

Local yokel

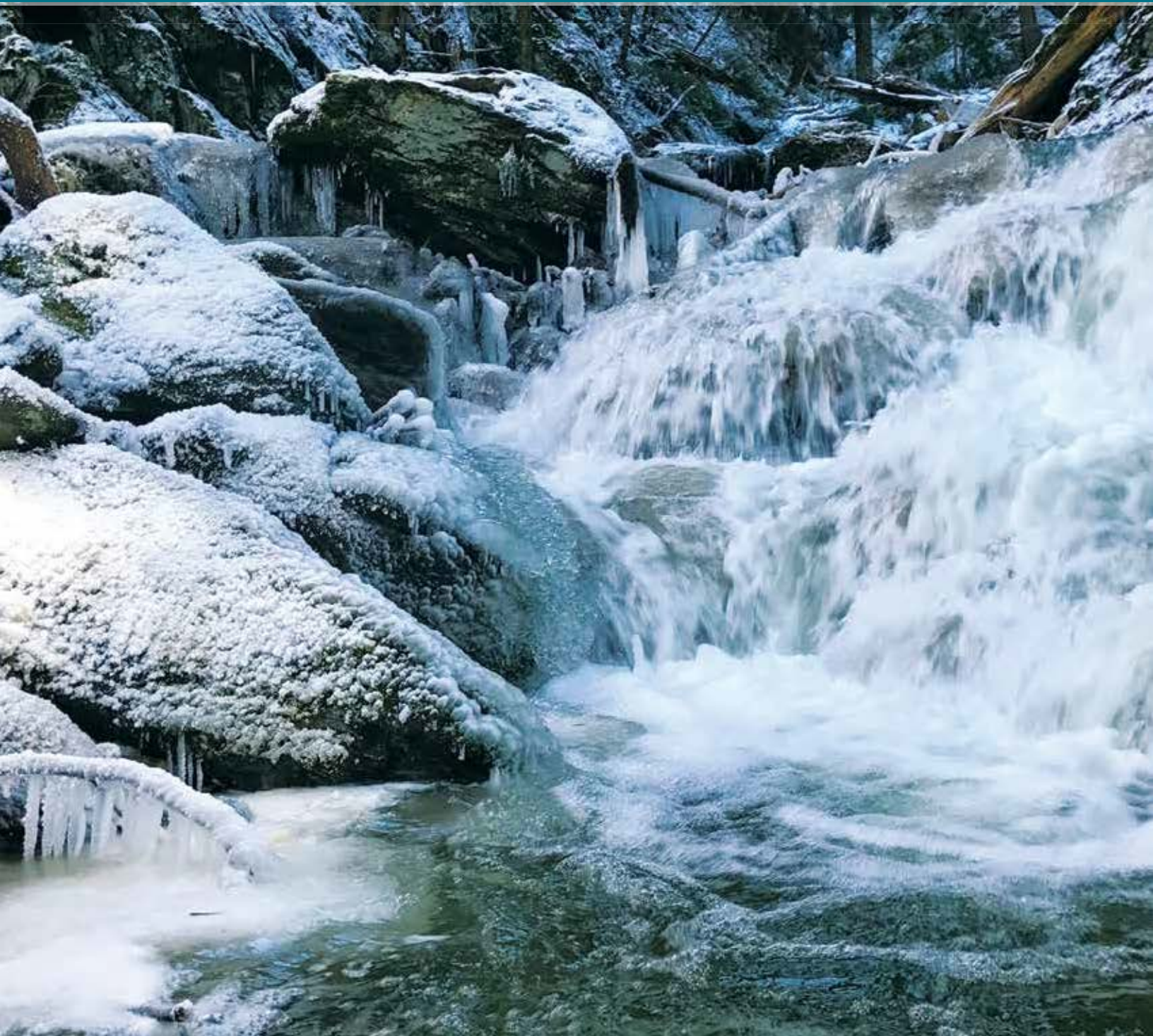
(n.) a country folk living in a quaint neighborhood community

West
Stockbridge

March

2024

S E R V I N G O U R C O M M U N I T Y S I N C E 2 0 0 5



Presidential Primary Election
Tuesday, March 5, Polls open 7 a.m.–8 p.m., Town Offices

Lenox Mountain Brook cascade at Stevens Glen. Photo by Emily Weiland

Fallon's Public Market Returns!

By Anne and Joe Roy, Jr.

Bernie Fallon is back and even better because his brilliant wife Isabel is right by his side! Since May 2019, together they have created an exceptionally remarkable presence at Loeb's Foodtown in Lenox (see BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: "Loeb's Foodtown in Lenox," *The Berkshire Edge*, 1/2/24).

But first a little history. Francis Fallon (Bernie's grandfather) bought what was a saloon and created Fallon's Public Market. Originally, Grandpa Fallon ran a "meat truck," and he later created and ran the Public Market from the 1930s to 1965. A few owners later, Bernie's stepfather Michael Skorput and his mother Anna purchased the market in 1978. It was during their ownership that Bernie learned the skills he needed to run a market.

