Officers will need to complete 80 hours of training in the coming year, most of which are online.

Andy Potter inquired about the website hosting the Dispatch Analysis, which is supplied by the Berkshire County Sheriff's Department. The Chief will look what into the policy is for such a posting.

...continued on page 7

# Timmons Landscaping & Tree

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- Stump Grinding
- Plowing & Sanding
- House Checking/Caretaking
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- Lawn & Field Mowing
- Fall & Spring Cleanups
- Building & Maintaining Gardens
- Firewood

# New Colonial Power Aggregation Program Available!



*Electrical service is available at a lower rate than National Grid for West Stockbridge residents.*

The Town of West Stockbridge has an aggregation agreement through Colonial Power.

Most residents were automatically opted into this cost-saving program. If you were not, you can “proactively” enroll rather than wait for the next sweep mailing. Anyone from West Stockbridge can proactively join at any time by completing the form on their website or by calling Colonial at (866) 485-5858 or Dynegy at (866) 220-5696. Information about the program including the opt-in form can be found at <https://colonialpowergroup.com/west-stockbridge/>.

When West Stockbridge negotiated a new rate for renewal in November 2023, all those currently enrolled in the program will automatically be “renewed” and no action will be required.

Here’s the current rate for the program through Colonial Power versus the current National Grid rate:

**Colonial Power Program Rate:**

Term: November 2023–November 2025

Rate: \$0.15051/kWh

Renewable Energy: MA Requirement + 5% MA Class I RECs (renewable energy certificates)

**National Grid Basic Service Rate:**

Term: November 1, 2023–July 31, 2024

Rate: \$0.18213/kWh

Renewable Energy: Meets MA Requirement

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

...continued from page 5

Overall, the Chief stated that everyone is getting along and working hard.

The Board thanked him for his report.

**Approval of Charter assignment of its telecommunications lease to Tower Co 2013 LLC**

Marie explained to the Board that Charter would like to sell its cell tower lease that it currently has with the Town on Albany Road. The lease would remain the same with only a name change of the new owner, Tower Co 2013 LLC. Town Counsel Mark Reich has reviewed and approved of the document for her signature and would like the Board to approve prior to signing.

Andy Potter made a motion, seconded by Kathleen, to approve the document to be signed by Town Administrator, Marie Ryan.

All were in favor, motion approved.

**Select Board Speak:**

Andy Potter attended a meeting by the Great Barrington Select Board in regard to the Housatonic Water Company issues. The meeting had to be canceled due to technical issues, but he will let the Board know when it is rescheduled so all can attend.

Andy mentioned that he, Marie, and Sarah Bourla each received a Thank You letter from School Committee Chair Steve Bannon for all our time commitment and hard work on the 8 Town Regional School District Planning Board.

Andy Krouss stated that Robert Ireland is now the Town's own Berkshire Regional Planning Commission representative for Broadband. He will be working with him on this issue and will keep the Board updated.

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy Potter, to adjourn to Executive Session and not to return to open session:

“Anticipated executive session in accordance with G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(2), to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel (Police Chief).”

And

“Anticipated executive session in accordance with G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(6), to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate, if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.”

Roll Call Vote:

Andy Krouss	Yes
Andy Potter	Yes
Kathleen	Yes

The Board adjourned open session and entered into Executive Session at 6:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Marie Y. Ryan*

Marie Y. Ryan

Town Administrator

**Select Board Meeting Minutes**

**December 4, 2023**

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

Kathleen opened the meeting at 6 PM.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy Potter, to approve the minutes from November 13, 2023.

All were in favor, minutes approved.

**Citizen Speak:**

Michael Bolognino spoke to the Board to update them on the progress of the Dog Park Advisory Committee. He stated that the Stanton Foundation Grant will only be available this year and the deadline is December 15 to submit an application. This grant could provide \$250,000 in funds to help create our Town dog park. The Town would need to commit to providing 10% (\$25,000) toward the project. Michael has been in contact with the Community Preservation Committee who are supporting the process to give that amount to the project if approved at Town Meeting.

