

Local yokel

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

West
Stockbridge
June
2026

Annual Town Meeting and Election Results Inside

S E R V I N G O U R C O M M U N I T Y S I N C E 2 0 0 4

An explosion of spring color. See "Forsythias of West Stockbridge" inside, with photos and text by Tom Bland of PappasBland

Forsythias of West Stockbridge

Photographs and text by Tom Bland, May 2026

Forsythias are so commonplace around here, you'd be forgiven for overlooking them. Most of the year they are nondescript shrubs without much to offer insects and birds other than shelter, yet when forsythias break winter dormancy, they are hard to ignore.

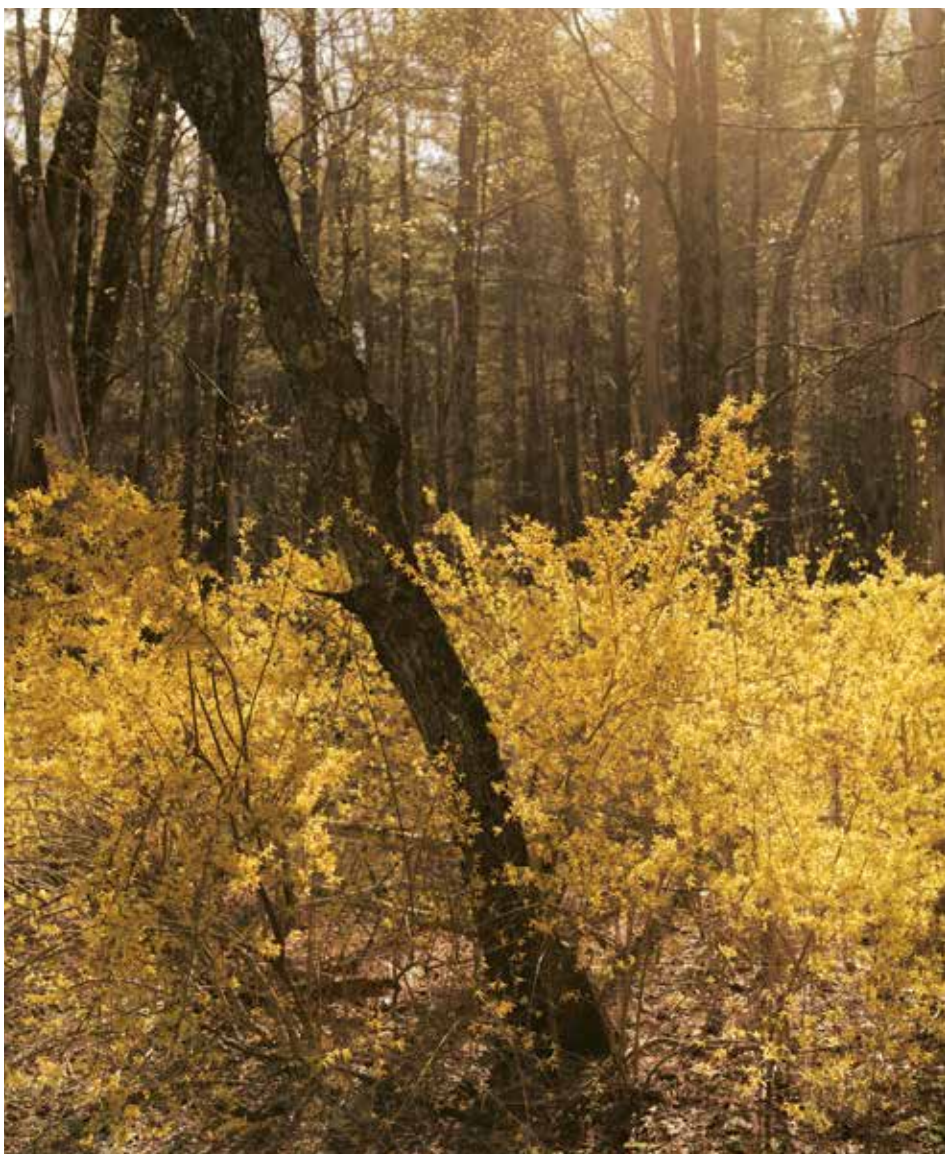
I always enjoy their explosion of color as a definitive marker that winter is truly behind us. No late frost will interrupt its bloom, timed almost perfectly with the goldfinches' return to bright yellow plumage.