Bernie acquired the Public Market in 2003 and successfully managed the business until 2010. When he sold the market, he moved to Phoenix, where he fell in love with Isabel. Soon after, they moved back to West Stockbridge, set up housekeeping in Bernie's grandfather's home in West Stockbridge, got married, and eventually bought Loeb's Foodtown in Lenox. At this time, Bernie and Isabel plan to run both businesses (in Lenox and West Stockbridge)—all this to the delight of the residents of both towns!

Bernie and Isabel understand the value of several business concepts: service to customers, positive "word of mouth" reviews, recognizing community history, welcoming neighbors and visitors into a warm and friendly atmosphere, and meeting customers with a smile (something Bernie inherited from his mom Anna).

Bernie brings his years of market management, his positive, warmhearted nature, and his own lessons from his book *Goodology*. Isabel, in turn, brings her fine-honed work ethic and years of experience in purchasing, scheduling, and employee management. Together, they will build a renewed market for West Stockbridge, a public market that offers quality products, consistent customer service, welcome compassion, and a sincere love of the town where they live and serve. They are West Stockbridge folks. They understand the locals because they are locals too!

By sharing their energies between Loeb's Foodtown and the Public Market, they will have increased purchasing power and can offer more fresh products at fair prices. Bernie can also build up the meat department and continue his expertise that he learned from his stepdad Michael Skorput. These are the sort of enhanced services that a quality market can offer and that a simple "convenience store" can't deliver. The deli should remain a positive attraction with some new offerings. We also understand that a fresh produce case is in the plan. What's important to Bernie and Isabel is that things get made fresh, made well, and get done quickly (especially at the sandwich counter). It's the best way to get customers back and encourage them to bring their friends.

Bernie has a lesson he likes to share: "In baseball, you are successful if you hit the ball where it is pitched." This reinforces the idea that customers should get what they want (not what someone thinks they want). The Public Market can handle customers from out of town on their way to Tanglewood or the Norman Rockwell Museum, for example, but the new owners will never forget the needs of the people who live (and work) in West Stockbridge.

At Loeb's Foodtown, they have managed to find excellent staff who share their values of welcoming, kind, thoughtful service that follow their example. Their goal will be similar in West Stockbridge. Progress and improvements take time, patience (and funds), which they understand very well. But it's all in the plan. Just ask the happy customers in Lenox! We anxiously anticipate welcoming this formidable force back to Main Street in West Stockbridge.

Bernie and Isabel work very long hours and often wonder how they do it. The answer is because they love what they do!

As Bernie often says, "It's all good!" He ought to know—he wrote the book!



Bernie and Isabel Fallon. Photo by Joe Roy, Jr.

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 Open Meeting Minutes January 22, 2024

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

Kathleen opened the meeting at 6 PM.

Citizen Speak:

None.

Senior Tax Abatement: Sheila Thunfors and Harold Schneid, Assessing Consultant

Sheila Thunfors requested that the Board add two warrant articles for the Annual Town Meeting. She and a group of concerned citizens have been researching exemptions for senior citizens to assist them with the increasing tax burden. They are asking that the Board place the following two articles on the warrant:

To see if the Town will vote to accept Chapter 41C ½, Section 5 of the Acts of Chapter 59 of the Massachusetts General Laws granting real estate property tax reductions to qualifying senior citizens, establishing the exemption amount of \$1000 and the requisite age eligibility to any person 65 and older.

And if the above article does not pass, then to vote on the following article;

To see if the Town will vote to increase the annual CPI for the requisite income eligibility level and exemption amount of \$1000 of Chapter 41C, Section 5 of the Acts of Chapter 59 of the Massachusetts General Laws granting real estate property tax reductions of qualifying senior citizens.

Sheila also mentioned that this would cost the Town approximately \$40,000 in lost revenue if their estimation is correct regarding the number of people who would qualify for this exemption.

Harold explained to the Board that the Board of Assessors have not yet been polled on this request but he feels confident they will agree and support this. He will discuss with them at their next meeting. The Board of Assessors have an overlay account that currently has a balance of approximately \$30,000. This money is used each year to cover lost revenue to the Town due to statutory exemptions and abatements. He believes that if this article is adopted, that the cost to the Town would not be as much as \$40,000 because not everyone will file for this exemption. The money in the overlay account could assist in covering some of the lost revenue from these new exemptions. The State does reimburse the Town an average of \$500 per applicant towards the \$1000 exemption. Harold will provide Marie the language for the two warrant articles.

The Board agreed this was a great idea and thanked Sheila and her group for doing the research on this and providing the information to the Board. The Board will need to get communication out to the residents informing them there are exemptions to assist with their tax burden. Andy Potter will create a Frequently Asked Questions fact sheet for the community.


Room Rental Revenue Warrant Articles: Andy Potter

Andy Potter presented the following information and requested that the three articles be placed on the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting:

Room Rental Revenue Warrants

[Change is often the result of evolving circumstances, and our town is not immune to the shifts in economic dynamics. It has been nearly three decades since our room tax was last adjusted in 1994.]

