

Local yokel

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West
Stockbridge
January
2025

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Frozen landscape off Swamp Road. Photo by Tom Bland

West Stockbridge Holiday Market

By Lily Thorne Davenport

On Saturday, December 7, the second annual West Stockbridge Holiday Market was hosted at the Old Town Hall, home of the West Stockbridge Historical Society. A total of 18 vendors sold lovely handcrafted items, from beautiful Shaker boxes to handsewn ornaments and gifts.

Many people found the perfect holiday presents, and the vendors enjoyed a busy day with visits from locals and out-of-town visitors alike. Baldwin Farm Food Truck was parked nearby, serving delicious sandwiches and hot beverages. Vaber Hall was decorated with a 12-foot Christmas tree, and Sherry Steiner's musickmaking helped spread holiday cheer.

Our thanks to Bob Salerno and the Historical Society team who helped organize and were present at the event all day, helping make it a success. We all look forward to the next holiday market in 2025!

Photos by John Parker



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.virtualtownhall.net/subscriber>].

Select Board Meeting Minutes November 18, 2024

The quorum was present: Select Board members Andrew Krouss, Kathleen Kersey, and Chair Andrew Potter.

Others Present:

Andy Potter opened the meeting at 6:00 PM.

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy Krouss, to approve the November 4th, 2024 minutes.

All were in favor, and the minutes were approved.

Citizen Speak:

Lynn Ryan, a Lenox Road resident, spoke about two concerns. The first issue of concern was the drivers speeding on Lenox Road. She stated that this is happening even more so now that the road has been paved. She would like a flashing speed sign placed closer to the end of the road. Her second concern is that boots are hanging on the wires at the intersection of Lenox Road and Swamp

Road, and she would like them taken down. These boots mark where drug dealers and gang members are located. This is disturbing to her, and she would have them taken down. Donald Taggart from National Grid was online at this meeting and stated he would look into this and see if he could have them removed.

George Father, a property manager at 87 Gt. Barrington Road requested that National Grid look at pole #45. This pole is in poor condition, and he asked Donald from National Grid if they could replace it. Donald stated they would look into it.

Town Administrator Update:

Marie noted that the Winter Sparkles event presented by the Parks and Recreation Commissioners is set. It will take place on December 8th from 4-6 PM at Town Hall, and she encouraged everyone to attend this wonderful community event.

Marie informed the Board that the Town of West Stockbridge has Chris Tonini as our Berkshire Regional Planning Commission representative. However, they are requesting an alternate be designated.

...continued on page 5

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- ❖ 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!

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...continued from page 3

Marie asked the Board to consider who on the Select Board may want to be designated the alternate. She will ask again at the next meeting and notify Berkshire Regional Planning.

Pole Location Request by National Grid:

Donald Taggart from National Grid requested the Select Board approve a new pole location at 86 Gt. Barrington Road. He said the homeowner wants to create an underground service connecting to this new pole.

Andy Krouss made a motion, seconded by Kathleen, to approve the pole location request from National Grid.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

Police Union Contract Renewal:

Andy Krouss explained to the Board that he and Marie have worked on this Police Union Contract with Officer Dan Hamill. The Union requests a salary increase comparable to other Towns, a shift differential, an increase in uniform stipends, and five (5) extra sick days. He felt the requests were fair and competitive, and he encouraged the Board to approve the changes to the new contract.

Kathleen moved, seconded by Andy Krouss, to approve the changes to the renewed Police Union Contract.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

Special Town Meeting Warrant:

Marie presented the warrant for a Special Town Meeting on December 11th at 6 PM. She noted that the first three articles involved adjustments to Tax exemptions for Senior residents and Veterans. The fourth article would change the Town Clerk's position from elected to appointed. Article five allows the Town the first right of refusal for a right of way on the Gaston property should they decide to sell the property, which leads to the Town's aqua fir. The final article would allow the Town to use money previously approved at the Annual Town Meeting for a culvert to be repurposed to pay for a design phase for improvements at the Main Street, Lenox Road, and Swamp Road intersection. The Town received a Complete Streets grant for the work to be completed. However, the Town needs to pay for the design work first.