Kathleen suggested that the Dog Park Advisory Committee get everything in order and come back to the Board for approval. The Board thanked him for all their hard work on this project.

Truc Nguyen asked the Board to consider how neighbors may be impacted by noise when approving the Annual Entertainment Licenses. Her concerns were in regard to a once a year fundraising event that takes place at TurnPark with amplification until 10:00 PM.

**Tax Classification Hearing-** Harald Schmeid, Assessing Consultant

Harald explained to the Board that this public hearing is for the Board to decide and vote on whether or not to continue with one tax rate in the Town. He suggested to the Board that voting to adapt one tax rate would benefit West Stockbridge the most. There are not enough commercial properties to tax in West Stockbridge to make a difference for the residents. He stated that he estimates that the tax rate will decrease this year from \$10.31 per thousand down to \$9.58 per thousand.

Andy Potter made a motion, seconded by Andy Krouss, that the West Stockbridge Select Board votes in accordance with M.G.L., Ch. 40, Sec. 56, as amended, the percentage of local tax levy which will be borne by each class of real and personal property, relative to setting the Fiscal Year 2024 tax rates and set the Residential Factor at 1.0, with a corresponding CIP shift of 1.0, pending approval of the town's annual tax recap by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue.

All were in favor, motion passed.

**Approval of Renewal of Annual Licenses:**

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy Potter, to approve the following Liquor Licenses:

Truc Orient Express	All Alcohol – Restaurant
Public Market	All Alcohol – Package Store

...continued on page 8

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Queensboro Wine & Spirits	All Alcohol – Package Store
AMICI	All Alcohol – Restaurant
Heirloom Lodge	All Alcohol – Hotel/ Innkeeper
The Foundry	All Alcohol – General on Premises

All were in favor, motion passes.

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy Krouss, to approve the following Entertainment Licenses:

TurnPark Art Space	Annual Entertainment
AMICI	Annual Entertainment
The Foundry	Annual Entertainment
The Foundry	Annual Sunday Entertainment

Andy Potter made a motion, seconded by Andy Krouss, to amend the Annual Entertainment License for TurnPark to change the time frame to 5 PM – 9 PM for amplified music and until 10 PM for all non-amplification.

All were in favor, motion passes.

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy Potter, to approve the following Auto Class II & III and Taxi Licenses:

Troy’s Garage	Auto Class II & III License
William Kie	Auto Class II & III
William Kie	Taxi

All were in favor, motion passes.

**Select Board Speak:**

Andy Krouss encouraged residents to continue to fill out the survey on the website in regard Broadband. The more information the State has the better the State will able to assist us for improved and faster services. If anyone has any questions or concerns, they can contact our Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Representative Robert Ireland at (413) 442-1521 x28.

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy Potter, to adjourn to Executive Session and not to return to open session:

“Anticipated executive session in accordance with G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(3), to conduct strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body, and the Chair so declares. (Housatonic Water Company)

Roll Call Vote:

Andy Krouss	Yes
Andy Potter	Yes
Kathleen	Yes

The Board adjourned open session and entered into Executive Session at 6:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Marie Y. Ryan*

Marie Y. Ryan  
Town Administrator

## Community News & Events

### Stockbridge Grange Dinner

On Sunday, January 14, the Stockbridge Grange will serve a takeout-only dinner at the Grange Hall, 51 Church Street, Stockbridge. The dinner will be baked beans and ham with chocolate and lemon pies for dessert. Cost is \$15. PLEASE ORDER BY FRIDAY, JANUARY 12. To place an order, call (413) 243-1298 or (413) 443-4352. Pickup time is 12 to 1:30 pm. Please call if the weather is iffy. If the dinner is canceled, it will be moved to Sunday, January 21.

