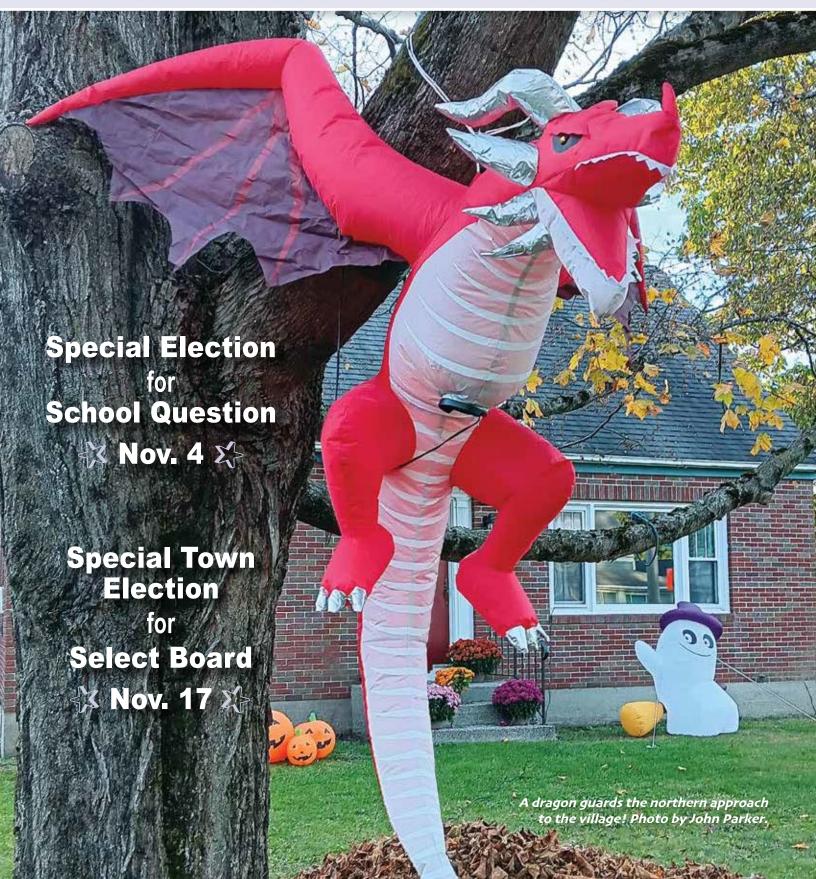
Local Yoke Stockbridge November

West 2025

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

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 2004



Profile:

Therapy Dog Rika (and Her Partner Deb Goodwin)

By John Parker

I first met Rika and Deb at the Zucchini Festival Pet Parade and was immediately intrigued by what I learned about these local heroes. Rika, a 5-year-old Golden Retriever, and her partner, Deb Goodwin, are a team providing mental health support and comfort where people are under stress and in crisis. They have responded to requests from various police and fire departments, as well as many other organizations here in the Northeast and around the country.

Rika is highly qualified with certifications as a Crisis Response Canine with HOPE-AACR (one of only five in all of New England), plus Therapy Dog, First Responder Therapy Dog, Canine Good Citizen (including Advanced and Urban), and additional certifications with the Alliance of Therapy Dogs, Bright Spot Therapy Dogs, and Animal Assisted Therapy Services of Massachusetts. Deb credits the three local fire departments for being "incredibly generous in helping Rika to have training opportunities alongside them."

In that capacity, Rika has done therapy dog work at the VA Hospital in Leeds, MA, at Bradley Airport, and at a day program for intellectually challenged adults. She is also a member of the Berkshire County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Canine Support Team, and she has participated in flu shot clinics, emergency preparedness workshops, a mass casualty simulation with the MRC, and worked with other MRCs in the state. Having gotten her start at Monument Mountain Regional High School, she has since worked with WSPD Chief Nicole Miller in a program for local children. She has made appearances at the West Stockbridge Library, the Dog Park Grand Opening, the Richmond/West Stockbridge Council on Aging, and events with the fire department.

Rika has done wellness visits and provided mental health support for first responders in the aftermath of difficult calls and the loss of a teammate. For example, Rika and Deb deployed to Bristol, CT, following the line-of-duty deaths of two officers in October 2022, to Lewiston, ME, after the mass casualty incident there in 2023. They traveled to Los Angeles following the wildfires earlier this year, providing support to victims waiting for help at the relief center there. They have also been invited to the Pentagon to work with emergency teams and support deploying troops.

Deb recounts their response to a Massachusetts firehouse the day after "a truly awful call." The officers and firefighters who had been on the call hugged and petted Rika and described how they could feel the stress leaving their bodies. They requested Rika return the next day for their official critical incident debriefing and "kept motioning Rika over and petting her as they did the emotionally difficult work of debriefing."

Deb says the two most important characteristics of a good therapy dog are that they love people and have excellent self-control. In addition, there must be a strong bond and trust between the dog and her handler. Trust and optimism that things will turn out well are essential for the dog to feel safe and engage with new and potentially scary things (for example, Rika recently met a robot dog!).

Deb emphasizes that she and Rika always work as a team and never deploy on their own. Someone in an official capacity must always invite them. Rika also has insurance for all the work she does.

We can't thank Rika and Deb enough for the work that they do, bringing solace and happiness to those in need.





Photos clockwise from top (all courtesy of Deb Goodwin except as noted):

Rika and Deb at the 2025 Zucchini Festival. Photo by John Parker;
Rika at Honor Flight departure sending veterans to Washington DC to see the monuments
erected in their honor; Rika with Boston PD officers at the International Association of
Chiefs of Police Conference in 2024; Rika meets a robot dog! Used for search and rescue;
Rika and Deb together at a 2024 training exercise with the Pennsylvania LifeStar helicopter







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 November 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 September 15, 2025

The quorum was present consisting of Select Board members Chair Andrew Krouss and Kathleen Keresey, and Town Administrator Marie Ryan.