Kathleen requested that Marie create a list of the pros and cons of changing the Town Clerk position so that the residents would understand why we are trying to change it to an appointed position. Marie agreed.

Andy Krouss motioned to approve the Special Town Meeting warrant, seconded by Kathleen.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

Select Board Speak:

Andy Krouss thanked the Albert family for bringing the community together by donating the Rockefeller Christmas Tree. The cutting ceremony was a wonderful event, and everyone loved being a part of it. He also thanked all the neighboring Towns' Police Departments that came to assist with traffic.

Andy Potter noted that the Board would need to have a Zoom-only meeting with the assessor's office in the next few weeks to approve the single tax rate.

Andy attended his first School Committee meeting as a new member, elected by write-in as a representative of West Stockbridge. He stated he was happy to be back on the Committee and looked forward to working on a possible new high school.

He also mentioned attending the Shakespeare and Company Fall Festival play Romeo and Juliet in the Wild West, put on by the Monument Mountain Students. The students were all very talented and did a great job.

Andy Potter requested that the Board adjourn the Open Session and go into an Executive Session due to an anticipated Executive Session per 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 in regard to the Town Administrator's Contract.

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

Roll Call Vote:

Andy Potter Yes
Kathleen Yes
Andy Krouss Yes

Open Session adjourned at 6:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Y. Ryan

Marie Y. Ryan
Town Administrator

...continued on page 7



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Note: Written proof of hardship is required to receive these benefits.

Because Pet Partners is operated entirely by volunteers, more help would be greatly appreciated. Call Faith Libardi at (518) 965-3121 for more information.

Funding for Pet Partners comes from gifts, grants, and donations. All donations go to helping pets.

To donate online, visit petpartnersberkshire.org/donate. Or donate with a check to Pet Partners, PO Box 67, West Stockbridge, MA 01266.

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GRAVEL PRODUCTS

...continued from page 5

Select Board Meeting Minutes December 2, 2024

The quorum was present: Select Board members Andrew Krouss, Kathleen Kersey, and Chair Andrew Potter.

Andy Potter opened the meeting at 6:00 PM.

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy Krouss, to approve the November 18th, 2024 minutes.

All were in favor, and the minutes were approved.

Town Administrator Update:

Marie stated that at the last meeting, she requested that the Board consider who may want to be the Alternate Representative to the Berkshire Regional Planning Board (BRPC). Kathleen said she would take on that position. Marie thanked her and will inform BRPC.

Marie informed everyone that the Parks Department will host the Annual Sparkles event at Town Hall on Sunday, December 8th, from 4 PM to 6 PM. This event will feature hot cocoa, cookies, a story walk, and Santa. Marie encouraged everyone to attend.

Curt Wilton and Building Superintendent Frank Alfonso are working on a project to hang all of the picture screenings from the town's 250th Anniversary this fall. They will display the pictures in the hall at Town Hall, and Bob Salerno will also attach individual paragraphs explaining what each picture represents.

Marie reminded everyone to attend the Special Town Meeting on Wednesday, December 11th, at 6 PM. One of the articles will include an increase in tax abatements for seniors and veterans. She hopes to have good attendance at the meeting.

Citizen Speak:

Joe Roy, Jr., as a Vision Committee member, informed the Board he is awaiting the discussion of signage locations around the town for the new welcome signs with Director of Public Works Curt Wilton. He believes Curt will need permission from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation to install the signs on state highways. Joe has suggested 22 locations where the signs should be placed. The signs are approximately the size of the podium and will have simple wording of "Welcome to West Stockbridge." They requested more information on the number of signs to be installed and a quote before making any approval. Joe will return to a future meeting to update the Select Board once he has more information.

Attorney Mitch Greenwald, speaking on behalf of Truc Nguyen, expressed concern regarding TurnPark's Annual entertainment License. Truc recently submitted a complaint about the sound level at TurnPark's September 2024 event. Mitch suggested that the Board consider clear, sound limits and a way to enforce these limits, including involving the Police Department when approving TurnPark's Entertainment License.