With some spectacular forsythias blooming in my immediate vicinity, I began to wonder about others that I hadn't seen. Where were they hiding, and what did they look like?

This brief project over a couple of days in late April had me driving around our town of West Stockbridge searching for bursts of yellow. In the process, I met residents of the town I had never spoken with before, helped a guy with a flat tire and no cell service call his mechanic nearby, and explored roads and lanes of the town that I had never seen.

We made a little free zine of this project featuring a selection of the photographs that we're leaving in the West Stockbridge info booth. Unfold it and stick it on your fridge! When they're gone, they're gone, just like the forsythia inflorescence.

To see the full series, visit pappasbland.com/forsythias-of-west-stockbridge.



Select Board Meeting Minutes

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

Select Board Special Meeting Minutes

April 13, 2026

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

Andy opened the meeting at 6 PM.

Town Administrator Update:

Marie informed the Board that the public Wi-Fi in the downtown area, located in the Historical Building, has been installed and is working. Also, she and Curt are working to have electricity brought to the shed at Card Pond, and then they will be able to have public Wi-Fi installed there as well, all paid for by grant funds.

She mentioned that she will be working with the Parks Commissioners on policies to consider having the gym open all the time for residents. She is currently waiting for information from the Town Insurance Company and Town Counsel on whether this could work out. She will return to the Board in the future with additional information to enable them to make their decision on this issue.

Police Department Update: Acting Chief Mike Renton

Acting Police Chief Mike Renton presented a process created by the Town Accountant, Elaine Markham, to control spending and allow the Board to monitor spending in the Police Department for the remainder of the Fiscal year. The process would require Mike to sign off on the bills payable form, after which a copy of just the cover sheet will go to the Town Administrator, who will then email it to the Select Board for review. Once the Board reviews the bills payable form, they will email Elaine to confirm whether

they approve of the payments or would like to see the back-up of those invoices before approving them. Once Elaine has received approval for the invoices, she will process them for payment.

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Toby, to accept the payment process provided by the Town Accountant through the end of Fiscal Year 26.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

Appointment of Eric Shimelonis to the Community Preservation Commission:

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Toby, to appoint Eric Shimelonis to the open Community Preservation Commission Member-at-Large position.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

Dog Park Committee Update: Ned Rosenthal, Member

Ned gave an update regarding the Dog Park. He stated that the walnut tree in the park that was detrimental to the dogs has been removed. The Committee plans on holding a volunteer clean-up day on May 9th, and all are welcome to join. He informed the Board that the Park has been very busy with visitors, which has been encouraging. They had no actual visitor count but stated that, on Google, 450 people had searched for the Park's address in the last year. His only request was asking the Board if the Town could take care of plowing the walkway from the parking lot to the park. This matter was previously discussed and signed off on in the agreement when the Park was created, stating that the Town will not be responsible for it; however, the Committee is again requesting it.

...continued on page 5



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The Declaration at 250: Voices and Viewpoints

Save the date for a July 4 community reading, hosted by the West Stockbridge Historical Society and TurnPark Art Space, following up on last year's very successful reading of Frederick Douglass's historic speech, "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" Members of the community will read selections from speeches or writings from the past 250 years that address the Declaration of Independence.

Some voices may speak of the Declaration as a document whose aspirations have been fulfilled. Other voices may ask whether the Declaration is an unfinished document. Have its promises been fulfilled? Is the Declaration only aspirational? Is it a moral compass?

The event, still being planned, will be held at TurnPark Art Space. Plan to join us, and watch these pages for further details, or visit <https://www.weststockbridgehistory.org/>.