### Council on Aging

The Richmond/West Stockbridge COA Craft Group meets at the West Stockbridge Town Offices on the second Tuesday of each month. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 9, at 10 am in the Town Offices Community Room for a paper folding class, this time making snowflakes. In the event of weather cancellation, the snow date will be the following Tuesday, same time. Pre-register 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!

### 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.

*Please 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).*



# Vision Committee Update

By Joe Roy, Jr.

The Vision Committee has had another active year! Here are some of the more prominent agenda items in the last six months:

- Sound control
- Family livability goals for the town
- Effects of the pandemic on public education
- Affordable housing and Planning Board's draft re "Accessory Dwelling Units"
- Zucchini Festival plans for August 2024
- Invitation for new members and coordinating with other board meetings
- Complete Streets progress
- Capital planning for certain town utilities and departments
- Another "public input" meeting
- Grants for new playgrounds
- 8 Town School merger
- Updated ideas for new town signage
- Massachusetts Broadband Institute discussion with BRPC member Robert Ireland
- Investigating possible grants to pay for an EV charging station, most likely in the town parking lot next to the Historical Society (thanks to community volunteer Peter Rothstein for helping this effort move forward)
- Whether West Stockbridge should consider hiring a professional grant writer

Current members: Chair Joe Roy Jr., Bill Barth, Karen Carmean, Champika Fernando, Steve Graham, Frank Landsberger, Thom Lipiczky, and Doane Perry. Nonmember regular attendees: Peter Rothstein and Andy Krouss

NOTE: We meet on Zoom the second Tuesday of the month and welcome everyone in town to attend! Visit <https://www.weststockbridge-ma.gov/vision-committee> for more information: Click on the most recent agenda to access the Zoom link.

## January History Quiz Question:

The 1820s was an unsettled time in the United States. The country was developing its political character and also expanding rapidly to the West with its growing farming and industrial base. Income disparity was widening and the middle and upper classes were on the rise.

At the same time, fringe political groups and new religious sects were springing up. The press was becoming more influential and spread the news, both real and fake. Discrimination and racial prejudice were increasing. Rumors and myths were common and stirred up the populace. How was a prominent West Stockbridge institution affected by these social trends?

(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

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## January Donor Roll Call

- Lucy & Robert Bellville
- Liza & Bill Bennett
- Jerri & Dan Buehler
- David & Maria Carls
- Doug & Kathy Davis
- Eugene Dellea
- Paula Farrell & Digger Lockenwitz
- Beth & Richard Fentin
- Lorin & Andrew Krouss
- Carol Kuller
- Thomas & Cecelia Meade
- Clark Nelson
- Cecily Patton & Gerald Elias
- Margie Skaggs & Bob Salerno
- Gordon Soule
- Mary K. Stodden
- Leonard Tabs
- Bob & Mary Thibeault
- Phyllis Weiss
- 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.)



*William Hudgins, Adam Esbensen, and Catherine Hudgins performing Mozart's Divertimento. Photo by Liza Bennett*

# **The West Stockbridge Chamber Players Harvest Concert: A Beautiful Cornucopia of Classical Music**

By Liza Bennett

An eager audience filled the Old Town Hall in West Stockbridge on Sunday, October 29, for a deeply felt benefit concert by the West Stockbridge Chamber Players. Among its offerings was the premiere of esteemed Berkshire-based composer Eric Shimelonis's *For the Love of Music: An Invocation Dedicated to Stuart Kuller*.

The performances featured an acclaimed group of musicians, including Chamber Players' artistic director Catherine Hudgins, clarinet; William Hudgins, clarinet; Sheila Fiekowsky, violin; Stephanie Fong, violin; and Adam Esbensen, cello. The program highlighted the rich and varied world of classical music, spanning centuries, starting with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Divertimento No. 5, K. 439b.

The next piece, *The Generation of Hope* by prominent Israeli clarinetist, educator, conductor, and composer Eva Wasserman-Margolis, was written in 1994 for the solo clarinet. The poignant and uplifting composition, beautifully performed by Catherine Hudgins, was made even more meaningful by the presence of the composer in the audience.