Appointment of Mary Roy to Parks Commission – Joe Roy, Chair
Parks Commission Chair Joe Roy requested that the Select Board appoint Mary Roy to the Parks Commission. He explained that she

already attends most of their meetings, always gets involved, and helps at every event, so the Commission would like to have her officially appointed.

Andy Krouss made a motion to appoint Mary Roy to the Parks Commission, seconded by Kathleen.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

Appointment of Jill Beasley to the Cultural Council – Marge Powell, Chair

Cultural Council Chair Marge Powell requested that the Select Board appoint Jill Beasley to the Cultural Council. Marge stated that Jill has been a resident for a while and has been very interested in joining the Cultural Council.

Andy Krouss motioned to appoint Jill Beasley to the Cultural Council, seconded by Kathleen.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

License Renewals: Liquor Licenses, Entertainment Licenses, Auto Class II, III and Taxi Licenses

Andy Potter suggested that the Board vote on all of the Annual Liquor Licenses in one vote; Kathleen and Andy Krouss agreed.

Kathleen motioned to approve all 2025 Liquor licenses, seconded by Andy Krouss.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

Kathleen then suggested voting, in the same manner, to bundle all of the remaining licenses together; the Board agreed.

Kathleen motioned to approve all of the 2025 Annual and Sunday Licenses, seconded by Andy Krouss.

Kathleen and Andy Krouss were in for; Andy Potter voted nay.

Motion approved, two for and one against.

Kathleen motioned to approve all of the 2025 Auto Class II, III and Taxi Licenses, seconded by Andy Krouss.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

Select Board Speak:

Kathleen inquired about the status of the Affordable Housing Trust Committee, and Andy Potter responded that, as the Chair, he plans on setting up a meeting sometime next week.

Andy Krouss informed everyone that he received a flyer in the mail from T-Mobile advertising that they can provide internet if anyone is interested.

Andy Potter encouraged everyone to attend the Special Town Meeting. This meeting will have some important items to vote on for the Town.

Kathleen motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Andy Krouss.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:19 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Y. Ryan

Marie Y. Ryan
Town Administrator

WEST STOCKBRIDGE CHAMBER PLAYERS

WINTER CONCERT

SUNDAY, JANUARY 19, 2025

AT 4:00 PM

Old Town Hall, 9 Main St, West Stockbridge, MA

MUSIC

Franz Liszt: *Am Grabe Richard Wagners*, S. 135

Amy Beach: *String Quartet*, Op. 89

Jesse Montgomery: *Source Code*

Bernard Hermann: *Souvenirs de voyage*

MUSICIANS

CATHERINE HUDGINS, *Clarinet*

SHEILA FIEKOWSKY, *Violin*

LISA CROCKETT, *Violin*

DANIEL GETZ, *Viola*

ADAM ESBENSEN, *Cello*

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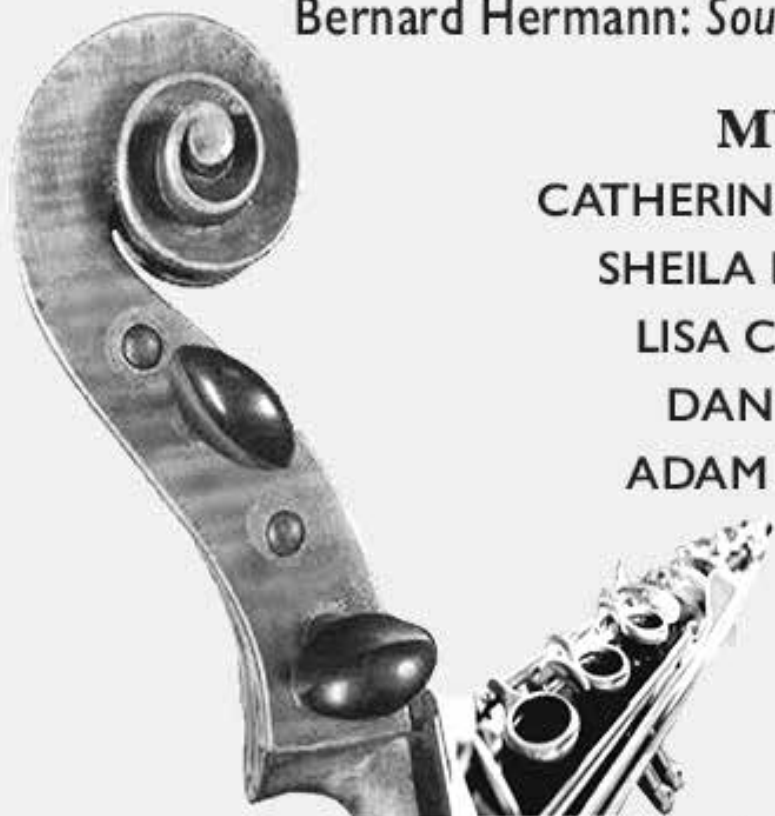
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This program is a benefit performance for the West Stockbridge Historical Society