...continued on page 5



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Andy Potter Appointed to Policy Committee on Energy and the Environment

Andy Potter, a long-time resident of the West Stockbridge community, who currently serves on the Select Board, has been appointed to the Policy Committee on Energy and the Environment by the board of directors of the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA).

This appointment by the MMA further highlights Andy's interest in civic engagement and his commitment to addressing pressing environmental concerns. The committee plays a crucial role in shaping the MMA's approach to statewide policies, covering vital areas such as water quality, water supply, air quality, solid waste and recycling, hazardous waste, wetlands, coastal areas, wastewater treatment, renewable energy, and energy conservation.

In addition to his role on the Select Board, Andy serves as a member of the West Stockbridge Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board of Trustees and chairs the West Stockbridge Public Library Board of Trustees. He also contributes his expertise as a member of the town's Complete Streets Committee. In the past, he served 6 years as the town's representative on the Berkshire Hills Regional School District and more recently served on the 8 Town Regional School District Planning Board.

Andy's extensive involvement in various community roles showcases his deep commitment to the well-being and sustainable development of West Stockbridge. His multifaceted experience positions him as a valuable asset to the Massachusetts Municipal Association's Policy Committee on Energy and the Environment.

The MMA plays a pivotal role in shaping statewide policies. Andy's diverse background and community involvement help underscore West Stockbridge's commitment to contributing actively to state-level discussions on environmental sustainability. Congratulations, Andy!

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During this time, the state legislature has revised the ceiling to 6%, positioning our town at a 4% rate. This proposed warrant falls under G.L. c. 64G, §3A, urging the community to consider raising the local room tax from 4% to 6%.]

Proposed Warrant article:

To see if the Town will vote pursuant to G.L. c. 64G, §3A to increase local excise upon

the transfer of occupancy of a room in a bed and breakfast establishment, hotel, lodging house, short-term rental or motel located within the Town from 4% to 6%; or take any other action relating thereto.

STR Community Impact Fee

[Section 3D. (a) A city or town that accepts section 3A may, by a separate vote and in the same manner of acceptance as set forth in said section 3A, impose a community impact fee of not more than 3 per cent of the total amount of rent upon each transfer of occupancy of a professionally managed unit that is located within that city or town.

(b) A city or town that votes to impose a community impact fee under subsection (a) may, by a separate additional vote and in the same manner of acceptance as set forth in section 3A, also impose the community impact fee upon each transfer of occupancy of a short-term rental unit that is located within a two-family or three-family dwelling that includes the operator's primary residence.

(c) An operator shall pay the community impact fees imposed under this section to the commissioner at the same time and in the same manner as the excise due to the commonwealth under section 3. All sums received by the commissioner under this section as excise, penalties or forfeitures, interest, costs of suit and fines shall, not less than quarterly, be distributed, credited and paid by the state treasurer upon certification of the commissioner to the city or town. A city or town shall dedicate not less than 35 per cent of the community impact fees collected under this section to affordable housing or local infrastructure projects.]

Proposed Warrant article:

Section 3D (a)

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Section 3D(a) of Chapter 64G of the General Laws allowing the Town to impose a community impact fee of not more than three percent (3%) of the total amount of rent upon each transfer of occupancy of a professionally managed short-term rental unit, which shall be assessed upon the transfer of 1 of 2 or more short-term rental units that are located in the same city or town, operated by the same

operator and are not located within a single-family, two-family or three-family dwelling that includes the operator's primary residence, and which surcharge shall be in addition to other state and local excise taxes assessed upon the transfer of short-term rental units; or take any other action relating thereto. 50% of such fees collected will be dedicated to affordable housing or local infrastructure projects and 50% dedicated to senior tax relief.

Proposed Warrant article:

Section 3D (b)

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Section 3D(b) of Chapter 64G of the General Laws allowing the Town to impose the community impact fee upon each transfer of occupancy of a short-term rental unit that is located within a two-family or three-family dwelling that includes the operator's primary residence, and which impact fee shall be at that same rate as the rate charged for professionally managed short-term rental units and shall be in addition to other state and local excises taxes upon the transfer of short-term rental units; or take any other action relating thereto. 50% of such fees collected will be dedicated to affordable housing or local infrastructure projects and 50% dedicated to senior tax relief.

The Board agrees these articles were important and should be on the Annual Town Meeting warrant.

Select Board Speak:

The Board thanked Sheila and her group for all their research and hard work.

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy Potter, 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)(2), to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel (Police Chief)

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 6:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Y. Ryan
Marie Y. Ryan
Town Administrator



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.