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Zucchini Fest Update: Marge Powell

Marge requested that the Board approve August 8, 2026, as the date for the Zucchini Fest. She then mentioned that they will no longer have fireworks and plan to end the event earlier in the evening. The Committee met and discussed holding the event at the Town Hall property. They believe this would work much better and be much easier for the volunteers to set up and take down everything. She requested that the Board approve holding the event at Town Hall this year, with hours from 10 AM to 5 or 6 PM on August 8. Once the Board approves of the location and date, the Committee will begin planning and return to the Board with additional information.

Toby made a motion, seconded by Andy, to allow the Zucchini Fest to be held on August 8, 2026, at Town Hall.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

New Fire Station Sign: James Hallock, President of Emergency Services Association

James Hallock, President of the Emergency Services Association, is asking for permission to purchase and hang a new sign at the Fire Department. The Association will pay for the sign and have it installed at the Fire Station. He said the old sign is small and not highly visible.

Andy made a motion, seconded by Toby, to approve the Emergency Services Association's request to purchase and install a new sign at the Fire Station.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

Renewal of Assessing Contract:

Mary Stodden, assessing clerk, stated that it is time to renew the contract with Regional Resource Group for their assessing services to the Town. The only change has been the hiring of one additional staff member, at no additional cost to the Town. Toby expressed concern about signing the contract before the funds were approved at Town Meeting. Mary stated that the Board could wait to sign it until after the Town Meeting, as it won't be effective until July 1st.

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Toby, to approve signing the renewal contract upon the budget's approval at Town Meeting.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

Complete Streets Grant Bid Award: Curt Wilton, Director of Public Works

Curt informed the Board that the Complete Streets grant required a bid process for work on Albany Road/Depot Street and Swamp Road/Main Street/Lenox Road. He stated that Foresight Land Services has been handling the bidding process. At the Bid opening, only one bidder, LB Corporation, submitted a bid of \$109,000. Curt stated that the grant was for \$112,000, so the bid came in under the awarded amount. He requested that the Board vote to award the bid to LB Corporation so the work can begin as soon as possible. He said the work should be done by Memorial Day.

Andy made a motion, seconded by Toby, to award the Complete Streets bid to LB Corporation.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

Shared EMS/Fire IMA Discussion:

Kathleen mentioned that one of the changes she requested and Stockbridge agreed to was adding a member-at-large to the Oversight Board for this shared service agreement.

Toby has spoken with Town Counsel and is waiting for a response on language before the Board can continue the discussion on signing this IMA.

Select Board Speak:

Kathleen mentioned that she is still progressively working on the One-Stop Grant program with consultant Jennifer Tabakin. She thanked Curt Wilton for spending time on this, reviewing and listing all the different projects that could be incorporated into this grant process.

Andy motioned to adjourn, seconded by Toby, at 6:40 PM.

All approved, and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Y. Ryan

Marie Y. Ryan

Town Administrator



June Art Calendar

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

June 4-28, "Beauty of the Berkshires" Art show featuring works by local artists. Art on Main Gallery, West Stockbridge, MA.
Reception: Saturday June 6, 2-4PM

June 14, Berkshire Photo Gathering.
See web: berkshirephotogathering.com/online-meetings

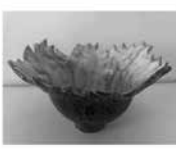
Daily, 10am-1pm, Plein Air. Join other Plein air artists to create work on site. Various locations. See more info and link to sign up on website.

Upcoming Workshops:

June 19-21, Plein Air workshop with Chris Morel. West Stockbridge. 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!

Beauty of the Berkshires
June 4-28, 2026



Jane Craker
Julian Craker
S.R. Aiken
Lisa Townsend
M.L. Kammel

Reception: June 6, 2-4pm

Art on Main
38 Main Street, West Stockbridge

Public Safety Building Feasibility Study Presentation

Monday, June 8, at 6 pm

By Marie Y. Ryan, Town Administrator

The town of West Stockbridge is preparing to relocate and rebuild the Fire Station and Highway/Department of Public Works to a safer area out of the flood zone. This new and upgraded emergency response and community facility will also house the Police Department and the food pantry, and it will function as an emergency shelter. The building is being designed to offer services to our community and the neighboring towns of Stockbridge, Richmond, and Great Barrington.