Vision Committee 2024 Update

By Joe Roy, Jr. and Thom Lipiczky

The Vision Committee (VC) of West Stockbridge serves as an advisory group to the Select Board. We pursue ideas and projects for the good of the town and make recommendations to the board for further action. Over 2024, we've considered and acted on a wide range of topics and ideas. Here are some items we have discussed:

- **New committee member:** We asked the Select Board to appoint Peter Rothstein to our ranks. Peter is the past president of New England Clean Energy Council and has been active in the VC's work to fund an electrical vehicle (EV) charging station in town.
- **Progress on EV charging stations:** With approval from the Select Board, the VC initiated contact with East Coast Renewable Energy that provides EV charging infrastructure to towns and institutions. The company recently installed a successful charging station at Simon's Rock. Through the VC, the town has applied for a no-cost grant from National Grid that will work with ECRW to install the chargers. Possible locations: next to the Old Town Hall, at the Town Offices, in the parking lot by the public restrooms, and at Card Pond. We hope the chargers will attract visitors passing through town. We are currently waiting on National Grid for approval on the proposal. The chargers should cost the town very little and provide a small revenue source.
- **Tribute to Carter White:** A longtime member of the VC, Carter was active in working on Community Land Trust issues for the town. He died this past spring at the age of 90.
- **Working with the Municipal Digital Equity Partnership:** The VC met with the Berkshire Regional Planning Committee to discuss the Municipal Digital Equity Partnership. It focuses on increasing access to the Internet, cell phone coverage, and computers. We gathered information about areas and townspeople who need these services. This is an ongoing topic of interest for the committee.
- **Intergenerational Park at the Town Offices:** The park would offer admittance to facilities at the Town Offices beyond the library and the playground. It might include access to the gymnasium and an upgraded kitchen, as well as outdoor vending machines and a storage building to house supplies and equipment. More work is required to move this idea along, but we are in contact with the Parks and Rec Committee.
- **BRTA bus service:** We discussed the idea of bus service to West Stockbridge via the Berkshire Regional Transportation Authority.
- **Affordable housing:** In concert with the Planning Board, we have focused on the demographics of the town and "livability" concerns for both older citizens and those with small children.
- **Public funding for candidates for local office:** Public funding for campaigns of those seeking elected town positions could encourage more participation. The expense would have to be a line item on the budget and approved at the annual town meeting.
- **Sharing services with neighboring towns:** Exploration of a shared fire department with Stockbridge is already underway. West Stockbridge police officers currently serve the needs of Richmond without compensation. Also, there is renewed interest in resurrecting the Community Health Program that we shared with Richmond. When the program disbanded, another organization delivering some of the same services now serves the town.
- **Semi-permanent display of large-format black-and-white photos of townspeople:** These photos would be mounted on frames similar to the Historical Society displays of the town to celebrate our 250th anniversary. We hope to work with the Cultural Council to further explore this idea.


The Vision Committee welcomes participants from the town at our monthly Zoom meetings (second Tuesday of each month at 8 am). Agendas and minutes are available on the town website.