Catherine's performance was followed by Czech-born Gideon Klein's String Trio, written in 1944 when the composer was 26 years old and imprisoned in the Terezin concentration camp. Ten days after he composed the trio, Klein was sent to Auschwitz and, ultimately, his end. The stirring performance by Fiekowsky, Fong, and Esbensen underscored the tragedy of losing such a gifted and promising musician so young.

After the intermission, Catherine Hudgins introduced the premiere of Eric Shimelonis's *For the Love of Music*, written in memory of Stuart Kuller. Hudgins spoke movingly of Kuller's passion for classical music, support of the Chamber Players, and great generosity of spirit. She pointed out that the piece included quotes from Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, and Barber, who were among Kuller's favorite composers. Shimelonis was also in the audience, marking the first time two composers were present at one time to hear their compositions performed by the Chamber Players.

The concert concluded with Czechian Bohuslav Martinů's Serenade for Violin, Viola, Cello, and Two Clarinets, composed in 1951. The spirited performance brought the entire group to the stage and, at the end, the audience to its feet. A reception downstairs followed the concert where the musicians, many longtime members of the Chamber Players, mingled with the appreciative audience and enjoyed refreshments.



# 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



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

\*\*\*\*\*

## NEW ADULT FICTION

- Archer, *Traitors gate*
- Baldacci, *The edge*
- Berest, *The postcard*
- Cline, *The guest*
- Connelly, *Resurrection walk*
- Cunningham, *Day*
- Evanovich, *Dirty thirty*
- Harmel, *The Paris daughter*
- Hill, *Wellness*
- Keegan, *So late in the day: stories of women and men*
- Lacey, *The biography of X*
- Lawhon, *The frozen river*
- Steel, *Ball at Versailles*
- Vassell, *The other half*

## NEW ADULT NONFICTION

- Brooks, *How to know a person*
- Graff, *UFO: The inside story of the US government's search for alien life here—and out there*
- Renner, *Gator country: deception, danger, and alligators in the Everglades*
- Trimble, *The creative vegetable gardener*

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

- Croucher, *Gwen & Art are not in love* (for young adults)
- Kozikoglu, *The ferris wheel*



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

1. How long did the Zucchini Festival run excluding 2014?
2. What year was the last festival excluding 2024?
3. Why did the Zucchini Festival end?
4. Who threw a 94-pitch shutout that helped Monument Mountain win the Mass. Division III trophy in June 2014?

1. Ten years  
 2. 2014  
 3. It was too much for the original crew who already had jobs  
 and not enough volunteers  
 4. Peter Osgiant



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.



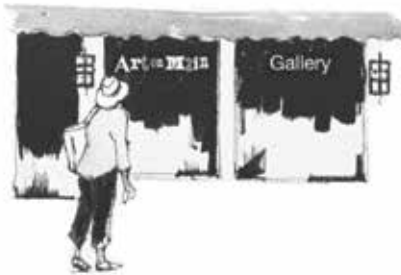
# Guild of Berkshire Artists' Tenth Anniversary

Looking Forward to 2024!

At 233 artists strong, the Guild of Berkshire Artists turns 10 years old in the New Year, and we are totally excited about 2024. Starting in 2014 as the Richmond & West Stockbridge Artists Guild, our members now come from all over the Berkshires and surrounding counties. We even have a handful of Berkshire originals now living in other climes yet still maintaining their membership.

Here's what we're focusing on for the coming year:

- Art on Main Gallery in downtown West Stockbridge, our own brick-and-mortar space, invites members to show their work, and slots are filling up fast. Every few weeks, new artists and new work will appear in our space at 38 Main Street. Since we went live in August 2022, a mere 18 months ago, some 40 individual Guild member artists have exhibited and personally managed their own shows in the gallery.
- In February, the Guild is partnering with the Berkshire Botanical Garden to mount a GBA member juried show, "Musings on Nature," at the Anna and Frank Henry Leonhardt Galleries at the Berkshire Botanical Gardens, open February 9–25, 2024.
- Ongoing GBA shows at the Colonial Theatre (changing quarterly), Berkshire Humane Society, and the Shaker Mill Inn in West Stockbridge.