The planning and design effort is funded by the Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Grant Program, ensuring the project strengthens the town's climate resilience and emergency readiness.



Residents are encouraged to attend the June 8 Select Board meeting, where you will be asked to share your input on what emergency response and community services would best support you and your neighbors. The focus of these conversations will be on ways to improve essential services and make them accessible to all.

Public meeting: June 8, 2026, West Stockbridge Select Board meeting, 6 pm, Town Offices at 21 State Line Road.

Sign up for the West Stockbridge CodeRED Alert System to receive emergency notifications: <https://www.weststockbridge-ma.gov/home/news/west-stockbridge-alert-system>

Community News & Events

Stockbridge Grange Dinner

The Grange dinner will be on June 14; see the ad elsewhere in this issue for details.

Council on Aging

We will be making Origami Gift Boxes with Bows on Tuesday, June 16, 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.



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

The *Local Yokel* is supported in part by a grant from the West Stockbridge Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

"We Remember When . . ."

Growing Up in West Stockbridge in the 1950s

A Series of Recollections by John Bormolini and Friends

Memorial Day in West Stockbridge

By Pete Angelini

Growing up in West Stockbridge, the month of May was special. After the long winter you could play outside all day without a jacket, open your bedroom window at night, fall asleep listening to frogs chirping in a nearby pond, and daydream about the fun you would have when school let out for summer vacation. Best of all was Memorial Day. It was usually a day off from school unless May 30 fell on a weekend (Memorial Day was celebrated on May 30 at that time). In preparation, we young people bought rolls of red, white, and blue crepe paper and decorated our bikes, threading the paper through the wheel spokes and wrapping the handlebars and crossbars and attaching small flags. Then we rode around town showing off.

On Memorial Day afternoon, there was a parade starting downtown and ending at the grade school (now the Town Offices). It was a wonderful parade with a marching band, the Eagles band from Pittsfield, local American Legion and Kiwanis Club members, Scouts, 4H, and town officials. At the school an opening prayer was offered by one of our local clergy, the band played "The Star-Spangled Banner," and the eighth-grade class valedictorian and salutatorian recited the Gettysburg Address and "In Flanders Field Where Poppies Grow" by John McCrae. Then a distinguished speaker from the community spoke about the significance of the day and the sacrifices of those who made it possible.

I first marched in the parade as a Cub Scout at age eight with Den 2. Joe Consolini was our first Den Chief (Boy Scout leader/mentor), followed by Steve Salvi. My dear mom, Ruth Angelini, was our Den Mother, and she and the other two Den Mothers, Mrs. Whiteman and Mrs. Shultz, also marched with us. I marched in the parade every year, advancing to Boy Scouts and then Explorers in Troop 37.

It was during this time that the American Legion purchased two bugles with the expectation that two scouts would learn to play Taps. It signifies "lights out" and is played concluding an honor guard ceremony paying respects to the fallen and at military funerals. The intent was for one bugler to play Taps with the honor guard following the four-volley rifle salute and for the second bugler to play the echo from a remote unseen location. At the time, I was taking trumpet lessons, and because a bugle is a trumpet without valves, I quickly learned to play Taps. However, no one else in our troop could play, so I suggested to the Legion that I play Taps after the rifle salute facing the gathering and then turn in the opposite direction facing away from the viewers and play the echo with a mute inserted into the bugle that quieted the sound as if being played from a distance. The honor guard is a striking and meaningful ceremony, and observing it has brought tears to my eyes more than once.