Vision Committee members: Chair Joe Roy, Jr.; Clerk Steve Graham, Bill Barth, Karen Carmean, Champika Fernando, Frank Landsberger, Thom Lipiczky, Doane Perry, and Peter Rothstein.

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Stockbridge Fire/EMS working group vote sets up Select Board to move toward joint services with West Stockbridge

On Thursday, December 19, the measure goes before the Stockbridge Select Board for its approval, and the West Stockbridge Select Board will have its say in January.

Written by Leslee Bassman

December 17, 2024

Stockbridge—For months, Stockbridge and West Stockbridge officials, along with Richmond’s leaders, have been meeting to solve the growing shortage of area fire and emergency medical services (EMS) personnel, departments that had traditionally been filled by volunteers.

Although Richmond will now chart its own course regarding those services, Stockbridge took a big step forward December 17 as its fire and EMS representatives approved putting to the Select Board its commitment to a joint project with West Stockbridge that includes constructing a new fire station, purchasing an ambulance, funding a two-year interim period before the shared-services program begins, and creating a five-person building committee to evaluate the operational needs and costs of such an endeavor.

Comprised of three members of the Stockbridge Fire Department, a member of the Stockbridge Finance Committee, and one member of the community, the building committee will have nine months to a year to submit its recommendations to the Stockbridge Select Board, with an article slated to go before residents at the May 2026 Town Meeting.

On Thursday, December 19, the measure goes before the Stockbridge Select Board for its approval, and the West Stockbridge Select Board will have its say in January.

Stockbridge Town Administrator Michael Canales reiterated the detailed “Shared Fire & Emergency Medical Services Cost Analysis” that has been put before representatives since mid-year. That document can be found [here](#).

“We think, overall, this is the first step forward in a long-range plan,” Canales said.

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January History Quiz Question:

From our archives by guest columnist John Parker, West Stockbridge Historical Society

On September 26, 2020, Bob Salerno and I led a public History Walk at the Village Cemetery, visiting the final resting places of prominent local citizens. One of the graves we visited was that of Victor Joshua Slocum, author, artist, seaman, and whaler—said to have been New Bedford’s top harpooner in 1903! How did this seagoing adventurer “land” in West Stockbridge?

(Find the answer somewhere in this issue!)

When friends, neighbors, or relatives move, downsize, or just clean house, *please* ask them to think of the West Stockbridge Historical Society before they discard any old books, pictures, postcards, letters, or memorabilia of the Town of West Stockbridge. Email info@weststockbridgehistory.org or call (413) 232-4465.



West Stockbridge Historical Society
Incorporated in 1994

Nuts and bolts of the shared-services proposal

The shared services idea aims to combine fire and EMS services between Stockbridge and West Stockbridge by hiring full-time professionals functioning around the clock who are backed up with volunteer support. Given the financial and population data for each town, project costs will generally be split proportionally, with 60 percent of those costs borne by Stockbridge and 40 percent contributed by West Stockbridge.

The crew will consist of eight full-time fire/EMS staff and one chief, with two staffers serving as deputy chiefs assigned to the department's operations. The chief will focus on the financial side of the department, along with an oversight board of town administrators and Select Board designees. The cost of the staff salaries is estimated to be \$977,205, with Stockbridge apportioned \$589,785, or 60 percent of the total, and West Stockbridge apportioned \$387,420, or 40 percent of the total.

The fire station will be located in Stockbridge, housing ambulances and full-time staff. The optimal site for the station is near the intersection of Routes 102 and 183 since that location provides a "significant improvement" in response times for both towns as having been determined in an analysis conducted by JB Consulting Group LLC, Canales said.

Based on the building costs of fire stations constructed in other nearby areas such as Hadley and Williamsburg, Mass., as well as Cambridge, N.Y., the construction budget is estimated to be around \$5.27 million. Stockbridge will own the facility and assume an annual building payment for the structure of \$354,000 in addition to the town's charges for staff annual salaries of \$589,785.

However, Canales cited a couple of negatives to the proposal: high initial costs and an increase in operational costs per town.