Cultural Council Awards Grants for 2024

The West Stockbridge Cultural Council has announced grant awards for 2024. These WSCC applicants were awarded a grand total of \$7,800 for 2024:

- Berkshire Pulse Inc. for Young Choreographers to Present Their Work at the Foundry
- Flying Cloud Institute Inc. for S*M*Art Lab: Where Science Meets Art!
- Friends of the West Stockbridge Public Library Inc. for seven library passes to local cultural venues, subscriptions to newspapers at West Stockbridge Library
- Triplex Cinema Inc. for Spring Teen Film Festival
- Triplex Cinema Inc. for the film *Till*
- Lara Tupper for Pick Up the Pen: Start Your Writing Project
- West Stockbridge Farmers Market Company for Musical Entertainment
- West Stockbridge Historical Society Inc. for West Stockbridge Chamber Players Spring Concert
- West Stockbridge Historical Society Inc. for WSHS Jazz Series
- West Stockbridge Local Yokel Inc. for *The Local Yokel*
- West Stockbridge Public Library for Muddy Brook Elementary School Book Distribution
- West Stockbridge Zucchini Festival for Entertainment

The Cultural Council encourages all West Stockbridge residents to take advantage of these events and programs. Passes are available at the West Stockbridge Library along with limited free tickets for the West Stockbridge Historical Society's Spring Concert and Jazz Series (also available at the library).

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- Firewood

Italian restaurant set for former Rouge restaurant site in West Stockbridge

Acqua al 2 is slated to open this summer as a sister eatery to the Florence, Italy establishment.



This letter written by former Rouge restaurant owner Maggie Merelle remains attached to the building as a notice to longtime patrons of its closure. In its place, a new Italian eatery is set to open this summer. Photo by Leslee Bassman.

BY LESLEE BASSMAN
POSTED ON FEBRUARY 14, 2024

West Stockbridge — For those residents who relish food from the *Bel Paese*, or “beautiful country,” no air travel will be needed once *Acqua al 2* opens in the space formerly occupied by Rouge restaurant later this year. Owner Maggie Merelle closed Rouge, with its 20-plus-year restaurant and newer wine shop at 5 Center Street, in April 2022, listing the site for sale.

The new eatery is the creation of Elizabeth “Liza” Stace Pagliari and husband Valentino Pagliari, with the latter a partner in the Florence, Italy *Acqua al 2* restaurant that will serve as the flagship for the local franchise to be managed by Stace Pagliari. Another *Acqua al 2* franchise restaurant is in Annapolis and managed by Ari Genjdenson. The Maryland franchise offers antipasti, pasta dishes, and main plates such as a hand-carved New York strip steak as well as a pan-seared branzino filet.



Proprietors Elizabeth “Liza” Stace Pagliari and husband Valentino Pagliari are slated to open a new Italian restaurant this summer in West Stockbridge. Contributed by Liza Stace Pagliari.

Stace Pagliari said the menu for the West Stockbridge franchise will be similar to the Florence restaurant that features a variety of focaccia and salads as well as a grilled vegetable plate along with main dishes including sirloin steak with green peppers and brandy; long fusilli with a ragu sauce; curry chicken breast with apple; and a number of beef tartare dishes.

Named for its original address on Via dell’Acqua, 2, the West Stockbridge *Acqua al 2* franchise will offer an “authentic Italian menu,” including an Assagi option, a format that provides a taste of any or all of the menu courses—salads, cheeses, pastas, steaks, and desserts.

Stace Pagliari told *The Berkshire Edge* via email that she and Valentino Pagliari are relocating from Florence to the Berkshires.

Growing up in New York City, Stace Pagliari spent her weekends and vacations at her family’s home in Great Barrington. She earned multiple college and post-graduate degrees in printmaking and art education that led her to Florence for work as a practicing artist and printmaker as well as an instructor in those fields.

“My family and I have always loved the Rouge restaurant and the town of West Stockbridge,” Stace Pagliari said. “It’s a wonderful location, but beyond that, the style of the space is cozy and fits the vibe of *Acqua al 2* here in Florence well. Here, a big part of *Acqua al 2* includes the theatre performers and patrons. As West Stockbridge is located so near to many performing venues, it seemed a perfect place to continue that tradition.”

The couple aren’t planning to make any major changes to the site other than conducting some structural work, painting, decorating, and adding new furnishings aimed at creating “a cozy Italian environment,” she said.

Born in London to Italian restaurateurs, Valentino Pagliari moved to Florence in the early 1990s to study architecture. However, he was lured away from that career by the vibrant Florentine nightlife scene, opening his own establishment after gaining experience in the industry. Late-night cocktail bar *The Blob Club* became Pagliari’s passion for 22 years and catered to international students. A frequent patron of a restaurant in the neighborhood, *Acqua al 2*, that possessed great food and ambiance, Pagliari joined that eatery’s management, first as a consultant on a new restaurant concept in Florence and later as manager to the breakfast and brunch site, “*The Diner*.” Two years later, he bought into the business and remains a partner in the group.

Stace Pagliari acknowledges the importance of the Berkshires’ artistic populace and “looks forward to being involved in this community, creating opportunities for those who practice art and those who appreciate it at the restaurant.”

Acqua al 2 will be open year-round for lunch and dinner, from Wednesday through Sunday.

