

# Local yokel

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

West  
Stockbridge  
**January**  
2026

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 2004



*Frosty dahlia at 11 Lenox Flower Farm  
in West Stockbridge. Photo by  
Diana Pappas of PappasBland*

Happy  
New Year!

# First Frost/Final Bloom

By Diana Pappas, PappasBland

With winter well and truly upon us, last autumn's first frost might now be a distant memory, but thanks to a West Stockbridge collaboration between 11 Lenox Flower Farm and PappasBland, it has been preserved to contemplate and enjoy without the need for outerwear or the ability to pause time.

We had ample warning that the first frost was coming, enough warning to bring our lemon tree in from the cold, harvest all the remaining peppers, and snip handfuls of tender herbs in a bid to hold on to the growing season for as long as possible. It wasn't a mad rush like it usually is most years; we were actually prepared. And it was in that preparation that we had time to formulate an idea for an art project. My husband Tom and I are photographers, and I am a gardener, and there was a unique opportunity to bring these interests and abilities into alignment.

Just through the woods from our house in West Stockbridge is 11 Lenox, a micro flower farm where Maria Santos and Dustin Bartlett have been transforming their gardening hobby into a business. Alongside such botanical curiosities as pawpaw trees, medlar, and Asian pears, they have amassed a collection of more than 30 varieties of dahlias. I had been meaning to get over there all summer and fall to tour the farm and talk plants, but for one reason or another it never happened, until it absolutely *had* to happen. The dahlias would not survive what was coming.

The incoming frost was really a freeze, and Maria and Dustin's dahlias were growing in blissful ignorance to this weather event. On the night of October 9, the temperatures plunged into the 20s, and on the morning of October 10, we showed up at the flower farm ready with thermals, coats, mittens, and cameras.

The grass crunched underfoot, blackberry leaves were edged in white, and aside from the curious clucks of chickens, there was a stillness and a silence to the morning. We walked through frozen rows of dahlias, papery and stiff to the touch, transformed by freeze into sculptures, their vibrant colors both dulled and highlighted by frost as if they were candied violets. Photographically, the dahlias could not have been more interesting. In the moment of their death there was such beauty, beautiful beyond what they would have been if seen a day earlier at their peak.

The different forms of dahlias responded in various ways to the frost. Ball dahlias stood defiant in the face of the freeze while dinnerplate dahlias totally

*...continued on page 3*



*Photos by PappasBland:*

# West Stockbridge "Sparkled" in 2025

By Cait Graham

Frigid temperatures were no match for the creative folks on West Stockbridge Parks & Rec and the West Stockbridge Public Library, as the whole program was successfully shifted indoors at the last minute! It worked out beautifully, welcoming local families into the library children's section to meet Santa and receive gifts and then into the Community Room for refreshments, merriment, and crafts facilitated by the library.

The WSPD graciously escorted the Mr. and Mrs. Claus to the town Christmas tree (located behind the library), which Santa magically lit after an excited countdown from the crowd. With temperatures hovering around 15 degrees, everyone then moved indoors for the remainder of the evening's fun! A long line of families made their way in to visit Santa, express their Christmas wishes, and double-check to make sure their children were on the "nice" list.

As always, it's wonderful to see all the smiling faces in the community and to be reminded that we are all lucky to be "local yokels" in this lovely town!

*top: They made it happen! Left to right, back row: Rachael Armstrong, Lauren Hyde, Kelli Bradbury, Mary Roy, Joe Roy, JP Boscarino. Left to right, front row: Mrs. Claus & Santa Claus. Not pictured: Cait Graham & Peter Skorput, who also helped make it happen. Photo by Zachary Roy.*

*center: Peter Skorput as Santa. Photo by Joe Roy, Jr.*

*bottom: Parks & Rec members serve up goodies. Photo by Joe Roy, Jr.*



---

...continued from page 2

capitulated, reaching for the ground in urgency when prior to the frost they were reaching for the sky with all the time in the world. It felt very much like time had stopped and we could explore this in-between space between life and decay. The moment felt special, and we knew even as we pressed the shutters on our cameras that the photographs would reflect it.

The sun eventually made its presence known, and for a time the frozen crystals resisted its warmth, with frost and sunshine coexisting to make a sparkling, glittering effect on the flowers and foliage. It sounds reductive to call the moment magical, but honestly that's exactly what it was. And then we noticed a perceptible change—time had resumed, melt had been initiated, and within a matter of minutes the flowers looked like they were melting before our eyes. The show was over, and by the end of the day what was visible above ground was already well on the way to becoming compost.

Below ground, however, the dahlia tubers would be unaffected, waiting for Maria and Dustin to dig them up, label them, and put them into storage for winter until they could be planted out in May, among their many other tasks involved in growing dahlias successfully. Their efforts are a labor of love, and we are so lucky in West Stockbridge to have such stunning flowers available to us grown right here on our doorstep. Look out for gorgeous bouquets at Maria and Dustin's cheerful farm stand on Lenox Road during the upcoming growing season. But last year's blooms aren't over yet, not quite.

We have designed and published *First Frost/Final Bloom*, a limited edition 32-page art zine that is a printed walk through the frozen dahlias. With an introduction by writer and gardener Lee Buttala of Ashley Falls and featuring a Q&A with Maria and Dustin, *First Frost/Final Bloom* contains 21 of our photographs. With the intention of favoring the physical over the digital realm, we have deliberately chosen to debut this work on paper. Keen eyes may have noticed a print of one of the frozen dahlias on display at the West Stockbridge Public Library in recent weeks. For information about where to pick up a copy of *First Frost/Final Bloom*, visit <https://pappasbland.com/zines>.

# Thank You!

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

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



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

## An Event-full Fall at the Old Town Hall

By Liza Bennett, West Stockbridge Historical Society

Boy, have we been busy. We painted and restored the upstairs and are in the midst of a major renovation on the first floor. But that didn't keep us from hosting three new musical events: the Rick McLaughlin Trio and Natalia Bernal in our jazz series, and the West Stockbridge Chamber Players Harvest Concert.

We also presented two fascinating Berkshire Nature Talks on Berkshire reptiles and building responsibly using the "slow wood" method. Liza Bennett spoke about her book on the lifelong friendship of Georgia O'Keeffe and the suffragist Anita Pollitzer, and Robert Salerno led a fascinating history walk through the West Center area and cemetery.

Along with all that, the Historical Society welcomed trick-or-treaters, offered tai chi classes, and opened its doors for a bustling West Stockbridge Holiday Market. Altogether, we hosted 27 events and programs over the past 12 months and welcomed more than 2,600 people to our concerts and events.

Here's to an even busier 2026!

*Photos by John Parker:*

*Book talk - Georgia & Anita by Liza Bennett*

*Nature Talk - Slow Wood by Brian Donahue*

*Holiday Market 2025 in the Old Town Hall*

*History Walk - West Center cemetery*

*Meet a turtle - Berkshire Reptiles with Tom Tynning*



# 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 January be viewed by clicking on the link in the meeting agenda posted on the town website calendar. Residents can receive email notification of town events and meeting agendas by subscribing at <http://weststockbridgema.virtualltownhall.net/subscriber>].

## Select Board Meeting Minutes Zoom Only Meeting September 5, 2025

**Present:** Select Board Chair Andy Krouss and  
Select Board member Kathleen Keresey

The Chair opened the meeting at 9:00 AM.