Interim

With the shared services and new station house not anticipated to be up and running until fiscal year 2029, interim provisions are planned to maintain emergency services for the towns.

Currently, West Stockbridge shares EMS services with Richmond. Stockbridge maintains two shared EMS-services agreements with Lenox and Lee until fiscal year 2028. West Stockbridge will need to enter into an agreement with Richmond for EMS services until fiscal year 2028 so those services don't lapse.

Pursuant to the proposal, Stockbridge will provide fire support to both towns for fiscal years 2026 and 2027, up to 10 hours per day, seven days a week, adding two additional firefighters. That cost will be divided, with Stockbridge charged \$154,571.46 and West Stockbridge charged \$101,535.54, according to the arranged 60/40 split.

Although Stockbridge has an ambulance the town received from Lee, the vehicle isn't sufficient to serve as a primary unit but only as a backup if the main ambulance is out of commission. To make the shared services debut by fiscal year 2028, an ambulance will need to be ordered in fiscal year 2026, given the extensive time required to build the vehicle. The approximate cost of that ambulance is \$450,000, with Stockbridge assuming \$270,000, or 60 percent of the cost, and West Stockbridge assuming \$180,000, or 40 percent of the cost.

Canales said efforts will be made to obtain federal funds—a Safer Grant—for four years of the project to assist with some of the costs. Additionally, he said the town's free cash may be set aside to adhere to a debt schedule for the new facility so the impact to the community wouldn't be "a big jump" in any one year.

The vote

When asked if there is a chance that both communities wouldn't approve such an agreement, Canales acknowledged the increased cost. "Look at what we're building here—a 24/7 backbone of paid staff and then volunteer departments that are going to work in combination to create what we think is the best option that we have on the table," he said.

Stockbridge Fire Chief Vincent Garofoli gave his full support for the project moving forward and, together with Canales, advocated for getting the information out to residents through a town website link and public-outreach sessions.

On November 4, the West Stockbridge Select Board approved Garofoli as chief of the town's fire department beginning January 1 when current Chief Steven Traver retires.

"There's been a lot going on in the community these past couple of years with COVID and everything else, and to highlight the needs of EMS and the inadequate EMS system has really put this as a concern for many citizens, both those that live here all of the time and live here seasonally," Garofoli said. "So, I think this is not something that's going to be ignored by the general community. I really think there's going to be some buy in."



From left: Stockbridge Town Administrator Michael Canales, Stockbridge Select Board member Ernest Cardillo, Stockbridge Firefighter James MacDonald, Stockbridge citizen George Manley, and Stockbridge Fire Chief Vincent Garofoli address sharing fire and emergency medical services with West Stockbridge during the working group's December 17 session. Photo by Leslee Bassman.



**Nicaela Haig of Mass Audubon to speak
on “Animal Romance”
at Berkshire Nature Talk Series
for the West Stockbridge Historical Society**

Saturday, February 15, at 7 pm

at the Old Town Hall, 9 Main Street, West Stockbridge

Nicaela Haig of Mass Audubon’s Berkshire Wildlife Sanctuaries will explore the weird and wonderful world of animal romance in the Berkshires—mammals, birds, amphibians, and more—the perfect way to spend the evening after Valentine’s Day!

Free for West Stockbridge Historical Society members; \$10 suggested donation for nonmembers. Please register at weststockbridgehistory.org.

Photo by Dx Lanson



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Local artists Diana Pappas and Tom Bland—read more about them in the December issue of the *Local Yoke!*—have generously set up a print of their monthly photograph for library visitors. Each print is accompanied by a flyer describing its creation. Please stop by and enjoy these!