Chair Andy Krouss opened the meeting at 6 PM.

Marie requested the Board not vote on the August 13 Executive Session meeting minutes so they may be reviewed at their next Executive Session meeting prior to approval.

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy, to approve the minutes of August 18 and September 2, 2025.

All were in favor, and the minutes were approved.

Tech Environmental Contract: Town Counsel Nicole Costanzo

Due to some changes in the contract requested by the Town and Tech Environmental, Attorney Nicole Costanzo explained that the draft contract, which the Board approved to sign at their September 2nd meeting, has been amended. She stated that the draft contract now includes a statement in item #4 that would allow Tech Environmental to perform additional tasks not included in the proposal should the need for more tasks be warranted. These possible additional tasks must be approved in writing by the Select Board.

The proposal included in the contract also had changes per the Town's request. These changes included terms of service and general liability. The proposal explains two tasks involved in the scope of service. One task consists of Tech Environmental, creating a baseline odor, which provides for them to come to the area to perform the testing periodically. The other task involves training volunteers to conduct a sniff test when the Town receives complaints.

Kathleen stated that the draft contract and proposal include training volunteers to go out to the area where complaints are lodged to do sniff testing. She was unsure of where the complaints would be filed and who would be contacted to perform the test. Marie stated that

she had reached out to the Board of Health to see if they would be available or interested in being trained once the Board has signed the contract. She said they were interested and that she would also get trained. Regarding where complaints are filed, Marie will develop a procedure for this. The Board agreed to have Marie serve as the point of contact, to train volunteers, and to allow her to create a procedure once the training has been completed.

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy, to approve the contract and proposal to be signed.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

Citizen Speak:

Jon Piasecki, Wiseacre Owner, requested that the Board allow his Attorney, Aaron DuBois, to speak on his behalf. The Board allowed that. Attorney DuBois stated that, according to a letter from the Cannabis Control Commission (CCC), Wiseacre has completed valid odor mitigation, and the file has been closed concerning complaints of odor issues. He believes that the constant complaints coming from two particular households are harassment. He said per the CCC, Wiseacre has been deemed compliant.

Iin Purwanti, Manager at Wiseacre Farm, stated that she goes out to validate any complaints of odor that they receive. She was on Baker Street today to check on a complaint and was verbally assaulted by a resident there. She said she goes to all areas where complaints are coming from, and rarely does she smell extreme odors coming from the farm.

David Valenti, a resident of 92 Baker Street, stated that he lives closest to Wiseacre Farm and has only experienced a very short period of intense odor. He said this is expected in an Industrial Zone at the peak of the season when the plants are flowering.

Brittany Daley, resident of 7 Jennifer Lane, works at Wiseacre Farm and really appreciates how generous Jon is. She requested that the two households that are always complaining stop harassing Wiseacre.

...continued on page 8

Important Dates: Upcoming Special Town Elections

Special Election on School Question - Nov. 4

Special Election for Select Board Position - Nov. 17

West Stockbridge Jazz Series

RICK McLAUGHLIN **TRIO**

Saturday, November 15 at 7:00 p.m.



Old Town Hall 9 Main Street West Stockbridge

TICKETS:

\$35 Members \$40 Non-members Card for Culture Tickets available





Mass with generous support from Cultural West Stockbridge, Richmond, Council and Alford Egremont Cultural Councils weststockbridgehistory.org



Special Election November 17, 2025 Select Board The Candidates: In Their Own Words



The Local Yokel invited each candidate for a contested or vacant town office, and new candidates in uncontested races, to provide a written statement limited to 300 words and a photograph. These are the statements received by the deadline for publication.



Tobias Casey

Candidate for Select Board

I grew up a sixth-generation West Stockbridge native, from West Center Road, just across

the street from my grandparents, Jean and Arthur Baldwin. I attended Village and Searles Middle Schools, followed by homeschooling for high school.

Throughout these formative years, I was blessed to observe my grandfather as he ran the town's hardware store and other family members who ran the extracts business.

After school, I worked with startups GilderGroup, a Housatonic-based collaboration between author George Gilder and *Forbes* magazine, followed by a move to the Boston area to serve as CIO for Innosight, a consultancy founded by Harvard Business School professor Clayton Christensen.

By early 2002, my wife, Cameo, and I decided it was time to move our growing family back to the Berkshires to start Anteris, a nationwide IT firm. This was aided by my grandfather allowing our little family to live with him at his farm, an opportunity that allowed low-cost living and high-value business advice simultaneously.

As the business grew, the opportunity arose to purchase the farm after the passing of my grandparents, allowing us to return permanently to the town I grew up in and have always loved. With the assistance of our whole family, but primarily our son Declan, Baldwin Farm is once again operating as a farm where quality meats are raised and sold.

In addition to running these two businesses, I serve as an elder of our church in Lenox and on the board of directors for a retirement village in northern Florida. If you choose to elect me, I believe each element of having grown up in West Stockbridge, combined with my varied professional experiences, would contribute an important perspective to our town's Select Board.

Please see my website at caseyforweststockbridge.com for more information or to reach out.



Susan Lupo

Candidate for Select Board

A West Stockbridge native, Susan is one of six children born to John and Polly Negrini,

both of whom were native to the town as well. Sue remembers when the post office was on Main Street, you spent the summer down at Card Pond, and the fire whistle blew every Saturday at noon. She attended first through fourth grade in what is now the Town Offices and is a graduate of Monument Mountain Regional High School and Berkshire Community College.