The Chair stated that, due to a inadvertent typographical error contained in the notice of the Select Board's August 28, 2025 meeting, the Board has re-posted the meeting and is holding this meeting to discuss and re-vote on the matters that were discussed at the August 28<sup>th</sup> meeting, including the approval of a contract between the Town and Tech Environmental to assist with odor mitigation issues at Wiseacre Farm. The Chair explained that the notice for the August 28<sup>th</sup> meeting, which was held in open session, incorrectly listed the date of the meeting as August 26, 2025.

### **Citizen Speak:**

I'in Cox, of 289 Great Barrington Road, and Brittany Daley, of 7 Jenifer Lane, both spoke in support of Wiseacre Farm.

Aaron DuBois, Wiseacre Farm Attorney, stated he had concerns about the continued executive sessions regarding Wiseacre Farm.

Jon Piasecki, co-owner of Wiseacre Farm, informed the Board that he has concerns regarding the additional odor testing noted in the Tech Environmental contract with the Town.

The Chair thanked everyone for their comments.

### **Tech Environmental Contract:**

The Chair made a motion to enter into a contract with Tech Environmental, which Ms. Keresey seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

Krouss Yes

Keresey Yes

Motion passed and approved.

There was no Select Board speak.

The Chair made a motion to adjourn, and Ms. Keresey seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

Krouss Yes

Keresey Yes

Meeting adjourned at 9:21 AM.

## Select Board Meeting Minutes October 15, 2025

**The quorum was present remotely, 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.

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy, to approve the minutes from September 29, 2025.

All were in favor, and the minutes were approved.

### **Citizen Speak:**

Anne Roy, 3 Miller Lane, informed everyone that the West Stockbridge Resistance Group will hold a rally this Saturday, October 18, from 12:00 PM to 1:30 PM at the Congregational Church. She has notified the Police Department about this peaceful protest. She encouraged anyone who would like to join them.

*...continued on page 7*



**Dana Bixby ■ Architecture**

[danabixby.com](http://danabixby.com)

413-232-7834



**Leslie Klein**  
...the art of clay  
gallery...classes...poetry  
[www.lesliekleinstudio.com](http://www.lesliekleinstudio.com)  
Clay Forms Studio—open by appt. or chance  
30 Austerlitz Rd., West Stockbridge, MA  
413-232-4349 [clayforms@verizon.net](mailto:clayforms@verizon.net)

# West Stockbridge Select Board explores options to improve governance, including creating a town charter

The hired consultants' report shows points of positive management but cites the areas where upgrades should be implemented.

Written by **Leslee Bassman**

December 9, 2025

During the West Stockbridge Select Board's Dec. 8 meeting, local urban planner Jennifer Tabakin and UMass Amherst government expert Wayne Feiden submitted a report and presentation to the group offering recommendations for organizational improvement and detailing an option for a new governing protocol. Photo by Leslee Bassman.



**West Stockbridge** — Select Board members received a town report card of sorts from hired consultants, local urban planner Jennifer Tabakin and UMass Amherst government expert Wayne Feiden. The presentation and filed report identified positive action already taken by government officials towards bettering town efficiencies as well as ways those active procedures could improve, along with an explanation of what steps would be needed should West Stockbridge seek a move from its home rule authority to a charter framework.

The Select Board agreed to take the report and presentation into consideration, adding a relevant discussion to a future agenda meeting.

A copy of the report can be found here. [Editor's note: see <https://www.weststockbridge-ma.gov/home/news/west-stockbridge-operational-and-organizational-assessment-draft>]

According to Select Board member Kathleen Keresey, the effort began more than a year ago when she reflected on government processes amid personnel changes, including a retiring police chief and other officials. At the time, the town also faced organizational questions: hiring a town planner, amending staff position descriptions for consistency, merging payroll reporting methods, engaging two more members to the Select Board, and considering if West Stockbridge would be better off with a different form of government, she said.

The time was right "to take a really holistic look at the way the town has been running," Keresey said. Funds were set aside to analyze the operational and organizational workings of the town, and a proposal was developed for the study in February, with Tabakin and Feiden submitting their draft report at the end of October that included two days of interviews with officials and stakeholders.

Given a charter petition's two-year process—including the creation of a working charter commission—other town improvements can be made concurrently under home rule governance while the actions to establish a charter form of government are ongoing, Tabakin said. The current home rule type of government allows the Select Board to delegate town bylaws and policies. By contrast, a local government ruled by charter adoption allows for that document to serve as "the town's governing framework."

Board members heard an explanation of the charter process from Town Counsel Lauren Goldberg of KP Law during their October 29 session, with Goldberg comparing a town charter to a "constitution" that covers the form of government accepted by the municipality and takes priority over local ordinances or bylaws.

"The charter process is a long one; it does involve cost and lots of involvement," Tabakin said.

The consultants recommended actions that can be taken immediately to modernize town operations, with those steps still benefiting the municipality even if a charter is ultimately not adopted. Specifically, Tabakin and Feiden proposed strengthening the town administrator role; clarifying reporting relationships; updating human resources and information technology (IT) policies, procedures, and manuals; documenting financial management practices; and adding board or staff training and assistance, especially for those new to their positions. For Tabakin, these recommendations reference "very common types of issues many, many towns are facing." "Incremental and immediate improvements allow West Stockbridge to test solutions, evaluate needs, and determine whether continued home rule changes

*...continued on page 8*

...continued from page 5

Marc Portieri, former West Stockbridge Police Chief, stated that he was concerned because he has not been offered detail assignments.

Barry Girdler, Oak Street resident, commented on the agenda item regarding a walking trail around the Town Hall property. He stated that he is an abutter and urged the Board and the Parks Department to take into consideration the opinions of all of the abutters before creating this trail.

**Town Administrator Update:**

Marie encouraged anyone who has not completed the Emergency Management Services survey located on the main page of the website to please do so. West Stockbridge has completed almost 50, which is excellent, but they would like to gather as much information from the survey as possible.

She also reminded everyone to attend the upcoming Special Town Meeting on Monday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, at 6 PM at Town Hall.

**Social Equity Policy, Evaluation Rubric and Host Community Agreement Policy and Procedures: Town Counsel Nicole Costanzo**

Town Counsel Nicole Costanzo explained that part of the updated Cannabis Control Commission regulations requires the Towns to have a dedicated page on their website for Cannabis, including specific documents. She stated that the Board must post a Social Equity Policy with an evaluation Rubric, as well as a Host Community Agreement Policy and procedures on their website.

Kathleen asked if these policies are only relevant to new Host Community Agreements (HCA) or if they are for current ones as well. Nicole stated that these policies are for both existing and new HCA applicants; they do not distinguish between new and current applicants. She also recommended that the Board apply these policies consistently.

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy, to approve the Social Equity Policy, Evaluation Rubric, and the HCA Policy and Procedures.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

**Pole Location on Easland Road: National Grid, Donald Taggart**

Donald Taggart from National Grid requested that the Board approve the location of new poles along Easland Road. He explained that the older poles are currently deep in the wooded area, making it difficult to perform any maintenance on them. National Grid is requesting permission to relocate and place new poles closer to the road for better access. Director of Public Works, Curt Wilton, asked if the poles could be at least 3 feet away from the roadway. He was concerned about the room for plowing that very narrow road. Donald replied that they would place them as far off the road as possible, preferably three feet off the roadway, while still keeping them out of the wooded area for better access.