For the month of November 2024:

- 642 items were borrowed and renewed
- \$10,200 saved by library users because they borrowed instead of buying
- 413 eBooks and streaming audiobooks borrowed
- 347 library visitors

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

NEW ADULT FICTION

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Baldacci, <i>To die for</i> | Kuang, <i>How to end a love story</i> |
| Hayes, <i>I am Pilgrim</i> | Patterson, <i>The house of Cross</i> |
| Hayes, <i>The year of the locust</i> | Price, <i>Lazarus man</i> |
| July, <i>All fours</i> | Roberts, <i>Mirror</i> |
| Khong, <i>Real Americans</i> | |

NEW YOUNG ADULT AND CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Eaton, *Survival scout: tsunami*

NEW ADULT NONFICTION

- Grisham, *Framed: astonishing true stories of wrongful convictions*
 Woodward, *War*

NEW DVDs

Beetlejuice Beetlejuice; Deadpool & Wolverine; Twisters; Wild Robot



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

1. Which Berkshire Hills Regional School Committee member appeared on the November 4, 2014, ballot even though he had died?
2. In October 2014, the Fire Department officers were Peter Skorput, Fire Chief; Ronald Race, Assistant Fire Chief; Larry Morse, Assistant Fire Chief; Steve Cabral, Lieutenant Medical Officer; and John Cardillo, Lieutenant. How many fire-fighters did the department have?
3. The State Line House was known far and wide for straddling the boundary of what two towns and states?
4. Why was there a double ballot at the November 4, 2014, election?



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.

1. John Krahn
2. Eighteen
3. West Stockbridge, Massachusetts, and Canaan, New York
4. One for the state electoral races and one to approve a \$52.1 million project for the Monument Mountain Regional High School renovation

January Donor Roll Call

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History Quiz Answer:

I first heard of Victor Slocum from a sailing buff living in Kentucky. He had read *Sailing Alone Around the World* by Joshua Slocum, who, from 1895 to 1898, was the first to sail single-handed around the world. Slocum's memoir of this remarkable journey is considered a classic of sailing literature. Googling "Slocum," our correspondent found a record of Victor Slocum's gravesite in our town cemetery and wondered if this could be the son of Captain Joshua Slocum.

Joshua Slocum, the father, lived an eventful and adventurous life on the sea during the final decades of the "Age of Sail." Born in 1844 in Nova Scotia, he went to sea at age 16, becoming an accomplished sailor, navigator, and captain of fishing and cargo vessels. He married and took his wife and young children on many voyages around the Pacific.

Following his first wife's tragic death and his remarriage, Joshua's ship *Aquidneck* was wrecked off the coast of Brazil. He built a small sailboat, the *Liberdade*, from local materials and sailed with his new bride and two young boys (Victor, age 16, and Garfield, age 6) 5,000 miles to Washington, D.C., where the boat was exhibited at the Smithsonian Museum. He later wrote a book about the adventure.

Unable to find work as a sailing captain (by then, sailing ships were beginning to be replaced by steamships), Joshua embarked on his round-the-world voyage in *Spray*, a derelict 37-foot oystering sloop he rebuilt himself. He financed the trip by lecturing and writing along the way, recounting many adventures including deadly storms and attacks by pirates. After publishing his best-selling memoir, Joshua Slocum and *Spray* were lost at sea on a solo voyage to South America in 1909.

Victor Slocum, Joshua's oldest son, was born in 1872 on a sailing ship captained by his father. The four Slocum siblings were all home-schooled by their mother on board ships their father captained and sailed around the Pacific. As a result, they all developed an interest in the arts and music and gained inner strength, self-reliance, and independence.

Victor learned seamanship and navigation from his father, and at age 16 he was named mate aboard the *Aquidneck*, the vessel shipwrecked off Brazil. Victor went on to serve as a whaler out of New Bedford. In 1903, he was considered the city's top harpooner. The sheath knife he carried had 22 notches cut into its handle for each whale he had harpooned.

Victor married a young woman from West Stockbridge, Harriet Estelle Woodruff, a graduate of the Pittsfield schools and Smith College. She was a music teacher, concert pianist, composer, suffragist lecturer, and author.

During World War I, Victor served as navigator aboard a U.S. Navy transport ship and piloted ships into the Port of New York. After the war, Victor worked for the Roosevelt Steamship Company. A feature story in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* in 1937 described Victor's talents as an artist. At the time, his paintings of Chinese junks were exhibited at a branch of the New York Public Library. The article noted, "At every port a camera and drawing board would go with the Captain to see the sights of the town instead of a whiskey bottle."