The first half of Sue's career focused on acquiring administrative and customer service skills that later led to management positions in several local businesses. Her most current employment is as the business manager at Kilpatrick Athletic Center as well as a full-time position as the Assistant Register of the Southern Berkshire Registry of Deeds.

In 2018 Sue was appointed by the Select Board to serve on the town's Board of Assessors, and she was reelected to that position for a third time in 2024. It is through this experience as an assessor that she feels it is time to take her desire to serve the town to the next level in running for the open position on the Select Board.

Sue would like the opportunity to not only support the Select Board but the other boards and departments of our town as well.

Sue would bring a fresh set of eyes to help tackle some of the biggest concerns our residents have, such as business and zoning, housing, budget, and taxes. She has the ability to see beyond preconceived beliefs, is a creative problem solver, and a compassionate listener. Sue has the willingness to put in the work that needs to be done to make the residents of West Stockbridge feel supported.



HOME MODIFICATION

LOAN PROGRAM

Are you or a loved looking for ways to make your home accessible as you age-in-place?
Are you a person living with disabilities looking for ways to remain in your home? The Home Modification Loan Program (HMLP) may be for you!

HMLP is a 0% interest, deferred payment loan program that provides modifications for home accessibility improvements that could help you or a loved one live more independently. Possible modifications include bathroom and kitchen modifications, ramps, stair lifts, accessory dwelling units, and more.

For more information, please contact Berkshire Regional Planning Commission at HMLP@berkshireplanning.org.



SHUT PHA

413-243-4111

Meadow Farm 1125 Meadow Street, Lee meadowfarmorganics.com

Compost Facility Accepting Yard & Wood Waste



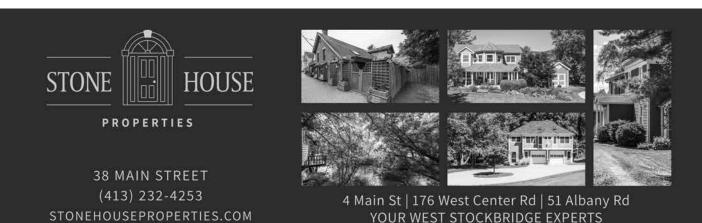
BALDWIN HARDWARE

Depot Street West Stockbridge, MA 01266

Henry Baldwin

(413) 232-7757





November 4 Is Election Day in West Stockbridge: All You Need to Know About the School Vote

By Sheela Clary, Communications Coordinator, BHRSD



Rendering of proposed new MMRHS building courtesy of BHRSD.

Tuesday, November 4, is Election Day in West Stockbridge, with polls open from 11 am to 7 pm. Voters will have two separate questions and two separate ballots on which to vote YES or NO. Question 1 will be a districtwide vote, counted in aggregate. Question 2 will be a town-by-town vote.

Question 1: Approval of Funds

Question 1 is the district ballot, asking voters to vote yes or no on the proposal put forward by the BHRSD School Committee to construct a new high school building. It asks residents:

"Do you approve of the vote of the Regional District School Committee of the Berkshire Hills Regional School District, adopted on September 11, 2025, to authorize the borrowing of \$152,067,064 to pay costs of designing, constructing, originally equipping and furnishing a new District high school to be located at 600 Stockbridge Road in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto, which vote provides, in part, as follows:"

The full text of the vote undertaken by the BHRSD School Committee on September 11, 2025, to approve the vote will follow, with "yes" and "no" boxes below.

- A **yes vote** approves the District's proposal as presented.
- o A **no vote** rejects the District's proposal as presented.

The ballot question will include the *total* amount of money for a new high school building, \$152,067,064. But taxpayers in the three district towns are *not* being asked to pay this amount. The Massachusetts School Building Association (MSBA) is covering \$61 million of this total. Taxpayers will be responsible for \$89,457,399 with the Mass Save Program contributing \$1.6 million in energy incentives.

Question 2: Proposition 21/2 Exclusion

Question 2 is the town ballot to authorize a debt exclusion that will allow for the funding of the high school building. It asks residents:

"Shall the town of West Stockbridge be allowed to exempt from the provision of proposition two and one-half, so-called, the amounts required to pay the Town's allocable share of the bond issued by the Berkshire Hills Regional School District for the purpose of paying costs to replace the existing Monument Mountain Regional High School with a new facility serving students in grades 9-12 on the site of the existing school, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto?"

Link to full warrant: https://www.weststockbridge-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif4031/f/agendas/ste_11.4.25_warrant.pdf

Early in-person voting will not be available. Early voting by mail is only available for Question 2, the town ballot, not for Question 1, the district ballot. Mail-in votes must be received by 8 pm on November 4 at the Town Offices to be counted that evening.

For more information, including Frequently Asked Questions, visit https://monumentbuildingproject.org/. You can reach out to the building committee at https://monumentbuildingproject.org/connect/ or contact Superintendent Peter Dillon directly at peter.dillon@bhrsd.org.

...continued from page 3

Attorney Adrienne Dean stated she was representing Wiseacre as well; however, Jon Piasecki did not speak to that fact. She had wanted to ask a few questions to Town Counsel, who had left the meeting and was not on Zoom. She asked the Board a few questions; however, Kathleen explained that Citizen Speak is for the Citizens to speak, not for the Board to answer any questions.

Town Administrator Updates: Marie

Marie informed the Board that five applications have been received for the Highway Superintendent position. Curt reviewed the applicants with his department and requested that the Board, Marie, and he hold an open meeting to interview three of the applicants. The Board agreed, and Marie will schedule a meeting.

Vision Committee: Joe Roy

Joe Roy stated that the Vision Committee just held its 100th meeting! They have done many things for the Town over the years. The most recent projects they are working on include: a handbook for new businesses and residents, an index of Town services, Research marketing guide to promote visitors to come to West Stockbridge, supporting the Planning Board on their zoning changes, and encouraging residents that have unique photos of the Town to send them in to be used in guides and brochures.