Preparing for this important event, I practiced daily. Taps is 24 musical notes and played in 45 seconds. Notes 16 to 18 are very high full-measure notes and, with bugles lacking valves, all the work is done by the bugler's lips. If your lip tires and these high notes aren't hit correctly, the sound is similar to a dog howling, and the entire effect is lost. Thankfully, I never experienced a mishap. Preparing also included polishing the bugle with Brasso and spit-shining my shoes. On Memorial Day, the Legion members and I met downtown and drove to West Center, the first of four local cemeteries where we would perform the honor guard ceremony. The American Legion Post commander was Paul Skorput. Other Legion honor guard veteran participants included Pete Antonazzi, who had lost his left arm in a World War II battle, Tony Viola, George Panzieri, and Gerry Roy. Arriving at the cemetery, we marched onto the grounds. Following a brief tribute to fallen comrades by Mr. Skorput, he gave the commands for the rifle salute, followed by me playing Taps and then the echo. Then we drove to the Williamsville cemetery where the ceremony was repeated, and on to West Stockbridge and the Protestant and Catholic cemeteries, concluding the morning's formal activities.

The Legion members returned to their post headquarters where they had prepared a hot dog roast and picnic lunch for their families. Being with these fine men on this day meant a great deal to me. Throughout the morning they were solemn, in keeping with the purpose of the day, but when the events had concluded and they were enjoying lunch with their families, they were completely at ease, chatting about work, fishing, the Boston Red Sox, planting their gardens, and other normal daily events. Although they had been in harm's way during the war, they never discussed that subject, reflecting their modesty and genuineness. I highly respected these local heroes for their devotion to country and duty, and these experiences strongly influenced my own decision to go into the military following college. Memorial Day was truly special growing up in West Stockbridge, and I will always treasure these wonderful memories.

John Bormolini is a West Stockbridge "ex-pat," now residing in Leavenworth, Kansas. Readers who would like to share their stories of 1950s West Stockbridge are invited to e-mail John at johnbormo@aol.com.



Honor Guard, 2014 Memorial Day parade, West Stockbridge. Photo by John Parker



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Stockbridge Grange Dinner Sunday, June 14

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Take out only/pick up - 12-1:30pm - Cost \$17
Grange Hall, 51 Church Street, Stockbridge

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The next dinner will be September 13



Voters Approve Town Warrant and Fiscal 2027 Budget

By John Parker

At the annual town meeting on May 4, voters approved the 36-article warrant and a budget of just over \$8 million for fiscal year (FY) 2027. Turnout was about 9% of registered voters.

The budget represents an 8.7% increase over the current year and includes \$3.9 million as the town's share of the Berkshire Hills Regional School District (BHRSD) assessment, a 12% increase over FY2026. BHRSD Superintendent Peter Dillon attributed the increase in the school assessment to higher districtwide salaries and benefits, out-of-district special education placements and transportation costs, and a shift in enrollment.

Contributing to increased town government expenses was an 8.7% rise in health insurance costs and a near-doubling of Fire Department salaries resulting from the upcoming shared services agreement with Stockbridge for firefighting and ambulance services (Stockbridge pays 60%; West Stockbridge, 40%).

Voters also approved the following:

- \$67,000 in Community Preservation funds for an accessible ramp at the Congregational Church (70–80% of the church's events are non-religious);
- Seasonal Communities designation, included in the state's Affordable Homes Act, providing communities with many part-time residents and short-term rentals the additional resources to create year-round housing for public employees, teachers, and emergency services workers, and establish affordable housing trusts.

Sources: Town of West Stockbridge and *Berkshire Eagle*, May 5, 2026.

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2026 Annual Town Election Results

May 11, 2026

TOTALS

MODERATOR

Joseph Roy, Jr.	150
Write-ins	1
Blanks	17

Select Board

Kathleen Keresey	120
Write-ins	15
Blanks	33

Board of Assessors

Michelle Laramée-Jenny	140
Write-ins	0
Blanks	28

Finance Committee Vote for 2

Robert Salerno	129
Steve Sautman	119
Write-ins	3
Blanks	85

Planning Board

Jared Gelormino	130
Write-ins	1
Blanks	37

Board of Health

David Finck	136
Write Ins	0
Blanks	32

Library Trustees (1 for 1 Year)

Julia Erickson	122
Write Ins	8
Blanks	38

Library Trustees (1 for 3 Years)