During World War II, Victor inspected wooden-hulled vessels for the navy. Later, he worked for the United Fruit Company and taught navigation. In retirement, Victor wrote several books including a biography of his father, *Captain Joshua Slocum, The Adventures of America's Best Known Sailor*.

Estelle died in 1946, followed by Victor in 1949. Both were buried in the West Stockbridge town cemetery (the Woodruff family is well represented there).

So how did this seafaring adventurer meet his accomplished and cultured wife from western Massachusetts and end up interred with her in our town cemetery? My guess is that it was their mutual interest in the arts that brought them together, and it seems likely he wanted to be buried with his wife, whose family roots were here in West Stockbridge.



Joshua Slocum's Spray. Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1012454>



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.

Community News & Events

Stockbridge Grange Dinner

Take a night off from cooking and order this month's takeout-only Stockbridge Grange Dinner on Sunday, January 12, with pickup at the Grange Hall, 51 Church Street, Stockbridge. Dinner entrée: Swedish meatballs; dessert: chocolate or lemon pie. 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 West Stockbridge and Richmond COA January paper folding class will be held on Tuesday, January 7, at 9:30 am in the Richmond Town Hall Community Room. We will be making Calendar Easels for the New Year.

Preregistration is requested to reserve your space; please contact Heather at Richmond Town Hall at (413) 553-7793.

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.*



WINTER PARKING BAN in effect as of November 15, 2024



The West Stockbridge winter parking ban will be in effect from NOVEMBER 15 to APRIL 1 between 11 pm and 7 am 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



**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.

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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 Kersey 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>Randy Bates</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

January Art Calendar

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

2024

January 28, Meet the Artist, 3pm.

Featuring Leslie Alfin. Link to watch to be shared on website.

January Meeting TBD, Berkshire Photo Gathering. See web: berkshirephotogathering.com/online-meetings

Upcoming Workshops in 2025:

January & February, 6 Mondays, Introduction to Drawing”with Mike Cohen. Berkshire South, Great Barrington. See calendar on the GBA website for sign up link.

Mondays 1-4pm in February & March, Advanced Cold Wax Workshop with Carolyn Abrams. Berkshire South, Great Barrington. See calendar on the GBA website for sign up link.

March, Plein air Workshop with Lori Bradley. Sheep’s Hill, Williamstown or TBD. See website for more information closer to date.

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

*Happy
New Year!*



Introduction to Drawing w/Mike Cohen



Advanced Cold Wax w/Carolyn Abrams



Plein Air w/Lori Bradley

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| 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 | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|---|----------------|--------------------------------|--|--|
| | 1/6 | Select Board meeting | 6 pm | Town Offices and on Zoom | | |
| | 1/7 | Council on Aging Craft Group meeting | 9:30 am | Richmond Library History Room | | |
| | 1/8 | Knitters Group | 2-4 pm | Community Room | | |
| | 1/8 | Friends of the Library meeting | 3:30 pm | Community Room | | |
| | 1/12 | Stockbridge Grange Takeout Dinner | | See Community News for details | | |
| | 1/15 | Knitters Group | 2-4 pm | Community Room | | |
| | 1/15 | *** Deadline for the next <i>Local Yokel</i> *** | | | Send to info@thelocalyokel.org | |
| | 1/16 | Planning Board Public Hearing: Short-term Rental & Zoning Bylaw Changes | 7 pm | Town Offices | | |
| | 1/19 | WS Chamber Players Winter Concert | 4 pm | Old Town Hall, 9 Main Street | | |
| | 1/20 | Martin Luther King, Jr., Day | | | | |
| | 1/20 | Inauguration Day | | | | |
| | 1/21 | Select Board meeting | 6 pm | Town Offices and on Zoom | | |
| 1/22 | Knitters Group | 2-4 pm | Community Room | | | |
| 1/29 | Knitters Group | 2-4 pm | Community Room | | | |

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