Represented by attorney Bill Martin, *Acquevo LLC*, parent company of *Acqua al 2*, received its liquor license from the West Stockbridge Select Board on January 29 but was not approved for outdoor seating. Martin told the Select Board that the purchase of the former Rouge property closed in late January.



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

NEW ADULT FICTION

- Broder, *Death Valley* [audio CDs]
- Carpenter, *Ilium*
- Clark, *A master of djinn*
- Grissom, *Crow Mary*
- Kahler, *Where you end*
- Lief, *Invisible woman*
- Matar, *My friends*
- McCauley, *You only call when you're in trouble*
- Michaelides, *Fury*
- Miller, *The curse of Pietro Houdini*
- Naylor, *The mountain in the sea*
- Patterson, *Alex Cross must die*
- Prose, *The mystery guest*
- Robb, *Random in death*
- Watts, *Blindsight*

NEW ADULT NONFICTION

- Alnes, *The fruit cure: the story of extreme wellness turned sour*

NEW YOUNG ADULT AND CHILDREN'S

- Gregory, *Pokémon: beginner's guide*
- Kostecki-Shaw, *Like you, like me*
- Neves, *How to train your Pokémon*
- BradyGames, *Pokémon visual companion*
- Yarros, *Iron flame*

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

1. Over half of the 2014 new construction built in Berkshire County were for whom?
2. What was Monument Mountain student Satchel Fisher noted for?
3. Which West Stockbridge resident owned a 1972 Mercedes-Benz 300 SEL displayed at the Lenox Classic in 2014?
4. Who were the four zoning board members who voted to deny Hudriv Investments a special permit for the drug treatment center on Route 41?

1. Second-home owners
 2. Being a great tennis player
 3. Earl Moffat
 4. Chairman Randy Thunfors, James Pinkston, Lori Robbins, and Jack Houghton



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.

Historical Society Launches Nature Talk Series with Sold-Out Crowd for Leila Philip's Beaverland

By Liza Bennett

The second floor of the Old Town Hall was packed on a recent February Friday night to hear award-winning writer Leila Philip talk about the wonderfully weird world of beavers.

Bob Salerno, West Stockbridge Historical Society president, welcomed the audience and offered a brief history of the Old Town Hall restoration to date. He remarked that the evening event was the first time a wintertime presentation was possible now that heat has been installed. Scott Edward Anderson, who is curating the new series, introduced the author. With a delightful mix of information and humor, personal experience, and natural science, Philip provided a fascinating overview of this charming and remarkably resourceful “fat furry rodent with four orange teeth.”

Accompanied by a slide show, Philip detailed how the beaver not only helped shaped American history but holds tremendous promise in salvaging our ecological future. The audience's deep engagement was clear in the many questions that Philip fielded after her presentation, which was followed by a reception and book signing, courtesy of Shaker Mill Books, on the first floor. The event was co-sponsored by the Friends of the West Stockbridge Library.



Photos by John Parker



Presidential Primary Tuesday, March 5

**Polls open at the
Town Offices Gymnasium
7 a.m. to 8 p.m.**

Be Sure to Vote!



**Month of March Food Drive
March 3, 2024 – March 29, 2024**

Coming to vote? Please consider bringing items for the Town Food Pantry to drop off at Town Hall when you come to vote.

We could especially use the following items but will accept any items you are willing to donate:

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Soup, coffee, tea

Thank you so much for your donations!

March History Quiz Question:

In 1874, West Stockbridge was 100 years old, having been chartered just before the American Revolution. The Civil War ended just nine years before our 100th birthday. The scars of that conflict and the nation's transition from a farming society to the Industrial and Gilded Ages all impacted every town in America, including West Stockbridge.

What was the nature of our town in 1874 at 100? Was it booming, was it still a small farm town, who lived here? Did West Stockbridge even celebrate its anniversary?

(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



Art on Main Gallery



Plein Air painting

Guild of Berkshire Artists Celebrates Its 10th Anniversary

By Margie Skaggs

In 2024 the Guild of Berkshire Artists (GBA) is celebrating its 10th anniversary. Founded in 2014 as the Richmond & Stockbridge Artists Guild, the GBA is now nearly 250 artists strong with members who live all over the Berkshires and in surrounding counties. We are developing a rich and robust series of shows and programs throughout 2024 to mark our anniversary.

In August 2022 the guild started its own brick-and-mortar gallery, Art on Main Gallery, in downtown West Stockbridge. Our popular rotating shows of work by member artists will continue throughout 2024. Artists will collaborate in small groups to organize and present their work in the gallery.