Margaret Korte	85
Carol Kuller	79
Write-ins	0
Blanks	4

Cemetery Commission

Mary Korte Kinmond	149
Write-ins	0
Blanks	19

Tree Warden

Andrew Fudge	126
Write-ins	3
Blanks	39

Constable

Karl G. Cooper	127
Wayne Cooper	131
Elizabeth Digrigoli	128
Paul Faggioni	135
Write-In	3
Wrire-In	0
Blanks	148

TOTAL VOTERS for this election

168

TOTAL VOTERS

1202

Source: Town of West Stockbridge



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YOUR WEST STOCKBRIDGE EXPERTS

June History Quiz Question:



**West Stockbridge
Historical Society**
Incorporated in 1994

Our two-block Main Street has been the commercial center of the village since the late 1830s. In the early 19th century, we were a rest stop on the Albany-Hartford Turnpike with a few taverns and inns where visitors could stay the night. In 1838, the railroad arrived, bringing visitors and trade. Our iron and lime industry was developing, and the dairy and cattle farms were growing as well.

Our village center was a natural retail hub with stores and services. The towns north and west of us did not have commercial centers as developed as ours. Transportation for shopping and other services was more convenient than Pittsfield or Great Barrington, and Lenox was over the mountain.

But by the 20th century, all that changed. Our village center is now a smaller retail center with only one store that dates to those early days. What is that business? When did it begin? What happened to the other businesses?

(Find the answer somewhere in this issue!)

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

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



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

News from the Pews

St. Patrick's Church

Helloo Yokels, local or not! Welcome to late spring in the Berkshires. The weather has been, to paraphrase Forrest Gump, like a box of chocolates; you never know what you're gonna get. In spite of that, we lucked out on our Spring Cleanup Day at St. Patrick's on April 25. About a dozen hardworking volunteers, driven and led by Lisa Parker, attacked the front of the church. We did a lot of raking, weeding, and mulching before placing some beautiful new plantings. It was all done in about two hours and followed by, you guessed it, coffee and donuts! (It seems as if we do a lot of things around coffee and donuts!) We all had such a good time that we decided not to cancel the May 16 rain date but to use it for more grounds work.

On May 3, our annual Spring Breakfast was held in the Parish Center. As promised, there were plenty of savories and sweets from which to choose, including egg dishes of every kind, many made from locally sourced eggs. Not to mention cinnamon rolls, cupcakes, scones, donuts (of course!), and fresh fruit to eliminate the guilt. It was very well attended and not much left over, although I did spy a few people with take-home plates.

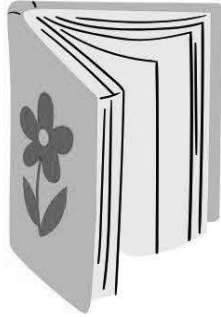
One of our parishioners has started a group for people struggling with low vision, whether macular degeneration, cataracts, or any form of visual compromise. The group meets on the last Tuesday of the month from 10:30 to 11:30 am at the Froio Center on North Street in Pittsfield. The meetings are open to all to share ideas and tips. For more information, email 222EYE222@gmail.com.

We love to see as many people in the pews as possible, but please, when you are parking, the area in front of the fire station is not a good choice.

Hope you all enjoy getting updates from your local parish and that you know you are welcome any Sunday for Mass, and of course afterward for coffee and . . . did I mention the donuts?



Photos courtesy of
St. Patrick's Church



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Happy June to all from West Stockbridge PL!

Please look for our monthly **Kid's Craft Crew** to be held at the WS Farmers Market on occasional Thursdays at 3 pm! It's the same fun crafts led by our very own Tess McGovern, just at a different location!

Thanks again to Bob Salerno and the Historical Society for making the Old Town Hall available in May for our "Let's Talk Big-foot" event with the Vogel brothers. And sincere thanks to Jackie Murray for assembling the Friends of the Library to coordinate light refreshments, welcome attendees, and take care of setting up. It was a full house. And we learned there were 2,000 views of the Historical Society Facebook post about the event.