Joe encouraged anyone that may be interested in helping to attend a meeting and possibly even join the Committee.

TurnPark One-Day Liquor License: Manager Jared Gelormino

TurnPark Manager Jared Gelormino requested a One-Day Liquor License from the Board for their Fairy House event on October 11th. This event will take place from 4 PM to 8 PM. The event is a family-oriented, low-key gathering that will feature a food truck and activities for the kids.

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy, to approve a One-Day liquor license for TurnPark on October 11.

All were in favor, the motion was approved.

Shared EMS and Fire Services: Fire Chief Vinny Garolfoli and Stockbridge Town Administrator Mike Canales

Chief Garolfoli introduced the two new deputies who have been

recently hired. Michael Mahar is the new Deputy Chief for EMS Services, and Paul Hernandez is the new Deputy Chief for Fire and EMT. Paul will also be certified as a paramedic in the near future. The Board congratulated the men, and Vinny is happy to have them be part of the team. Chief Garofoli explained that the Town of West Stockbridge has been robust with more events happening in the Town. He obtained the West Stockbridge Department's tones for calls, so we now have our own tones to respond to events as first responders. Stockbridge will always back us up as well. They are two separate fire departments, but share administrative duties and EMTs. Both departments drill and train together and have each other's backs. He stated that everything is going great!

Stockbridge Town Administrator Mike Canales feels that we have an excellent team for the shared services that is really coming together. He stated that the two new hires will help with plans to develop our shared departments. In October, Mike will hold the first meeting of the Oversight Committee. This Committee includes the Chief, both Town Administrators, as well as a Select Board member or designee.

Mike relayed that the new shared ambulance has been ordered and should arrive in early 2027. He also applied for a Safer Grant for the two towns, which could bring us up to \$1.5 million. He is not counting on the grant, but if we do get it, it will help tremendously.

Andy Krouss thanked the Town department members who were in attendance for their service to the Town.

Affordable Housing Trust Board: Chair Chris Powell

Affordable Housing Trust Board Cahir Chris Powell requested that the Board appoint Steve Mack, currently an Ex-Officio Member, as a full member to take Andy Potter's position, as he has resigned. Chris explained that Steve has attended all of the meetings and is very active on the Committee. The Committee has recently voted unanimously to support this appointment.

Andy made a motion, seconded by Kathleen, to appoint Steve Mack as a full Member of the Affordable Housing Trust.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

Dog Park Signs: Chair Michael Bolognino

...continued on page 9

Girdler Electric

MA Master License 2406 A1

Barry Girdler

owner

P. O Box 20 West Stockbridge MA 01266 413-237-5957

girdlerelectric@gmail.com



November 3 at 6:30pm

Michael Wilcox

will talk about

Indigenous people of the area.

Stockbridge Grange Hall, 51 Church St., Stockbridge Sponsored by the West Stockbridge Grange Covered Dish supper at 6:30, public invited For more information call (413) 443-4352

...continued from page 8

Dog Park Committee Chair Michael Bolognino requested that the Board approve two signs for the Dog Park. The first sign is a permanent wayfinding sign to be attached to the current Library sign at Town Hall. The second sign is a temporary sign that announces the Grand Opening of the Dog Park on October 5th from 12 PM to 3 PM. This sign will be on Town property and double-sided, measuring 24x18 inches. Michael stated that the Sign Officer Brian DuVal has already approved both signs.

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy, to approve both signs to be placed on Town property at Town Hall.

All were in favor and the motion was approved.

The Foundry One-Day Entertainment License: Owner Amy Brentano

The Foundry owner, Amy Brentano, requested a One-Day outdoor entertainment License from the Board. Per her recently amended Special Permit, she is allowed four outdoor events on her green space. She would like to have this circus event on October 4th from 3 PM to 4:30 PM. This event will have amplified noise, and the speakers will not be facing the neighbors. This is a family event.

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy, to approve the One-Day Entertainment License for The Foundry on October 4th.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

Social Equity Policy and Evaluation Rubric: Marie

Marie explained to the Board that the Cannabis Control Commission requires a location on the Town's website for Cannabis information. Two of the necessary documents are the Social Equity Policy and the Evaluation Rubric. She requested that the Board vote to approve these documents so she can post them on the website.

Attorney Aaron DuBois for Wiseacre Farm requested that the Board delay approving policies, as they currently only affect Wiseacre.

They would like time to review these policies and consult with Town Counsel if necessary. The Board agreed.

<u>Vote to Approve Special Election Ballot Question</u>: School Superintendent Peter Dillon

School Superintendent Peter Dillon explained to the Board that the State requires two separate ballots and two separate questions to be used at a special election regarding voting for a new high school. The first ballot, issued by the school district, asks voters if they want a new school. The second ballot comes from the Town and asks the voters to override Proposition 2 ½ to allow for paying for the new school building. He requested that the Board vote to approve the ballot question and for the special election to be held. Peter said the election would take place on November 4th, and he is not clear on the hours at this time, but will let the Towns know.

Peter also encouraged everyone to attend a meeting at the high school tomorrow at 5:30. This will be an informational meeting regarding the new school and will include a tour of the current high school.

Andy made a motion, seconded by Kathleen, to approve the ballot question to be used at a special election on November 4th.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

Select Board Speak:

Andy stated that resident Bruce Render's wife has passed away and the Town sends their condolences.

Kathleen motioned to adjourn, seconded by Andy, at 7:11 PM.

Both approved, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Y. Ryan Marie Y. Ryan Town Administrator

Community News & Events

Stockbridge Grange Dinner

This month's dinner is on November 9. See advertisement in this issue for details.