...continued on page 9

# Timmons Landscaping & Tree

Fully Insured - Free estimates

**413-329-8200**

- Tree and Brush Removal
- Tree Pruning
- Stump Grinding
- Plowing & Sanding
- House Checking/Caretaking
- Drainage & Driveway Repairs
- Lawn & Field Mowing
- Fall & Spring Cleanups
- Building & Maintaining Gardens
- Firewood

...continued from page 6

are sufficient or if a charter would provide longer-term clarity, statutory authority, and stability for the future,” she said.

Feiden praised the administration for “doing a good job” consolidating and indexing local codes and bylaws. However, he suggested the town implement several upgrades such as formalizing its process of providing monthly reports in one format, adopting “the right” software package for employees to report and keep track of their time, and formulating process changes to accommodate the town clerk’s transition from an elected position to an appointed one in two years. The consultants advocated some measures that would require approval by residents at Town Meeting: merging the treasurer and tax collector positions, increasing the Select Board membership from three members to five members, and funding a charter commission.

Tabakin advised adding on-call or temporary service contracts for employees who may take a leave of absence, keeping the town’s Capital Improvement Plan up to date, continuing to work on its Master Plan, brokering other shared-services agreements as the town embarks on a joint fire and emergency services program with Stockbridge, and incorporating technical advisers to bolster volunteer board and commission members in their roles.

She also noted the stress that towns similar to West Stockbridge are experiencing with “less volunteers.” Concurrently, she said, “local government is becoming more complicated and you have to have a lot of technical knowledge.”

“Some of these [recommendations] obviously have cost and some have cost savings involved,” Feiden said.



## Queensboro Wine & Spirits

26 Main Street ~ West Stockbridge

**Carefully curated wines,  
unusual spirits and  
awesome beers**

*Don't see what you're looking for?  
Just ask and we can get it in for you!*

**413-232-8522**



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

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

# Bark Mulch Topsoil Compost

S  
W  
E  
E  
T  
P  
E  
A  
T

G  
R  
A  
V  
E  
L  
P  
R  
O  
D  
U  
C  
T  
S

**413-243-4111**

Meadow Farm  
1125 Meadow Street, Lee  
[meadowfarmorganics.com](http://meadowfarmorganics.com)

*Compost Facility Accepting Yard & Wood Waste*

...continued from page 7

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy, to approve the pole location for National Grid along Easland Road.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

**Police Update: Police Chief Nicole Miller**

Police Chief Nicole Miller said the new Officer Donald Rhodes has been working independently for a few evenings now and is doing a great job. He works well with all the other officers.

She then informed the Board that she had applied for and had received two grants. She was awarded a grant through the Ed J. Burns Memorial Justice Assistance Grant for \$30,000. She will be using this grant money to purchase a fully digital live fingerprint scan system. This grant money will pay for the equipment and the training needed to use it. The second grant she was awarded is a Municipal Road Safety Grant for \$25,000. She will use these funds to purchase a traffic message board, pay for approximately 50 additional officer hours of traffic calming, and fund a bike rodeo for the children. The Bike Rodeo will include the purchase of bike helmets, bike safety coloring books, and safety vests, all to give away for free to the children.

She reported to the Board the following statistics from July 1<sup>st</sup> until today:

254	Motor Vehicle Stops
16	Incidents (some ended in arrests)
7	Accidents
12	Arrests

Regarding police detail work, where a company reimburses the Town for the officer's cost, plus an additional 10% that the Town earns, the total money earned to date is \$8,027.

Andy asked Nicole if the message board would be electronic, and she responded that they are currently shopping around, so she is hopeful but not sure at this time.

**Proposed Trail Around Town Hall: Parks Chair Joe Roy**

Parks Commission Chair Joe Roy presented a map of a proposed walking trail around the Town Hall property. The trail would be eight feet wide and approximately 0.4 miles long. They hope to include benches along the trail as well. He thanked Barry Girdler for speaking up and assured the Board that the Parks Commissioners plan to include all abutters and Town Departments in the discussion to create a plan that works best for everyone. He has reached out to a company to get a starting estimate, which he believes will cost about \$58,000. The Commissioners plan on applying for a Community Preservation grant to pay for this. Joe wanted to present the idea to the Select Board for their input before continuing with the process.

Kathleen and Andy both agreed this was a good idea.

**Contract with Weston & Sampson: Town Administrator Marie Ryan**

Marie explained to the Board that the \$348,000 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant award received by the Town is for a feasibility study on a new public safety building, which she and Curt Wilton completed with the assistance of Weston & Sampson Engineer, Inc. Weston & Sampson also will assist with the project and do the administrative work as well as per the MVP

requirements for the grant. They will be paid for through the grant. Marie assured the Board that they plan on having multiple meetings with all stakeholders, including the Town departments, Boards, and residents. Marie said that she has sent this contract to Town Counsel for review, who then requested the Board vote on approval and sign it.

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy, to approve the contract with Weston and Sampson.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

**Select Board Speak:**

Kathleen reminded everyone about the upcoming Special Election regarding the new high school vote. She stated that the School District held a very informative presentation on the issue and she thanked Peter Dillon, School Superintendent, for their efforts to get out all the information needed to the voters.

Kathleen motioned to adjourn, seconded by Andy, at 7:05 PM.

Both approved, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

*Marie Y. Ryan*

Marie Y. Ryan  
Town Administrator

**Select Board Meeting Minutes  
November 10, 2025**

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

Chair Andy Krouss opened the meeting at 6 PM.

Kathleen requested to postpone the approval of the October 15, 2025, minutes to allow for additional time to review them. Andy agreed.

**Citizen Speak:**

None

**Town Administrator Update:**

Marie stated that parts have been ordered to set up broadband at the Town Hall Gazebo and the old Town Hall on Main Street. The Town received a grant to pay for the installation of the additional free public wifi. She hopes to have it in place in the next few weeks.

Marie reminded everyone that the Transfer Station will be closed on Veterans' Day on Tuesday, November 11. She also reminded everyone that the Special Town Election will be held on Monday, November 17<sup>th</sup> from 10 AM until 7 PM.

**Police Department Update: Chief Nicole Miller**

Chief Miller requested that the Select Board grant her permission for the disposal of the 2016 Police Interceptor Utility (Ford Explorer). She received a quote from Troy's Garage stating that the total cost to repair it to working condition, which will pass

...continued on page 11



# CodeRED: The West Stockbridge Alert System

The town urges residents to sign up for the new emergency notification system.

CodeRED is an emergency notification system that enables local public safety personnel and town officials to notify residents and businesses by telephone, text message, and email for time-sensitive information, emergencies, or urgent alerts. The system can reach hundreds of individuals in minutes to ensure information such as evacuation notices, missing persons, inclement weather advisories, and more, are quickly shared. Only authorized officials have access to send alerts using the CodeRED system.

Visit the enrollment portal online at <https://accountportal.onsolve.net/weststockbridgema> or use this QR code to register through the app on your smartphone.



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

## News from the Pews

### St. Patrick's Church



Happy New Year to all. It was a very busy December! With what was going on in everyone's individual and family lives, it was a miracle to have a large group show up to clean and set up the church for Christmas. With many hands, the job got done in just a few hours. All of the gifts collected for the Elizabeth Freeman Center were brought back to St. Patrick's. Steve and Marcia McMahon made sure that they were delivered on time.