The guild has also organized other events throughout the Berkshires to commemorate our 10th year:

- Art on Main Gallery resumes exhibitions from early April throughout 2024, a new show about every two weeks by one to three artists
- Quarterly revolving shows at the Colonial Theatre, Berkshire Humane Society, and the Shaker Mill Inn in West Stockbridge
- Our plein air painting outdoors series at various Berkshire locales begins in May
- The Welles Gallery at the Lenox Library hosts an invitational show in July
- Berkshire Artists Open Studios is planned for September/October
- Small Works Shows in November and December at Art on Main Gallery

The guild has also organized in-person and online opportunities:

- Workshops in watercolor, cold wax, and more at Berkshire South Community Center
- Plein Air group meet-ups: making art outside and together in downtown West Stockbridge and other Berkshire locales
- Online art shows during the winter months
- Various online events: demos, critiques, how-to's and more

GBA is a nonprofit organization that supports and promotes its members through education, exhibits, community events, and Art on Main Gallery. Everyone benefits from the process of making art and presenting their work in a warm and welcoming environment. Please join us in celebrating our 10th anniversary! For more information, contact mlskaggs51@gmail.com. And visit our website at www.berkshireartists.org.

Photos courtesy of Art on Main



Plein air with young audience



Guild member Lori Bradley working on a painting



Abstract collage workshop

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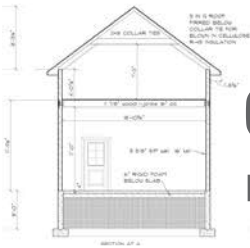
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On the Home Front

By Thom Lipiczky

Plastics!

Remember that scene in the *The Graduate* when a friend of Dustin Hoffman's father gives the character Benjamin some career advice? "I have one word for you: *plastics*." That film was from 1967, and director Mike Nichols's view of the future was well aimed. Plastics seemed like the wave of the future, a magic substance that could be used for *everything*.

Almost 60 years later, this vision has proven true. Plastics have become so ubiquitous that at a 2020 American Chemical Society meeting, Dr. Charles Rolsky said,

You can find plastics contaminating the environment at virtually every location on the globe, and in a few short decades, we've gone from seeing plastic as a wonderful benefit to considering it a threat. There's evidence that plastic is making its way into our bodies, but very few studies have looked for it there. And at this point, we don't know whether this plastic is just a nuisance or whether it represents a human health hazard.

That same year, Wikipedia reports, "The global mass of produced plastic exceeds the biomass of all land and marine animals combined."

Plastics are chains of organic molecules, carbon, and other elements, and virtually everything in our daily life uses at least some plastic components: clothing, cars, computers, food storage, cosmetics, and more. As plastics break down, they can take on properties they didn't have when they were formed. They are slow to degrade, so they virtually don't go away. The particles just get smaller—hence microplastic pollution, and it's everywhere.

UN.org reports in late 2022 that "There is an estimated 75 to 199 million tons of plastic waste currently in our oceans, with a further 33 billion pounds of plastic entering the marine environment every single year. This constant flow of plastic production is simply too much for existing waste management and recycling infrastructure."

Seabirds, whales, turtles, and fish mistake plastic waste that has worked its way into our waterways and then into the oceans. As these creatures' stomachs fill with plastic, many die of starvation. Dead or alive, they become food for other creatures. Thus plastic enters the food chain.

And it's not just in the water. Cordis.Europa.eu reports that we inhale enough bits of microplastics every hour to produce a credit card each week. Of course, much of what we inhale and ingest goes into our sewers as human waste, and then it gets circulated into the environment. Increasing evidence indicates that plastic pollution contributes to disruption of our endocrine (hormonal) systems and is related to infertility, obesity, some cancers, and diabetes.

Researchers from the Ocean Conservancy and the University of Toronto analyzed more than a dozen different types of proteins, such as seafood, pork, chicken, beef, and tofu. They found microplastics in nearly 90% of the samples they tested and estimated that the average American adult may consume at least 11,000 pieces of microplastics each year. Per serving, breaded shrimp had the most microplastics, followed by plant-based nuggets and chicken nuggets. Chicken breasts, pork loin chops, and tofu had the least. Because highly processed products like breaded shrimp and chicken nuggets contain significantly more microplastic particles per gram, researchers suggested that food processing could be a source of contamination.

In my December article, both of my readers will remember that I discussed recycling in general. Of course, we should *try* to recycle our plastic waste at the town transfer station, at least the types of plastic that are accepted. But in 2022, NPR reported that although more than half of recycling facilities accept plastic, only about 5% is actually repurposed. The rest goes into landfills or burned (dispersing unhealthy chemicals), and it eventually degrades into micro- and even *nanoplastic* particles, working their way into the environment and our bodies. And you thought all you had to worry about was AI, pandemics, and Elon Musk taking over the world.



Some groups are working to educate the public about plastic pollution. One, based in nearby Bennington, Vermont, is Beyond Plastics, headed by Judith Enck, a former regional EPA administrator. (Dr. Enck can often be heard as a commentator on WAMC's Roundtable.) More on this topic in the future, if you can stand it. In the meantime, take a moment to become aware of how much plastic is around you. And try to find glass bottles or aluminum cans for your food and beverages. Perhaps consider reusing glass bottles for cleaning products, for example, or trying out laundry detergent sheets in lieu of the big plastic bottles of detergent.

Address questions, comments, and rants to info@thelocalyoekel.org.