Council on Aging

We will be making Flower Napkin Rings on Tuesday, November 4, at 9:30 am in the Richmond Town Library. Pre-register to reserve your space and materials by calling Heather at Richmond Town Hall, (413) 553-7793. The class is free to COA residents of Richmond and West Stockbridge. It's a fun time—hope to see you there!

The Knitters Group

The Knitters Group meets every Wednesday from 2 to 4 pm in the Community Room at the Town Offices. All crafts are welcome.

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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.



Source of image: https://www.visitweststockbridge .com/churches-library

News from the Pews

St. Patrick's Church

Howdy, *Local Yokel* followers! By the time you're reading this, it will be November. Most of the leaves will have fallen and the "peepers" will have returned to their nests.

Here at St. Patrick's, we have reason to celebrate. The Grounds Committee has been hard at work for the last few months on some exterior projects that are now finished. The church siding and windows were power-washed, the trim was painted, and new plantings were set. The rectory shrubs were trimmed back, and, after a lot of hard work by Wayne Spence and his assistants Steve McMahon and Doug Davis, the garage was totally refurbished. A tremendous amount of work has now been accomplished since the spring.

St. Mary's School in Lee, the only Catholic school in South Berkshire, did a short presentation after Mass on October 12. As a fundraiser, students sell a November cash calendar. A winner is chosen every day for prizes of varying amounts. Even if your name has been drawn, it goes back into the drawing! As the saying goes, "You can't win if you don't play!"

As we get deeper into fall, we will all start to prepare for Thanksgiving and the approaching holiday season. Operation Christmas Child has already begun. Run by an organization known as Samaritan's Purse, gift-filled shoeboxes are sent to children all over the world with toys, school supplies, hygiene products, and more! Parishioners fill the boxes and return them with a \$10 donation to cover shipping. It's a wonderful project to share the love of God with less fortunate children and always supported enthusiastically by parishioners.

We are a small congregation with a big heart. If you're thinking you might want to get in touch with your spiritual side, why not join us Sunday morning for Mass and maybe have a cuppa joe afterward? I'll save you a doughnut!

Hope to see you in the pews!



The Grounds Committee has completed a "tremendous amount of work" since spring. Photo courtesy of St. Patrick's Church

Stockbridge Grange Dinner Sunday, November 9

Roast pork and apple or chocolate pie
Eat in or take out - 1pm - Cost \$17
Reservations appreciated, but not necessary
Grange Hall, 51 Church Street, Stockbridge

To place an order call: (413) 243-1298 or (413) 443-4352





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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.



Ralph "Scott" DiMaio

Commander, USNR (RET) (28 Years)

DO Officer (RET) (33+ Years)



Why I Joined the Service

One of my earliest memories is standing in a shipyard, holding my mother's hand, waiting for my grandfather. My mother's father had served as an engineer on Royal Navy submarines during World War I, later working in the shipyards of Glasgow, Scotland, and eventually immigrating to the United States to work at the Sun Shipyard in Chester, Pennsylvania. I was only five or six, but I remember being struck by the sight of the towering ships and feeling a fascination with the sea. Military service ran through my family. My father served in the Army during the occupation of Germany, an uncle served in the Army in the Pacific, another was seriously wounded during the Battle of the Bulge, and another uncle fought in Korea. Their quiet examples of service and duty shaped how I thought about my own path.

When it came time to choose a college during the Vietnam era, I was drawn to schools with ROTC programs. At Villanova, I joined the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC), established in 1944 as part of the V-12 Program. In May 1975, I was commissioned as an ensign in the U.S. Navy. Looking back, joining the military was never about a single decision; rather, it was the combination of memories and family influences. The Navy became not just a career, but a way of carrying forward a legacy that continues; my own son now serves as a captain in the New York National Guard.

A Memorable Experience

My first ship, the USS *William M. Wood* (DD-715), was anchored off St. Raphael, France, on July 4, 1976, during the U.S. bicentennial. I had the duty that day, so I couldn't go ashore, but the experience was unforgettable. The enthusiastic French visitors who came aboard during the day and the spectacular fireworks that evening clearly showed how deeply the French people remembered and took pride in the role they played in helping us win our independence 200 years earlier.

Lessons Learned from Service

The first thing I learned was that it takes a good follower to become a good leader. If you cannot take orders, you cannot expect to give them well. Leadership means more than giving direction. It requires taking responsibility for your people: their training, the support they need to do their jobs, career and professional guidance, and an interest in their lives outside of work. I also learned the value of belonging to something larger than myself. In the Navy, six months at sea built bonds of camaraderie that felt like family. With limited contact from home, we relied on one another. Those relationships, grounded in trust and shared sacrifice, remain among the strongest of my life. Finally, I came to see that the Code of Conduct—we do not lie, cheat, or steal and remain faithful to our oath—was not just a set of rules, but a way of life: to be honest, forthcoming, and sincere in all things.

Life After the Service

After active duty, I joined the Naval Reserve, ultimately serving a combined 28 years of active and reserve duty. During that time, I earned a master's degree at the University of Pittsburgh before being recruited by the Central Intelligence Agency. I began my career at the National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC) as an imagery analyst and then spent nearly three decades as an officer in the Directorate of Operations (DO), initially in the Central America Task Force (CATF). My work took me across the globe, but it always drew on the discipline, sense of duty, and perspective I gained in the Navy. Along the way, I met my wife Jackie, who also worked at the agency as an analyst, in the gym. Together we raised a son and daughter, and eventually retired to West Stockbridge, where we built a house and settled. Retirement has brought perspective on my time in uniform and government service. Life moves on, but the true measure of service is not the rank or medals you earn—it is the relationships you carry forward, the friends and colleagues who remain part of your circle long after your service ends.