- January to March: Series of in-person workshops in watercolor, cold wax, and more at Berkshire South; we also offer a winter online GBA Art Show on our own website to all members.
- April through October: New exhibits every few weeks at Art on Main Gallery; also Plein Air group meet-ups—making art outside and together—in downtown West Stockbridge and other Berkshires locales (come watch and chat with artists).
- July: The Guild is pleased to return to the Welles Gallery at Lenox Library with a new small group invitational show.
- GBA collaborates in September and October, continuing at Art on Main Gallery with Art Week Berkshires Open Studios.
- November and December: Annual holiday Small Works shows

Something is always going on at the Guild. We welcome new members, art appreciators, volunteers, and friends!

Visit our website and calendar for upcoming events at [www.berkshireartists.org](http://www.berkshireartists.org).

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## BALDWIN HARDWARE

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# Municipal Broadband Survey

Please visit the web page noted below to complete a survey on broadband in the area. The state will use this information to help us receive better and faster broadband in West Stockbridge. The more completed surveys, the better the state will be able to assist us.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact Robert Ireland, our Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Representative, at (413) 442-1521, ext. 28.

To complete the survey, go to: <https://broadband.masstech.org/internetforall>

Best wishes for a

**Happy  
New Year!**  
in  
2024

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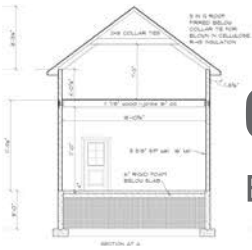
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# On the Home Front

By Thom Lipiczky

## Reduce, Reuse, Recycle in the New Year!

In mid-November, the *Berkshire Eagle* published their “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Guide” in collaboration with the Springfield Materials Recycling Facility Advisory Board. This remarkably informative 24-page supplement can probably answer any question you might have about recycling in Massachusetts and the general issue of waste and pollution.

Back in the so-called good old days, people used items until they wore out. If they could be repaired, all the better, but if not, they tended to toss them “out back.” This was a habit before municipal landfills and town dumps, I guess. I have noted in the past that I’ve found some interesting items half buried on the land we moved to along the shores of Majestic Mud Pond. Besides the usual cans and bottles and washing machines, there’s even a Nash Rambler from the 1950s, long since vine covered.

Maybe it’s part of the ethos of “dominion over nature” that is sadly misinterpreted to mean ignoring the impact we humans have on the environment. I’m hoping people today are relearning the age-old lesson of interconnectedness. For instance, microplastics—the residue from our reliance on plastic production—are everywhere, including in our bodies. They’re linked to endocrine disruptions, weight gain, insulin resistance, and cancer, according to formnutrition.com. And like lots of single-use manufactured goods, it’ll be around for centuries!

So, what do we do with items designed to be disposable? How can we reduce our waste? The *Eagle* supplement reminds us that “waste is a design flaw.” It’s unique to humans. Food waste is a good example. “An alarming 40% of food waste in the U.S. goes uneaten, and uneaten food wastes an extraordinary amount of resources—even if it is composted.”

And a huge amount of food we buy is packaged in plastic. The good news is that some of this can be recycled and actually make money for the town. Clear plastic clamshells, cups, jugs, and so on, can be recycled, but rinse them first. Milk cartons, juice boxes, aluminum and steel cans, and glass beverage containers and jars with the caps on are all good as well.

Paper can also be recycled, including your precious copies of the *Local Yokel* (but you probably keep these for sentimental purposes). And recently it has become OK to recycle pizza boxes (but no crusts or pepperoni, please; grease is fine). But shredded paper is for some reason unacceptable.