Community News & Events

Stockbridge Grange Dinner

On Sunday, March 10, the Stockbridge Grange will serve a takeout-only dinner at the Grange Hall, 51 Church Street, Stockbridge. The dinner entrée will be corned beef and cabbage, with lemon and chocolate pies for dessert. Cost is \$15. PLEASE ORDER BY FRIDAY, March 8. 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.

Council on Aging

The Richmond/West Stockbridge COA Craft Group meets in the Community Room at the Town Offices at 10 am on the second Tuesday of each month. The next meeting will be on March 12 (snow date: Tuesday, March 19) and will feature making St. Patrick's Day mugs. 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!



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. The next meeting will be on March 3 from 2 to 4 pm in the Community Room at the Town Offices. For further information, please contact Lisa 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, or visit thelocalyokel.org.*

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

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

*Sound like you? We invite you to call our Rabbi,
Barbara Cohen, at 413-528-4197. Or visit us to learn more.*



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Monday to Saturday 10am to 9pm
Sunday Noon to 6pm

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

West
Stockbridge

EASTER

EGG HUNT

Sunday, March 24th

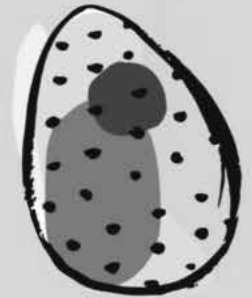
TOWN HALL PLAYGROUND

AGE 5 AND UNDER: 1PM

AGE 6 - 12: 1:30PM

This is a free community event

sponsored by West Stockbridge Parks & Recreation



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History Quiz Answer:

Certainly 150 years seems like a long time ago, but some things haven't changed, and of course others have. In many ways, West Stockbridge was very much like today, a small community, partially separated from the glitz of the Gilded Age but transitioning into an industrial center. The town was booming, with its peak population of 1,924 residents and 416 dwellings. Many of the Civil War veterans did not return, moving out west; however, postwar immigration replaced them and swelled the population. The village hub had shifted from West Center to Main Street. Williamsville and State Line were large active hamlets with their own schools and post offices.

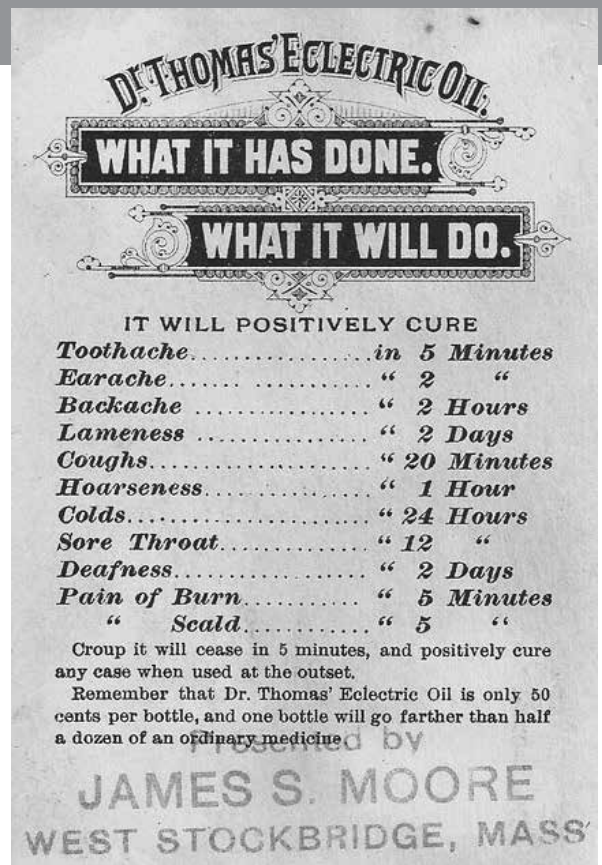
Our ethnic mix still consisted of early New Englanders with an influx of many second-generation Irish and German immigrants. Also, there were 20 African Americans, based around two families that had been in town for many years, plus four other so-called hired hands. The Irish families were primarily working in the two iron-ore beds (on State Line Road near West Center Road). Interestingly, their supervisors were English. Two of the supervisors were in their early 20s, responsible for managing a much older workforce. (The age and English/Irish dynamic must have been noteworthy.) The German men were either farmers or dubbed engineers, running the equipment at the quarries and ore beds.

Population growth was driven by the available work in the fields and the ore beds. Many newcomers were engaged in farming (likely dairy, sheep, and cattle). Households were multi-generational with young hired Irish farmhands. Ore beds and lime kilns were also big employers. Although a few people worked for the railroad or in local trades, the town was primarily a mining and farming community.

The map and directory of Main Street showed a vibrant center. It listed two churches, a private academy, a bank, boot and shoemaker, tailor and dressmaker, carriage shop, two doctors, one lawyer, four general merchandise stores, and two hotels. We also had two saloons, one identified as selling "oysters and refreshments" (with no indication where the oysters came from). The town center also featured an iron furnace and two lime kilns, operating 24/7. James S. Moore (see the trade card above) ran the apothecary/drug store (where Vivian Outlaw Gallery is now). He also owned much real estate along Stockbridge Road, served as selectman and treasurer, and he was one of the richest men in town.