In November 2023, in commemoration of Veterans Day, the Local Yokel began a series of profiles of local veterans to honor their service. We invite West Stockbridge veterans and their families to share their stories. We will continue sharing these profiles as they become available. If interested, please contact Renee McCormick at drreneemccormick@gmail.com or text her at (914) 629-6314. We look forward to hearing from you and telling your story!

Photos courtesy of Scott DiMaio

Housatonic Valley Association's 2025 Auction for the Environment

Lara Beckius, HVA Communications and Engagement Manager

Luxurious getaways, artsy experiences, and local adventures are up for bid at one of fall's most festive events!

On Saturday, November 22, environmental enthusiasts will gather for the HVA's annual Auction for the Environment at South Farms in Morris, Connecticut, with an online silent auction to open on November 10.

Hosted by critically acclaimed Emmy and Tony Award-winning actress Christine Baranski and co-chaired by her daughter, Lily Cowles, and Elyse Harney Morris, this dazzling event promises an exciting afternoon of bidding fun while profoundly benefiting the environmental health of the region we call home, from the Berkshires to Long Island Sound and beyond.

Learn more and purchase tickets to the live event at hvatoday.org, or register online without charge to participate in the silent auction.

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-Fall & Spring Cleanups
-Building & Maintaining Gardens
-Firewood





Grand Opening of the Dog Park*

By Joe Roy, Jr.

About 40 people (and even more dogs) joined the pet parade at the new Dog Park grand opening on Sunday, October 5. More dogs in the crowd (with their owners) watched the parade in the field. And yet more attendees and pets were cheering them on and checking out the multiple pop-up tents with treats for people and pets and information about the park.

Dog Park Committee Chair Michael Bolognino addressed the crowd for the ribbon cutting, thanking the many volunteers who made the park a reality. Then he asked Select Board members Andy Krouss and Kathleen Keresey to cut the ribbon and open the gate.

It was a picture-perfect day with bright sunshine and a blue sky as pet owners and a multitude of dogs enjoyed the new park.

*Adapted from the post on the West Stockbridge Facebook page.

Photos by Joe Roy, Jr. from top:

Select Board members Kathleen Keresey and Andy Krouss cutting the ribbon.

Dog Park Chair Michael Bolognino addresses the crowd.

First participants enjoy the Dog Park.



Winter Parking Ban

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 on Center Street. Snow removal in these areas will be between 7 am and 8 am.

* Thank you for your cooperation! *

West Stockbridge Police Department (413) 232-8500







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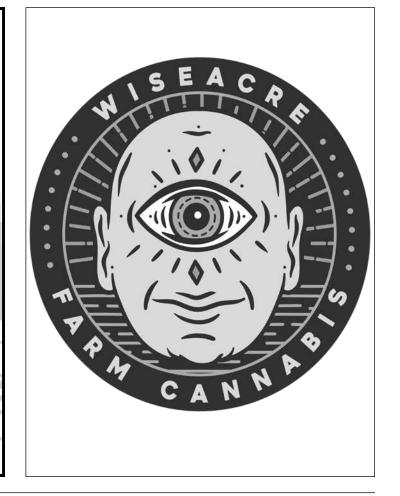
413-232-8522





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

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





WEST STOCKBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY

21 State Line Rd | West Stockbridge, MA 01266 | In the Town Offices weststockbridgepl.org | 413-232-0300 ext. 308

Mon., Wed., Thurs., and Sat. 10 am–3 pm | Tues. and Fri. 2–6 pm | Sun. Closed

Happy Thanksgiving from all of us at West Stockbridge Public Library! Safe travels to those of you who are visiting family and friends far away. Stop in to the library and get a card if you don't already have one. Then use it to borrow a streaming audiobook for some entertainment on your trip!

BORROW THE INTERNET FOR YOUR HOME FOR A YEAR

The hotspots are made possible by the Hotspot Distribution Pilot Program through the Digital Equity Connectivity Fund provided by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute and Alliance for Digital Equity in collaboration with the United Way of Franklin Hampshire Region (UW-FH).

September at a glance:

- 671 hardcopy items were borrowed and renewed
- \$12,300 was saved by library users because they borrowed instead of buying
- 476 eBooks, eMagazines, and streaming audiobooks borrowed

We look forward to seeing you in the library! Vicky, Rachel, and Francesca

NEW ADULT FICTION

Alameddine, *The true true story of Raja the Gullible* Bakopoulos, *Archipelago*

Canas, The possession of Alba Diaz

Follett, Circle of days

Haratischwili, The lack of light

Hardinge, The forest of a thousand eyes

Johnson, The wayfinder

Lamb, The river is waiting

Liu, All that we see or seem

Lockwood, Will there ever be another you

Majumdar, A guardian and a thief

Pynchon, Shadow ticket

Ramage, To the moon and back

Rutherford, North Sun: or, The voyage of the whaleship Esther

NEW ADULT NONFICTION

Bolen, 100 days to better English speaking

Harkup, V is for venom: Agatha Christie's chemicals of death

Lee, A thousand ways to die

Piazza, Living in the present with John Prine

Toews, A truce that is not peace

NEW DVDs

Abigail; Flow; The Friend; Here; Juror #2; A Working Man



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

- 1. Who was the award-winning author of the "Daniel Jacobus" mystery series?
- 2. What else did this author do besides write books?
- 3. Which West Stockbridge resident was one of the youngest musicians ever hired by the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 2015?
- 4. What instrument did this musician play?



3. Rolf Smedvig, 19 years old

concertmaster of the Utah Symphony

Orchestra violinist and associate

2. A former Boston Symphony

1. Gerald Elias



Mass 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.