The Youth Ministry and New Genesis (a ministry of inclusion for individuals of different abilities) held a "cookie walk" including crafts on Saturday, December 13, at the St. Ann's Parish Center as a collaborative project of the tri-parish community.

With increases in cost of living and difficulties for so many, it was very gratifying to see the generosity of parishioners who contributed to collections like the hats and mittens, sponsored by our Police Department, and also the winter coat drive. With all of the animosity we see and hear about in the news, isn't it amazing how much love and goodwill there is in our community? We should be humble and proud at the same time.



If you managed to attend any of the Christmas holiday and Holy Day services and enjoyed the atmosphere, music, and joyful celebration, why not keep it going? The more, the merrier! And don't forget the coffee and donuts!

If it sounds like I'm trying to fill the pews . . . you've got me! Hope to see you around town and in the pews.

*Decorating for Christmas at St. Patrick's.  
Photos courtesy of St. Patrick's Church.*

...continued from page 9

inspection, will be around \$14,000. The highest possible estimate to sell the vehicle would be around \$4,000. Chief Miller requested that the Board vote to declare this vehicle as surplus. Should the Board provide this vote, Chief Miller would then like to post the car on the online MuniBid to auction it off.

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy, to move that the Select Board declare the 2016 Ford Police Interceptor Utility (Ford Explorer), Vin # 1FM5K8ARXGGC15233, previously assigned to the Police Department, as surplus property in accordance with M.G.L. c.30B, § 15, having been determined to be no longer useful for municipal purposes. Further, the Board authorizes the Town Administrator to dispose of said vehicle through a public auction, online municipal surplus auction platform, or other method permitted under M.G.L. c. 30B, with proper notice, and that all proceeds be deposited in the appropriate municipal account in accordance with Town Policy.

The Town estimates the fair market value of the vehicle to be less than \$10,000; accordingly, disposal shall be conducted in a manner that ensures competition and transparency, consistent with M.G.L. c: 30 B, § 15.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

Nicole reported that the Police Department has been extremely busy. She submitted a report detailing all calls made over the past calendar year. She pointed out the significant increase in total calls, up 26%, and arrests, up 13%. This reflects the increased staff. Chief Miller informed the Board that she interviewed a new potential officer from Texas. She hopes to come before the Board in the near future to appoint this new officer. If this new officer is appointed, the Department will finally be fully staffed after many years. This will only enhance the Department's ability to respond to even more calls in Town. The Department currently employs five full-time officers, including the Chief, and three part-time officers. Once the Department is fully staffed, she hopes to have two cruisers in use per shift by using part-time officers.

Chief Miller thanked the Board for their assistance with the disposal of the older vehicle and looks forward to coming before them in the near future to appoint the newest officer.

**Parks & Recreation Commission Update: Joe Roy and Cait Graham, Co-Chairs**

Joe reported that the Halloween event went very well. He thanked

Kathleen Keresey for serving as costume judge and the Police Department for their help in making the event a great success. Approximately 20 children participated in the costume contest. The Commission served Pizza at the event, which parents really appreciated.

Joe stated that the Parks & Rec Commission has submitted two applications to the Community Preservation Committee for funds. The first application requests funds to assist with creating a walking path around the Town Hall property. They have received input from many Boards and Committees, as well as the Select Board, and appreciate all the assistance.

Cait explained the second application was for additional equipment for the playground at Town Hall. The new equipment will be accessible and used by people with mobility impairments. They hope to purchase a merry-go-round that accommodates children with wheelchairs, as well as those who do not need one, allowing them to play together simultaneously. The second piece of equipment is for intergenerational swings, allowing a grandparent to be on the same swing alongside their grandchildren.

The Parks Commission has set the date for the Holiday Sparkles event as Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup>. This event will include a tree lighting near the gazebo, a visit by Santa as well as gifts for all the children handed out by Santa.

Cait also stated that every year in the Memorial Day Parade, Stockbridge, Great Barrington, and West Stockbridge take turns having the veterans' march in their parades. She is excited to announce that this coming year, the Veterans will be marching in the West Stockbridge parade. She hopes everyone attends to support and cheer them on.

**Dog Park Committee Update: Michael Bolognino, Chair**



Michael announced that the Dog Park officially opened on October 5<sup>th</sup>, with many people and dogs in attendance. The park has been extremely busy with a large number of visitors. He has received only positive feedback and is very happy with the way things are working out. They have installed a first aid box on the fence and a donation box, which has collected over \$300 so far. They had a very nice article written about the Dog Park in the Berkshire Eagle, which also gave attention to the Park, and many people have mailed in donations since that article ran.

...continued on page 12

**Girdler Electric**  
 MA Master License 2406 A1

**Barry Girdler**  
 owner

P. O Box 20  
 West Stockbridge MA 01266  
 413-237-5957  
 girdlerelectric@gmail.com

**BALDWIN HARDWARE**

Depot Street  
 West Stockbridge, MA 01266

Henry Baldwin (413) 232-7757

...continued from page 11

They had one issue regarding a walnut tree. Walnut trees are poisonous to dogs if they eat their nuts or bark. The design company had identified the tree incorrectly, so it was not removed during construction. They had to close the small dog park area until all the nuts had fallen and been cleaned up. Curt Wilton, Director of Public Works, is assisting Michael in obtaining quotes for the removal of the tree.

The water fountain has been shut off for the winter months, and Michael thanked Frank Alfonso, Building and Grounds Superintendent, for winterizing the fountain.

The main issue Michael is having now is finding someone to shovel the path from the parking lot to the fenced park area. Curt Wilton informed him that the employees would not be able to tend to that area, and it was the responsibility of the Dog Park Committee to have it cleared. Michael has been searching for a company to take care of the path, but no one has been able to accept the job. He will continue to search, but he asks the Select Board to help by having the Town maintain the path. There were suggestions of other companies for Michael to reach out to, as well as having a student shovel for them. The Committee is willing to pay to have the path cleared. Marie will look into the insurance for having a student take care of the path and get back to Michael. He also stated that the Park will be closed when there are winter storms that close the schools. A sign will be posted when the schools are closed that the park is also closed.

**Town Welcome Signs: Joe Roy, Jr., Vision Committee**

Joe has been working on a design for new welcome signs to be posted at all roads entering West Stockbridge. He suggests the signs be approximately 24 x 30 inches, in block lettering, with a green background and white letters. He added that the next steps, if the Board wants to move forward, include determining what funds are available and whether the Board approves of the considerations Joe has presented, as well as whether they have any additional comments.

Kathleen stated that she has also reached out to a graphic designer she knows for ideas. She feels that the funds approved at Town Meeting were intended for wayfinding signs, not welcome signs, but both could be considered. Kathleen suggested gathering input from residents on their thoughts and how they would like to brand the Town through these signs. She thinks there should be consistent branding and suggested a small committee work on this design and process. Joe stated he would be happy to be involved, and Andy said he would love to assist as well. Kathleen will provide some graphic design companies to the group to help them. Joe and Andy will work on organizing a group to tackle this. Kathleen thanked Joe for everything he has done.

**Select Board Speak:**

Kathleen noted a tribute to two recently deceased long-time residents, William Negrini and Irene Norton. They were both long-time residents committed to West Stockbridge, and they will be missed.

Andy reminded everyone to vote on Monday, November 17<sup>th</sup> for the new Select Board member.