The town budget was not much different from today. Education was the largest expense, followed by highway maintenance. (Individuals were paid to maintain the roads in front of their property instead of a formal highway department.) Another major expense was for "care and support of paupers." Poor families were given housing and feeding in someone's home, who were then reimbursed from the town. In addition to local taxes, the town also earned income from its own hearse, listed as making 50 trips a year, also selling used planks from the Shaker Mill and Pomeroy bridges, renting space in the Town Hall, and wood cut from off Lenox Road.

There is no record of a 100-year anniversary celebration. The newspapers (*Berkshire Evening Eagle* and *Pittsfield Sun*) only carried stories of local arrests (there were many for drunkenness and assault) and deaths. One wonders if the aftermath of the impact of the Civil War put a damper on local celebrations or maybe the population was too busy building the economy and industry to bother with an anniversary party?



Moore Trade card. Image courtesy of 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 \$ _____
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Name (as you want it to appear in acknowledgments)

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City State Zip

Email

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- 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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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 • Community and Business Website: visitweststockbridge.com

❄️ WINTER PARKING BAN ❄️

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

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

❄️ Thank you for your cooperation ❄️

West Stockbridge Police Department
(413) 232-8500

West Stockbridge Historical Society's
Berkshire Nature Talk Series

BEN NICKLEY on the Fascinating Science of Bird Banding

Friday, March 15th
at 7 p.m.

at the Old Town Hall
9 Main Street
West Stockbridge



Photo: Scott Edward Anderson

Ben Nickley, founder and director of the Berkshire Bird Observatory, will be the guest speaker at the second of West Stockbridge Historical Society's Berkshire Nature Talk Series.



Illustration of bird banding. Photo: Scott Edward Anderson

Nickley's talk and slide presentation, "The Birds in Our Hands: Berkshire Bird Observatory's First Two Years of Conservation Science," will be followed by a reception downstairs in the Old-Town Hall.

West Stockbridge Historical Society
Please register for this free event at: weststockbridgehistory.org

FREE & FUN
event at the
West Stockbridge Library

AGES 9-13

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West Stockbridge Library
21 State Line Rd, West Stockbridge, MA 01266

March Art Calendar

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



38 Main Street, West Stockbridge

March 9, Artist Talk w/Amy Pressman, 2-4pm. Featuring encaustic work. Art on Main Gallery, West Stockbridge, MA.

March 16, Artist Talk w/Larry Frankel, 1-3pm. Using Photoshop topic. Art on Main Gallery, West Stockbridge, MA.

March 17, Berkshire Photo Gathering. See web: berkshirephotogathering.com/online-meetings

March 26, Meet the Artist, 3pm. TBD. Link to watch to be shared on website.

March 29, Art Book Gathering, 10-11am. Share a favorite book, artist, or process.

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!



Woods and Water

Art Show at the
Colonial Theatre
- Pittsfield, MA -

February - April 2024

9 Works
from Local Artists



West Stockbridge
Local Yokel
 P.O. Box 238
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thelocalyokel.org



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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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
31						

March Calendar of Events			
3/3	Plant Exchange meeting	2-4 pm	Community Room
3/5	Presidential Primary Election	7 am-8 pm	Town Offices
3/6	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room
3/7	Conservation Commission meeting	7 pm	Town Offices
3/10	Daylight Savings Time begins: Set clocks ahead 1 hour		
3/10	Ramadan begins at sundown		
3/10	Stockbridge Grange takeout dinner		See Community News for details
3/11	Select Board meeting	6 pm	Town Offices and on Zoom
3/12	Council on Aging Craft Group meeting	10 am	Community Room
3/13	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room
3/13	Friends of the Library meeting	3:30 pm	Community Room
3/15	*** Deadline for the next <i>Local Yokel</i> ***		Send to info@thelocalyokel.org
3/15	WS Historical Society Bird Banding talk	7 pm	Old Town Hall, 9 Main Street
3/16	Graphic Novel Workshop	10 am-noon	West Stockbridge Public Library
3/17	St. Patrick's Day		
3/19	First Day of Spring		
3/20	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room
3/21	Annual Town Caucus	6 pm	Town Offices
3/22	Library Trustees meeting	5 pm	Town Offices
3/23	Purim begins at sundown		
3/23	Graphic Novel Workshop	10 am-noon	West Stockbridge Public Library
3/24	Palm Sunday		
3/24	Easter Egg Hunt	Two times: 1 and 1:30 pm*	Town Playground, 21 State Line Road
3/25	Select Board meeting	6 pm	Town Offices and on Zoom
3/27	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room
3/29	Good Friday		
3/31	Easter		
* 1 pm: Ages 5 and under; 1:30 pm: Ages 6-12.			
Note: Town Offices (including Community Room and Library) are located at 21 State Line Road, West Stockbridge.			