November Donor Roll Call

Sally Kimball
Robin Lazarow & Amy Beth
Christopher O'Connor
Joan & Tingey Sewall
John & Elizabeth Whitehead

Thanks to everyone who has donated to WSLY. We couldn't do it without your support! Keep the *Local Yokel* coming. Please send your gift today! (See response form on page 21)



Dana Bixby ■ Architecture

danabixby.com

413-232-7834



Come Celebrate with us!



8:30 Sunday Mass followed by Coffee Hour

St.Patrick Church 30 Albany Road West Stockbridge



The Grange meets the 1st or 3rd Monday at 6:30 PM Call to verify the day/date



West Stockbridge Grange 51 Church St. Stockbridge, MA 01262

> Donald McClelland 413-356-4870



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,
- or visit www.thelocalyokel.org
- for more information.

WEST STOCKBRIDGE

Holiday Sparkle Weekend

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5TH

STORY WALK, TREE LIGHTING, AND A VISIT FROM SANTA AT THE TOWN OFFICES PAVILION

(21 STATE LINE ROAD)

The tree will be lit at 5pm, plus enjoy cookies, candy canes, and cocoa! 4:30pm-6pm

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6TH

WEST STOCKBRIDGE HOLIDAY MARKET
AT THE WEST STOCKBRIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(9 MAIN STREET)

Local Artists, artisans and makers selling one-of-a-kind pieces, holiday gifts, baked goods and more. Plus Baldwin Farms Food Truck will be selling delicious local, farm fresh food!

10AM-4PM

CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE AT THE WEST STOCKBRIDGE VILLAGE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

(45 MAIN STREET)

Stop by to enjoy seasonal music, Christmas stories, and cookie decorating in a beautiful, historic church amid traditional decorations.

1PM-3PM

These are all free community events, brought to you by WS Parks & Recreation, the WS Historical Society, the WS Public Library, and the WS Village Congregational Church

Scott Wilton

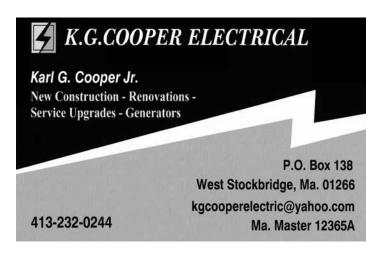
Restoration & Conservation Fine Furniture & Interiors

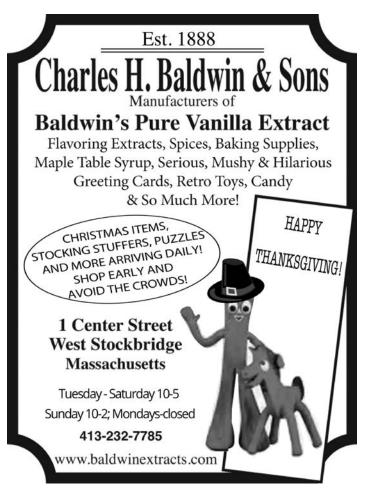
Restore & revitalize old finishes Repairs, re-gluing, veneers, replacements varnishes, shellacs, Japan colors

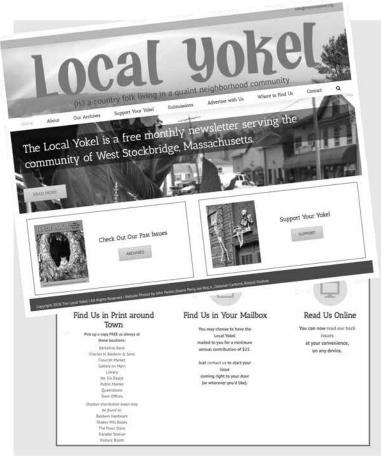
P.O. Box 338

West Stockbridge, MA 01266

(413) 232-4349







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



Tai Chi for Beginners

LEARN THE 24 MOVE FORM

4 week series - Mondays Nov. 10, 17, 24 & Dec. 1 5:30pm-6:30pm Certified Tai Chi Instructor Mary Hannah Parkman

West Stockbridge Historical Society
9 Main Street
West Stockbridge, MA

\$20 per class pre-registration & questions: email - maryhannah.parkman@gmail.com

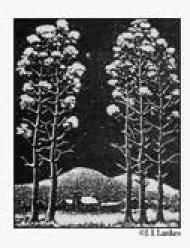
www.maryhannahparkman.com



~2025~

West Stockbridge Holiday Market

Saturday Dec. 6th 10a-4p



9 Main St. Historical Society

Handmade Gifts ● Ceramics ● Block-Printed Cards ● Hand Sewn

Clothing • Wreaths • Wooden Home Objects • Shaker Boxes •

Turned Bowls • Handmade Jewelry • Woolen Treasures

Fine Woodworking
 Pies & Baked Goods

and Baldwin Farms Food Truck

Plus, enjoy special West Stockbridge merchant events, sales & more holiday fun all day long!

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.

	nt to support the Loca	Check any that apply: I would like my contribution to remain	
Enclosed is my do		anonymous.	
made payable to I	NSLY.		Thanks, but don't mail the <i>Local Yokel</i> to me. Save the postage; I'll pick it up myse
Name (as you want it to appear in acknowledgments)			Yes, please do send me a YKL Bumper Sticker for my
Address (location you	would like the Local Yokel ar	nd/or bumper sticke	r sent) donation of \$35 or more.
			Please mail this form with your check to:
City	State	Zip	WSLY
			P.O. Box 238
Email			West Stockbridge, MA 01266

Your business need a little exposure?

If you've got a new business idea, updated business plan, or still chuggin' along, advertise in the *Local Yokel* to let readers know what your business is up to!

Visit thelocalyokel.org for our rates or email Vicki for more information at info@thelocalyokel.org.