Kathleen motioned to adjourn, seconded by Andy, at 7:00 PM.

Both approved, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

*Marie Y. Ryan*

Marie Y. Ryan

Town Administrator

**Select Board Meeting Minutes  
November 24, 2025**

**The quorum was present remotely, consisting of** Select Board members Chair Andrew Krouss, Kathleen Keresey, and new Board member Toby Casey, as well as Town Administrator Marie Ryan.

Chair Andy Krouss opened the meeting at 6 PM.

Andy welcomed new Board Member, Toby Casey, and said he looks forward to working with him.

Andy made a motion, seconded by Kathleen, to approve the minutes from September 5, October 15, and November 10, 2025. Toby abstained.

All were in favor, and the motion passed.

**Citizen Speak:**

None

**Town Administrator Update:**

Marie informed the Board that she has submitted the paperwork to the Attorney General's office from the Special Town Meeting on October 20<sup>th</sup> regarding the Short-Term Rentals and Accessory Dwelling Units. It will take 90 days for them to review and approve, so that the timing will bring us to around the end of February.

Marie reminded everyone that the Parks & Recreation Holiday Sparkles event will take place on December 5th at 4:30 at Town Hall and encouraged everyone to attend.

...continued on page 13

<b>BRIDGE OPEN</b>	<b>The Baker Street bridge is now open to traffic!</b>
------------------------	--

**Appointment of Courtney Linkugel as a new Police Officer: Chief Nicole Miller**

Chief Miller requested that the Select Board appoint Courtney Linkugel as a new West Stockbridge Police Officer. Courtney was present via Zoom. The Chief said that she has interviewed Courtney and has had many discussions about her working for the Town of West Stockbridge over the past few weeks. She is very impressed with Courtney and described her as well-rounded as an officer, a certified canine officer, who has earned many commendations, centers her work ethic around community policing, and has the utmost professional integrity.

The Board was impressed with her resume and was happy to meet her virtually. They welcomed her and thanked her for her interest in working for the Town.

Andy made a motion, seconded by Kathleen, to appoint Courtney as a full-time police officer for West Stockbridge.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

The Chief mentioned that in a published article in which the Richmond Select Board requested additional assistance from the State police to monitor Swamp Road for speeders, Nicole wanted to offer aid from the West Stockbridge Police Department. The Chief stated that she recently received a grant for traffic calming, in which she could offer a few hours a month to assist Richmond, and that the grant would pay for those hours and not the Town. She would like to reach out to the Richmond Select Board as a sign of goodwill, which may lead to future collaboration.

Toby expressed concern that West Stockbridge should come first and that the grant money should help fund additional traffic calming there. Chief Miller agreed and said that once the cruisers are at a particular place, they need to move around so drivers do not know the officers' patterns. She suggested they could spend a few hours helping our neighbors mix the traffic calming and noted that Swamp Road is also in West Stockbridge. The chief stated that she has to log all hours used for the grant and that it is set up so that she has a specific number of hours per month for traffic calming, with a use-it-or-lose-it policy each month. Hours cannot be carried over to the next month.

The Chief also mentioned that these grant hours for the officers will be in addition to their regular work schedule. They will not be on patrol for the grant during their regular shifts; it would be in addition to their regular shifts if they want to work for the extra money.

Kathleen inquired about West Stockbridge Police handing out tickets in another town. The Chief stated that if Richmond would like to engage with the Department, she suggested that our officers could be appointed and sworn in as Special Municipal Employees by the Town of Richmond, which should take care of any legalities.

Chief Miller will reach out to Richmond and see if they are interested, and if so, she will begin working with them to set it up. She will also include Town Counsel in the conversation to make sure everything is done correctly.

**Special Town Meeting for December 16, 2025: Bob Salerno, Finance Committee Chair**

The Finance Committee Chair, Bob Salerno, explained to the Board that, due to the aging of the Wastewater Treatment Plant, the

need for continual repairs at this point, and the lack of increased rates over the years, the enterprise fund accounts for the Water and Sewer budgets are in deficit almost every year. The Department of Revenue (DOR) has warned the Town over the past few years that something must be done to address this ongoing issue. Last year, the Water and Sewer Commissioners increased the Sewer rate but decreased the Water rate, which did not help the situation. This year, the DOR stated that they will not approve our tax rate until the Town has taken this issue seriously, addressed the current deficit, and developed a plan for the future. Bob stated that the tax bills need to be mailed out by mid to late December to ensure the revenue comes in and pays the Town's bills. The Collector cannot mail out the bills until the tax rate has been set. The DOR has recommended that the Town use three separate articles, which will allow the DOR to approve a tax rate and move the Town forward.

Lastly, Bob mentioned that the Sewer plant has many maintenance issues that need to be addressed. The Water and Sewer Commissioners request that an engineering study be conducted to determine what needs to be completed and in what order to keep the plant operational. Once this is done, the Town will be able to use the study to apply for loans and grants to help pay for the upgrades.

The three articles that will be on the Special Town Meeting Warrant would need to be:

1. To transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$25,000 to cover the Sewer Enterprise Fund FY26 Revenue shortfall
2. To transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$35,000 to pay for an engineering study of the Sewer Plant.
3. To transfer from the Water Retained Earnings Account, the sum of \$49,000 to support the Water Enterprise Fund FY26 Revenues.

Bob stated that the Water and Sewer Commissioners, as well as the Finance Committee, have voted to support these articles held at a Special Town Meeting and request that the Board vote to hold this meeting.

Andy made a motion, seconded by Kathleen, to hold a Special Town Meeting on Tuesday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM to include the articles as mentioned above.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

**Select Board Speak:**

Toby said he looks forward to working with the Board and thanked everyone for welcoming him.

Kathleen said she is happy to have Toby join the group and welcomed him.

Kathleen motioned to adjourn, seconded by Toby, at 6:29 PM.

All approved, and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

*Marie Y. Ryan*

Marie Y. Ryan

Town Administrator

## January History Quiz Question:

In the winter of 1775–76, the uprising in the colonies was heating up to eventually become a full-scale revolution. Emotions ran high in Massachusetts, with the battles of Lexington and Concord, and then Bunker Hill. Boston was the focus of British forces, but they were cut off by the town and county militias. George Washington had recently arrived that fall to form a rebel group of untrained volunteers to fight the world's most professional army. It was an interesting time.

The New England towns felt threatened by these British troops. (Shoreline towns had been bombarded by the British Navy and Portland was burned to the ground.) The towns were asked to support Washington with the siege of Boston and staffing a military force. How did West Stockbridge respond to this call for help?

(Find the answer somewhere in this issue!)



**West Stockbridge  
Historical Society**  
Incorporated in 1994

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

## January Donor Roll Call

Richard & Pauline Arienti  
Judie Bodnar  
Jerri & Dan Buehler  
Maria Mackavey Carls  
Sue Coxon  
Gene Dellea  
Mark & Melissa Greenlaw  
Sally Kimball  
Sheila & Wally Lehman  
John Olander & Margery Turner  
Edmund Parnes  
Steve & Erika Sautman  
Mary K. Stodden  
Joe & Kathy Valenti

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)

## 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.

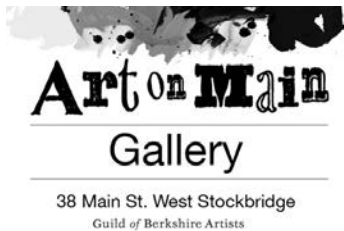
\* Thank you for your cooperation! \*

West Stockbridge Police Department (413) 232-8500



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

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.