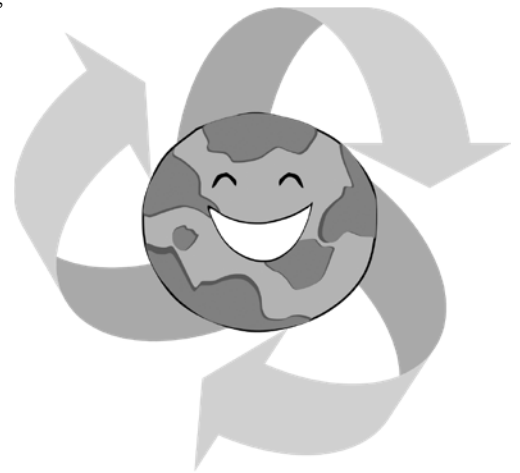
What you can’t recycle (so it goes, for now, to the landfill near Chicopee) are items like plastic bags, colored, black, or opaque plastic cups, automotive fluid bottles, Styrofoam packaging, or batteries. And—this came as a surprise—textiles, clothing, or shoes should not be thrown in the town garbage dumpster. Instead, clothing, towels, bedding, curtains, and other fabric items should be bagged separately and put in textile drop-off sites (there’s one in town in the parking lot behind St. Patrick’s Church). As much as 95% of this material can be recycled, but for now these need to be kept separate.

I know of someone who prides herself on producing only a tiny amount of “garbage” (i.e., nonrecyclable waste) and says she even holds up her underwear with string when the elastic wears out. I’m sure the string is recycled, too. Sounds a bit austere to me. Old underwear can make great rags for cleaning anyway.

I highly recommend you check out the updates on how to reduce waste and recycle what we can. Visit <https://recyclesmartma.org/> to learn the latest. And when in doubt, ask Wayne at our local transfer station.

Sending you the best, least wasteful wishes for a great new year!

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



# History Quiz Answer:

Freemasonry (aka the Masons) was one of the earliest civic/fraternal organizations in the United States, with the first lodge chartered in 1733. Our Wisdom Lodge was chartered in 1803. Many of the country's founders and delegates to the constitutional convention were Masons, including George Washington. As the country grew, membership in the Masons rose as well. A secret organization, it comprised many leaders in politics, industry, medicine, and education. The Masons were viewed as dominant and powerful both nationally and locally.

But in the late 1820s, a populist movement arose against the Masons. It started with a conspiracy rumor in New York State and rapidly spread throughout the country. The movement gained strength and formed a political party called the Anti-Masonic Party. It frowned on the Masons and actively campaigned against members of the

society. The secret nature of the Masonic society spawned numerous rumors and accusations by the Anti-Masonic Party, such as anti-Christian behavior, plots to overthrow the government, and foreign entanglements.



*The Kniffen Block. Photo courtesy of West Stockbridge Historical Society*

The number of members in the Anti-Mason party grew, and they became advocates of conspiracy theories, general anti-elitism, distrust in government, and rejection of science and education. Rarely linked to facts and bordering on paranoia, the Anti-Masons party made it dangerous to support or be a Mason. Membership in the Masonic Society dropped rapidly, and chapters were forced to close or go underground.

In 1826, our West Stockbridge Wisdom Lodge was forced to suspend its charter and return it to the Grand Lodge in Boston. Although the

brothers at that time were many of the prominent names in town (e.g., Pomeroy, Spencer, Woodruff, Cobb, and Willson), an association with the Masons was no longer a safe position. Lodge regalia including a Bible, furniture, and other materials were kept hidden by Daniel Spencer in his house at 7 Main Street. (Daniel later went to Nauvoo, Illinois, and became a leader in the establishment of the Mormon church.)

The Anti-Masonic Party died out in a few years, primarily due to infighting, paranoia, and an inability to have any coherent position except opposition to anything or anyone they felt didn't agree with them. By 1840, the remaining anti-Masons switched to the Whig party that had a conservative isolationist position consistent with the anti-Masons. The anti-Mason hysteria died out with the fighting over tariffs and slavery.