"You can't get any more local than advertising in the Local Yokel! Stay safe and shop local!"

- Jackie Moffatt at C. H. Baldwin & Sons



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around town:

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Charles H. Baldwin & Sons
Flourish Market
Gallery on Main
Library
No. Six Depot
Public Market
Queensboro
Town Offices

Or you can choose to have the Local Yokel mailed to you for a minimum annual contribution of \$25.

Outdoor distribution boxes: Baldwin Hardware, Shaker Mill Books, The Floor Store, Transfer Station, and Visitors' Booth

Town Government Boards and Commissions, Phone Directory, and Office Hours Town Offices Main Number (413) 232-0300 · Fax 232-7195				
Animal Control	John Drake	464-2148		As Needed
Assessors Office	Mary Stodden	232-0300	ext. 303	Tues. 1–5 pm; Thurs. 9 am–1 pm
Board of Health	Earl Moffatt	232-0300	ext. 314	Fri. 9 am-4 pm, or by appt.
Select Board	Kathleen Keresey Andy Krouss	232-0300	ext. 319	
Town Administrator	Marie Ryan			MonThurs. 7 am-3 pm Fri. 7-11 am
Building Inspector	Brian Duval	232-0300	ext. 313	Leave Message for Inquiries
Conservation Commission	Kathy Korte	232-0300	ext. 300	Leave Message for Inquiries
Council on Aging	John Zick	232-0300	ext. 340	Leave Message for Inquiries
Emergency Management	Louis Oggiani	528-2175		
Fire Department	Steve Traver	911 or 329-7153 (non-emergency)		Mon. 6:30–9 pm
Highway Department	Curt G. Wilton	232-0305		Leave Message for Inquiries
Library	Rachel Alter	232-0300	ext. 308	Mon., Wed., Thurs., and Sat. 10 am–3 pm; Tues. and Fri. 2–6 pm; closed Sun.
Police Department	Nicole Miller	911 or 232-8500 (non-emergency)		24 hours, 7 days/week
Post Office	Randy Bates	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	Michael Buffoni	232-0309		
Town Accountant	Elaine Markham	232-0300	ext. 317	Leave Message for Inquiries
Town Clerk	Ronni Barrett	232-0300	ext. 300	Tues. & Thurs. 1:30-3:30 pm
Town Collector	Kelli Bradbury	232-0300	ext. 302	Tues. 1–5 pm; Wed. 7 am–12 pm; Thurs. 1–6 pm
Town Historian	Robert Salerno	232-4465		
Town Treasurer	Benjamin Gelb	232-0300	ext. 316	Tues. 9 am-4 pm
Transfer Station	Wayne Cooper	232-0307		Tues. & Thurs. 10 am-6 pm and Sat. 8 am-6 pm
Tree Warden	Andrew Fudge	212-9206		
Veterans Agency	Tom Beasley	528-1580		
Zoning Board of Appeals	C. Randolph Thunfors	232-0300	ext. 300	

Official Town Government Website: weststockbridge-ma.gov • Community and Business Website: visitweststockbridge.com

November Art Calendar

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

2025

October 30 - November 30, "Plein Air"

Art show featuring local plein air artists. Art on Main Gallery, West Stockbridge, MA. **Opening Reception:** Saturday Nov 1, 2-4PM **Closing Reception:** Sunday Nov 30,

12:30-3:30pm

November 23, Berkshire Photo Gathering.

Last meeting of 2025! See web: berkshirephotogathering.com/online-meetings

September 30 - December 16, "Colors of Autumn" Fall Art show at the Colonial Theatre. See website for theatre hours.

Upcoming Workshops:

NOVEMBER

Mondays, November 10-24, "Explorations in Cold Wax" Workshop with Carolyn Abrams at Berkshire South. See Guild website for all details and signup link.

November 14-26, "Watercolor Portraits"Workshop with Pat Hogan at Berkshire South.
See Guild website for all details and signup link.

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

Plein Air October 30 - November 30, 2025

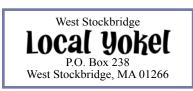




Opening Reception: November 1, 2-4pm Closing Reception: November 30, 12:30-3:30pm



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thelocalyokel.org



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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

November Calendar of Events

11/2	Daylight Savings Time ends (set clocks back one hour)				
11/4	Council on Aging Craft Group meeting 9:30 am		Richmond Library History Room		
11/4	Special Election on New High School	11 am-7 pm	Town Offices		
11/5	Knitters Group	2–4 pm	Community Room		
11/9	Stockbridge Grange Dinner (see ad inside for details)				
11/10	Tai Chi for Beginners (4 classes: 11/10, 11/17, 11/24, 12/1)	Old Town Hall, 9 Main Street			
11/10	Select Board meeting	6 pm	Town Offices and on Zoom		
11/10	Planning Board meeting 7 pm		Town Offices		
11/11	Veterans Day				
11/12	Knitters Group	2–4 pm	Community Room		
11/12	Friends of the Library meeting	3:30 pm	Community Room		
11/15	*** Deadline for the next <i>Local Yokel</i> ***	Send to info@thelocalyokel.org			
11/15	WSHS Jazz Series: Rick McLaughlin Trio 7 pm		Old Town Hall, 9 Main Street		
11/17	Special Town Election for Select Board	10 am-7 pm	Town Offices		
11/19	Knitters Group	2–4 pm	Community Room		
11/24	Select Board meeting	6 pm	Town Offices and on Zoom		
11/24	Planning Board meeting	7 pm	Town Offices		
11/26	Knitters Group	2–4 pm	Community Room		
11/27	Thanksgiving				
Note: T	Note: Town Offices (including Community Room and Library) are located at 21 State Line Road, West Stockbridge.				