# Small Works Show Extended Open Saturdays 11 to 3 in January and February

The Guild of Berkshire Artists is happy to announce that the Small Works show will continue through February.

Carolyn Abrams, Sue Aiken, Lori Bradley, Anne Ferril, Caryn King, Christine Koldys, and Deborah Schneer will fill the gallery with their unique works of art in painting, ceramics, photography, and fiber.

### Carolyn Abrams

My work in oils and cold wax reflects my connection with my creative spirit and the world around me, most especially Mother Nature in all her beauty and her challenges.

### Sue Aiken

My approach to painting can change with the subject, with the intention to impart a sense of place and local colors in landscapes, or playfulness and whimsy with little flower arrangements. Overall, it is to give the viewer a moment to relax with a sense of peace.

### Lori Bradley

Birds are a favorite subject of mine to paint as they act in ways similar to humans, so I started painting them to tell stories about human interactions and relationships. I also enjoy their subtle but intricate forms, colors, and shapes.

### Anne Ferril

Each ceramic piece I create, no matter the size, is shaped by my hands, so while its form may be familiar, every object remains unique. The diverse elements, minerals, chemicals, and firing methods all contribute to a piece's personality. These smoke-fired pinched vases are gilded for the holidays.

### Caryn King

Clay, paint, and mixed media collage—my art comes from pure joy in creating and a deep love that comes straight from the soul. Animals, people, and the natural world all find their way in!

### Christine Koldys

I am a free spirit artist working in several different mediums, and this is one of my needle-felt pieces. My work is inspired by the beauty of nature and my imagination.

### Deborah Schneer

In my artwork and life, I look for color and light, and from these create a balance that is beautiful to my eye. It is one way I manage the chaos of our times.



Images courtesy of the artists (clockwise from top):  
Carolyn Abrams  
Sue Aiken  
Lori Bradley  
Anne Ferril  
Caryn King  
Christina Koldys  
Deborah Schneer

# Mill Brook Sugar House


New Lenox Road  
Lenox, MA

[www.millbrookmaplestore.com](http://www.millbrookmaplestore.com)



*From Tree.. to Table  
and everything in between.*

Local Delivery  
&  
Shipping available

Find us on 

## Stockbridge Grange Dinner Sunday, January 11

Swedish meatballs, lemon and chocolate pies  
Take out only/pick up - 12-1:30pm - Cost \$17  
Grange Hall, 51 Church Street, Stockbridge

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

Call if the weather is iffy to see if the dinner will be  
moved to the following Sunday, January 18

## Friends & Neighbors

Come Celebrate with us!



8:30 Sunday Mass  
followed by  
Coffee Hour

St. Patrick Church  
30 Albany Road  
West Stockbridge



## 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.

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission at  
[HMLP@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:HMLP@berkshireplanning.org).



# WEST STOCKBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY

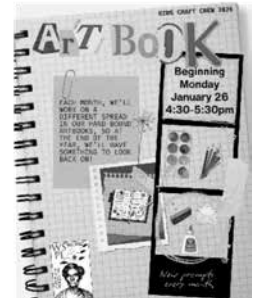
21 State Line Rd | West Stockbridge, MA 01266 | In the Town Offices  
weststockbridgepl.org | 413-232-0300 ext. 308

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



Best wishes for a very happy 2026 from all of us at the West Stockbridge Public Library!

**The Kids Craft Crew is meeting on Monday, January 12, and again on January 26 at 4:30 pm.** Get ready to create with Q-tips on 1/12, and then join us on 1/26 to begin working on your own book! Email weststockbridgelibrary@gmail.com with any questions, or come see us in person for more information.



November at a glance:

- 579 hardcopy items were borrowed and renewed
- \$8,500 was saved by library users because they borrowed instead of buying
- 491 eBooks, eMagazines, and streaming audiobooks borrowed

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

\*\*\*\*\*

## NEW ADULT FICTION

- Adler-Olsen, *The keeper of lost causes*
- Adrian, *Seduction theory*
- Atwood, *Book of lives: a memoir of sorts*
- Baldacci, *Nash Falls*
- Brown, *Red rising*
- Gabel, *Lightbreakers*
- Herron, *Slow horses*
- Hilderbrand, *The academy*
- Patterson, *The Picasso heist*
- Rose, *The perfect marriage*
- Sen, *Alchemised*
- Sharpson, *The burial tide*
- Washington, *Palaver*

## NEW ADULT NONFICTION

- Bourdain, *The Anthony Bourdain reader*
- Carlin, *Tonight in Jungleland*
- Ellis, *The great contradiction*
- Fox, *Future boy*
- Jen, *Bad bad girl*
- Porter, *Buzz me in*
- Slaght, *Tigers between empires*
- Trump, *Under siege*

## NEW TITLES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS

- McCarty, *The five wolves*
- Pilkey, *Dog Man: Big Jim believes*
- Ponti, *City of the dead*
- Ponti, *City spies*
- Ponti, *Forbidden city*
- Ponti, *Golden Gate*
- Ponti, *Mission Manhattan*
- Pullman, *The book of dust*
- Tavares, *Dasher and the polar bear*
- Velasquez, *The polar bear and the ballerina*



## Scrapbook Questions/created by Paula Farrell

### TEST YOUR TRIVIA KNOWLEDGE!

1. What is the name of the second floor in the Old Town Hall?
2. Voters at the May 4, 2015, town meeting authorized the town to borrow \$1,917,600. What was that large sum used for?
3. In addition to selling coffee and food at No. 6 Depot, what other events took place there in 2015?
4. What happened at the open mike event for the first time at the No. 6 Depot Gallery?

1. Vaber Hall auditorium
2. Its share of the costs to construct, install, and start up a high-speed network.
3. The Gallery hosted dance, theater, and other performances.
4. Local residents performed original works of poetry, prose, or favorite classics.



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.

# Dog Park Raffle Prize Awarded

Dog Park Committee Chair Michael Bolognino announced the winner of their raffle. Tickets were sold all summer at the Farmers Market, Zucchini Festival, and Baldwin Extracts. The prize was a custom portrait by local artist Vivian Outlaw, valued at \$2,500. Congratulations to the winner, Kim Sack of Glendale! The photo shows artist Vivian Law with Kim's dog Lulu and her painting of Lulu."



Artist Vivian Outlaw with her painting of Lulu.  
Photo courtesy of the Dog Park Committee

## January Art Calendar

Guild of Berkshire Artists | BerkshireArtists.org | infoberkshireartists@gmail.com 2026

**January & February, "Holiday Small Works"** Art show featuring small works by local artists. Art on Main Gallery, West Stockbridge, MA.  
*Limited hours on Saturdays from 11-3 in January & February.*

**January, Berkshire Photo Gathering.** Visit the website for the 2026 once posted! See web: [berkshirephotogathering.com/online-meetings](http://berkshirephotogathering.com/online-meetings)

### Upcoming Workshops:

**Tuesdays, Jan 20 - Feb 24, "Painting in Oils with Bob Watkins"** Workshop on traditional painting using environmentally safe materials at Berkshire South. See Guild website for all details and signup link.