The Wisdom Lodge was restored in 1856. Members met in the hall above the current Queensboro Wine & Spirits store until 1943. (That space was part of the Kniffen block, owned by George Kniffen, a prominent citizen and Mason.) The Masons met there until they bought a building on Hotel Street and moved in on January 1, 1943.

Although we tend to believe our times are unique and we live in a small town shielded from world events, history shows us that some things are not that different, and we are not really insulated from the rest of the country.



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@annelessercommunications.com](mailto:anne@annelessercommunications.com); Designer: **Kim Bradway, [kim@bloominarts.com](mailto:kim@bloominarts.com)**.**

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## Do you enjoy writing or photography?

The Local Yokel needs regular and occasional contributors.

Please call John Parker at (413) 394-4368, email [info@thelocalyokel.org](mailto:info@thelocalyokel.org), or visit [www.thelocalyokel.org](http://www.thelocalyokel.org) for more information.



<b>Town Government Boards and Commissions, Phone Directory, and Office Hours</b>				
<b>Town Offices Main Number (413) 232-0300 • Fax 232-7195</b>				
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>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>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](http://weststockbridge-ma.gov) • Community and Business Website: [visitweststockbridge.com](http://visitweststockbridge.com)

# January Art Calendar

Guild of Berkshire Artists | [BerkshireArtists.org](http://BerkshireArtists.org) | [infoberkshireartists@gmail.com](mailto:infoberkshireartists@gmail.com)

2024

## *Happy New Year!*

**January 23, Meet the Artist, 3pm.** Shany Porras, painter. Link to watch to be shared on website.

**January 24, Member Potluck, 4:30pm.** Richmond. Sign up via link in upcoming January members' newsletter.

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

**January 28, Berkshire Photo Gathering.** See web: [berkshirephotogathering.com/online-meetings](http://berkshirephotogathering.com/online-meetings)

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

Keep an eye out for special  
Guild of Berkshire Artists  
**10th Anniversary events**  
and more upcoming shows at  
**Art on Main Gallery** this year!



**Art on Main**

38 Main Street, West Stockbridge



Meet the Artist:

*Shany Porras*

**January 23, 3pm**

Program hosted over Zoom

*Link to watch to be listed on website.*



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

[thelocalyokel.org](http://thelocalyokel.org)



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**January Calendar of Events**

1/1	New Year's Day		
1/2	Select Board meeting	6 pm	Town Offices, 21 State Line Road and Zoom
1/3	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room, Town Offices
1/3	Affordable Housing Trust meeting	5 pm	Town Offices, 21 State Line Road
1/7	Plant Exchange meeting	2-4 pm	Community Room, Town Offices
1/9	Vision Committee Meeting	8 am	On Zoom
1/9	Council on Aging Craft Group meeting	10 am	Community Room, Town Offices
1/10	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room, Town Offices
1/10	Friends of the Library meeting	3:30 pm	Community Room, Town Offices
1/11	Conservation Commission meeting	7 pm	Town Offices, 21 State Line Road
1/14	Stockbridge Grange takeout dinner		See Community News for details
1/15	Martin Luther King Jr. Day		
1/15	*** Deadline for the next <i>Local Yokel</i> ***		Send to <a href="mailto:info@thelocalyokel.org">info@thelocalyokel.org</a>
1/16	Select Board meeting	6 pm	Town Offices, 21 State Line Road and Zoom
1/17	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room, Town Offices
1/17	Select Board Hearing for Trailer Park Rent Control Board	6 pm	Town Offices, 21 State Line Road and Zoom
1/24	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room, Town Offices
1/25	Finance Committee	2 pm	Town Offices, 21 State Line Road
1/29	Select Board meeting	6 pm	Town Offices, 21 State Line Road and Zoom
1/31	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room, Town Offices