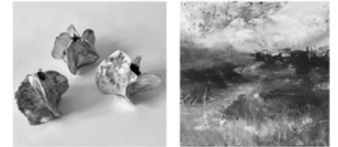
**Jan 12, "Explorations in Cold Wax" with Carolyn Abrams** at Berkshire South. See Guild website for all details and signup link.

**Jan 26, "Intro to Cold Wax" with Carolyn Abrams** at Berkshire South. See Guild website for all details and signup link.

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

### Small Works Exhibit

*Limited hours on Saturdays from 11-3 in January & February.*



*From ceramics to fiber arts the gallery will be filled with original works of art that are great for gift giving and sharing.*

Carolyn Abrams | Sue Aiken | Lori Bradley | Anne Ferril  
Caryn King | Christina Koldys | Deborah Schmeer

**Art on Main**

38 Main Street, West Stockbridge



Do you enjoy writing or photography?

The *Local Yokel* needs regular and occasional contributors.

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



## 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**

### FINE ART RESTORATION

Specializing in oil painting restoration

By Troy Amuso, Master Conservator

-all styles and value levels-

Over 35 years Restoration & Conservation Experience

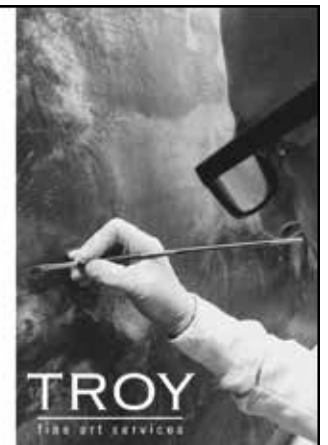
**O:(413)248-1309 M:(203)856-1337**

Studios in Sheffield/Ashley Falls, MA. & CT.

Serving New England and beyond.

Family owned since 1997.

[www.TroyFineArt.com](http://www.TroyFineArt.com)



**TROY**  
FINE ART SERVICES

# Community News & Events

## Stockbridge Grange Dinner

The Grange dinner will be takeout only on Jan. 11; see ad on p. 16 for details.

## Council on Aging

We will be making Self-Closing Bags on Tuesday, January 6, 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.

## Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Library Committee meets every second Wednesday of the month from 3:30 to 4:30 pm in the Community Room at the Town Offices. All are welcome.

*Please send your notices for Community News & Events to the Local Yokel, P.O. Box 238, West Stockbridge, MA 01266, email [info@thelocalyokel.org](mailto:info@thelocalyokel.org), or visit [thelocalyokel.org](http://thelocalyokel.org).*



## An Invitation to Veterans

Since November 2023, the *Local Yokel* has produced a series of profiles of local veterans to honor their service. We invite all 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 [drreemccormick@gmail.com](mailto:drreemccormick@gmail.com) or text her at (914) 629-6314. We look forward to hearing from you and telling your story!

THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR  
SERVICE!



38 MAIN STREET  
(413) 232-4253  
[STONEHOUSEPROPERTIES.COM](http://STONEHOUSEPROPERTIES.COM)



42 Stockbridge Road (Motel) | 4 Main Street (Mixed Use)  
YOUR WEST STOCKBRIDGE EXPERTS



**Karl G. Cooper Jr.**  
New Construction - Renovations -  
Service Upgrades - Generators

P.O. Box 138  
West Stockbridge, Ma. 01266  
[kgcooperelectric@yahoo.com](mailto:kgcooperelectric@yahoo.com)  
413-232-0244  
Ma. Master 12365A



We've been flooring people since 1983!

12 Main Street  
West Stockbridge, MA

(P) 413-232-7175  
(F) 413-232-4659

Tuesday - Saturday  
9:00AM - 4:00PM

[www.floorstoreweststockbridge.com](http://www.floorstoreweststockbridge.com)

Mary K Roy  
[marykroy33@gmail.com](mailto:marykroy33@gmail.com)

Joseph P Roy  
[floorstorews@gmail.com](mailto:floorstorews@gmail.com)

# History Quiz Answer:

West Stockbridge, a formal town for barely 18 months, joined with other Berkshire County villages to support the uprising. In the fall of 1775, it voted unanimously to raise money for the provincial government and organized a militia of 14 men to join with the unit being formed in Stockbridge. This Stockbridge group, called "Rossiter's regiment," was part of the Third Southern Berkshire contingent that went to Boston to support the siege.

The town also formed a Committee of Inspection of seven men to see to the "protection of inhabitants and their interests at home." We have no record of what exactly that meant, but we can infer there was some concern that the British Army would somehow invade West Stockbridge.

Many years later, around 1900, the state compiled a record of all the soldiers and sailors who served in the Revolution from Massachusetts. This was a major endeavor because recordkeeping was not a standard or consistent practice during the war. It's a thick 17-volume work, with the entries listed by last name, town (if available), dates and location of service, and discharge date. We've been through half of the volumes, looking for names of West Stockbridge servicemen to gain a more detailed understanding of our involvement.

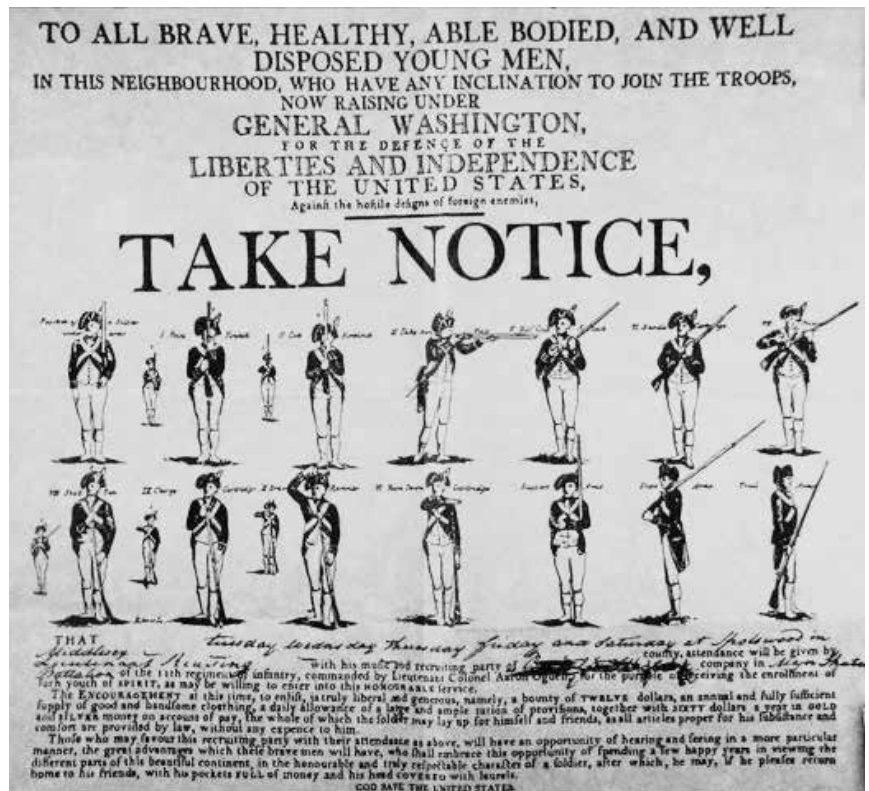
The first years of the war saw much activity, with many early enlistments to serve in Boston and support the siege. Winter was very active because we were a farming community and the cold months were a quiet time. The initial enlistments in 1775 were short term, 30 or 60 days, but later in the year some stayed for three months. Others were only 10 days. We assume these men needed to return home to plant in the spring.

Pay initially included a travel allowance of one day for every 20 miles from home. The payroll registers also listed a few people serving for clothing (one coat). The soldiers' pay was funded from money raised by the towns. As the war went on, it became more difficult to pay the army, and it became an issue for recruiting new volunteers. After the war, money was so scarce, it took the town five years to make its final payments to the soldiers.

As the war dragged on and the theater of battle shifted from Boston to other states, the towns were asked for more men. The volumes show that some of our men served at Ticonderoga, then with General Gates at Saratoga and Bennington in 1777. Others were later at West Point and other forts along the Hudson.

By the end of the war, a total of 48 men from West Stockbridge served, about 25% of its male population. Most only had short enlistments, six months maximum in the early stage of the war. Ages ranged from 16 to 35, and many show up described in the first national census as the "head of household."

The longest serving West Stockbridge resident was Frank Dunkins. He was a slave, owned by Elijah Williams. Frank enlisted in 1777 and served at Boston, Ticonderoga, and New York. He was mustered out in 1783 and given his freedom. After the war, Frank lived as a pauper in Stockbridge. A court case ensued between Stockbridge and West Stockbridge about which town should support him, but that's for another History Q&A.



Graphic courtesy of West Stockbridge Historical Society

**Every issue costs us about \$1,500 to print and distribute!  
Please help us keep the Local Yokel coming!**

*With increased printing and postage costs, we need your help more than ever. To get the latest town news, please contribute to the Local Yokel. For your donation of at least \$25.00 per year we will mail each issue to you (unless you prefer otherwise). The Local Yokel will continue to be available free at selected locations as long as possible, but we hope you will contribute anything you can. The West Stockbridge Local Yokel, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization, and all contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Please check with your employer, or former employer if retired, for matching gift programs.*

**Yes!** I want to support the Local Yokel.  
Enclosed is my donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
made payable to WSLY.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (as you want it to appear in acknowledgments)

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email

**Check any that apply:**

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



**Please mail this form with your check to:**  
WSLY  
P.O. Box 238  
West Stockbridge, MA 01266

**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!

**As low as \$15!**

Visit [thelocalyokel.org](http://thelocalyokel.org) for our rates or email Vicki for more information at [info@thelocalyokel.org](mailto: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

Est. 1888

**Charles H. Baldwin & Sons**

Manufacturers of

**Baldwin's Pure Vanilla Extract**

Flavoring Extracts, Spices, Baking Supplies,  
Maple Table Syrup, Serious, Mushy & Hilarious  
Greeting Cards, Retro Toys, Candy  
& So Much More!

*Not just a store...  
It's an experience!*

**1 Center Street  
West Stockbridge  
Massachusetts**

Tuesday - Saturday 10-5  
Sundays 10-2, Closed Mondays

**413-232-7785**  
[www.baldwinextracts.com](http://www.baldwinextracts.com)

# Local Yokel

Pick up  
a copy  
**FREE**  
AS ALWAYS  
at these locations  
around town:



Berkshire Bank  
Charles H. Baldwin & Sons  
Flourish Market  
Gallery on Main  
Library  
No. Six Depot  
Post Office  
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	<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	Hours by appt. using website contact email
Select Board	<i>Kathleen Keresey Andy Krouss Tobias Casey</i>	232-0300	ext. 319	Mon.-Thurs. 7 am-3 pm Fri. 7-11 am
Town Administrator	<i>Marie Ryan</i>			
Building Inspector	<i>Brian Duval</i>	232-0300	ext. 313	Leave Message for Inquiries
Conservation Commission	<i>David Evans</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>Nicole Miller</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>Nicole Miller</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](http://weststockbridge-ma.gov) • Community and Business Website: [visitweststockbridge.com](http://visitweststockbridge.com)



Photo by Cait Graham



top right: Cait Graham, Jude Harrigan (who donated gifts and assisted shoppers), and Taylor Lamme (who collected donated goods and kept the line flowing).



above: Cait Graham and Marie Ryan (our director and our organizer-in-chief, shopping partners for all the gifts purchased with generously donated funds). Photo by Taylor Lamme

## First Helping Hands Holiday Free Store a Success!

By Cait Graham

Some of you have likely heard of West Stockbridge Helping Hands. Maybe you read the write-up in the newspaper about our Christmas deliveries back in 2019, or perhaps you supported us by purchasing a raffle ticket at the Zucchini Festival. For the last eight years we have annually sponsored eight local families with Christmas gifts, Christmas dinner, and arranging for their children to meet Santa. This year, however, we decided to pivot our operation in an effort to reach more families. On the afternoon and evening of December 10, our first-ever Helping Hands Holiday Free Store opened for one day only. It served 70 children from 27 families, from 10 towns in two states, ranging from Ashley Falls to Pittsfield to Austerlitz, New York. What a night and what a group effort!

Folks not pictured but who helped make the magic happen: Paula Farrell (who assisted customers and made them feel welcome at the store), Pastor Regina Baird Haag of the West Stockbridge Village Congregational Church and Deacon John Zick of St. Patrick's Parish (whose congregations contributed toys, money, hats, and mittens), the West Stockbridge Police Association (that helped us fundraise, purchased wrapping paper, and carried a *lot* of toys), Frank Alfonso (who helped us make sure the room was ready to go and gave us some great ideas), the folks at the *Local Yokel*, the *Shopper's Guide*, and WSBS (who all gave us free advertising), Joe Roy (who built our sign), Brady Graham (who helped set up stocking stuffers and painted lights on our sign), our mail delivery champion Chad (who delivered dozens of boxes full of toy, hat, and mitten donations), Shaker Mill Books (that donated a box full of books for all ages), many community members (who donated toys, hats and mittens, and money), and probably others we've forgotten to mention.

2026 will be our 10th year with Helping Hands, and we look forward to an even more robust Helping Hands Holiday Free Store to mark the occasion! If you'd like to donate to Helping Hands, send a check made out to "West Stockbridge Helping Hands" to WS Helping Hands, PO Box 90, West Stockbridge, MA 01266, or drop off new, unwrapped toys anytime at the West Stockbridge Police Department. If you'd like to help out or have a fundraising idea, e-mail [wstockhelpinghands@gmail.com](mailto:wstockhelpinghands@gmail.com). We'll be happy to hear from you!

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

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



January						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

**January Calendar of Events**

1/1	New Year's Day: Town Offices closed		
1/5	Fire & EMS Oversight Committee	5 pm	Town Offices and on Zoom
1/5	Select Board meeting	6 pm	Town Offices and on Zoom
1/5	Planning Board meeting	7 pm	Town Offices
1/6	Council on Aging Craft Group meeting	9:30 am	Richmond Library History Room
1/7	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room
1/11	Stockbridge Grange Dinner; see ad on p. 16 in this issue for details	12-1:30 pm	Grange Hall, 51 Church St., Stockbridge
1/14	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room
1/14	Friends of the Library	3:30 pm	Community Room
1/15	*** Deadline for the next <i>Local Yokel</i> ***		Send to <a href="mailto:info@thelocalyokel.org">info@thelocalyokel.org</a>
1/15	Finance Committee	9 am	Town Offices
1/19	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: Town Offices closed		
1/20	Select Board meeting	6 pm	Town Offices and on Zoom
1/20	Planning Board meeting	7 pm	Town Offices
1/21	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room
1/28	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room

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