April at a glance:

- 627 hardcopy items were borrowed and renewed
- \$11,100 saved by borrowing instead of buying
- 438 eBooks, eMagazines, and streaming audiobooks borrowed
- 343 visitors to the library from April 1 through April 30

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

NEW ADULT FICTION

Baker, *Japanese gothic*
Barnes, *Death's daughter*
Burke, *Yesteryear*
Cottrell, *Afternoon hours of a hermit*
Durst, *The Faraway Inn*
Erdrich, *Python's kiss*
Lakhani, *Abundance*
Langbein, *Dear Monica Lewinsky*
Menon, *Under water*
O'Reilly, *Prestige drama*
Parmar, *The original*
Quinn, *The astral library*
Ryan, *Buckeye*
Sullivan, *The red winter*

NEW ADULT NONFICTION

Brooker, *The story of the interior: how we have shaped rooms and how they shape us*
Fehrman, *This vast enterprise*
Keefe, *London falling: a mysterious death in a gilded city and a family's search for truth*
Konkle, *The sane one*
Meacham, *American struggle*
Montgomery, *When trees testify*

NEW TITLES FOR ALL AGES

Bernstrom, *A bear, a man, and a donut van*
Cordell, *102*
Gibbons, *Flowers*
Heck, *Sunflower*



Scrapbook Questions/created by

Paula Farrell

TEST YOUR TRIVIA KNOWLEDGE!

1. David Capeless was elected president of what group in 2015?
2. What does the association represent?
3. What was his top priority in his new role?
4. Who appointed David Capeless the Berkshire district attorney in 2004?

1. Massachusetts District Attorney Association
2. The 11 top prosecutors across the state
3. The opioid crisis
4. Governor Mitt Romney



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.



GRANGE

For the Whole Family



To grow new friendships:

You can meet people from around the state and enjoy activities designed just for youth.

To discover your talents:

You can enter contests that offer the opportunity to travel to state or national competitions, or even to win cash prizes and scholarships.

To help your community:

You can grow your leadership skills, make a difference through community service, and have an equal vote in the Grange at 14.

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

Girdler Electric

MA Master License 2406 A1

Barry Girdler

owner

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Community Partnerships Power Hands-On Learning at Muddy Brook

By Hannah Van Sickle, Communications Consultant, BHRSD

Students and teachers benefit from the generosity of local learning partners

A wave of “good news” is sweeping through Muddy Brook Elementary’s third-grade classrooms, driven by partnerships with three Berkshire-based nonprofits helping bring hands-on learning to life.

“It has been a year of incredible growth for our students, and we have been fortunate to leverage several community partnerships that have deeply enriched our curriculum,” says classroom teacher Stephanie Kluka whose Team 3 colleagues include Dianna Lupiani, Vanna Maffuccio, and Maegan Warner.

“Throughout the school year, we have been honored to work with educators from The Mount, the Norman Rockwell Museum, and Mass Audubon . . . experts [who] have visited our classrooms multiple times, bringing history and science to life,” says Kluka, who provided details on each collaboration in what the classroom teachers dubbed a professional community “trifecta”:

- ⇒ *Literary Editing with The Mount:* Educators taught students to amplify their writing by using the same “cut and paste” editing techniques used by Edith Wharton. This hands-on approach to revision significantly improved student engagement with transition words and essay structure.
- ⇒ *Social-Emotional Learning with Norman Rockwell Museum:* In our second year of this partnership, we explored local history and social-emotional concepts through Rockwell’s iconic works, such as *The Golden Rule*, *The Problem We All Live With*, *The Peace Corps (JFK’s Bold Legacy)*, and *The Four Freedoms*. These lessons sparked deep discussions regarding equity, community service, and our shared freedoms.
- ⇒ *Scientific Inquiry with Mass Audubon:* Students engaged in nature journaling, vernal pool observation, and the study of local habitats and adaptations, providing a vital bridge between our classroom science standards and the natural world around us.

Each partnership will culminate in a meaningful milestone: end-of-year field trips to The Mount, the Norman Rockwell Museum, and Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary—all hosted free of charge—a powerful example of what’s possible when schools and community partners come together.




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Beauty of the Berkshires June 4–June 28

Show Hours: Thursday–Sunday, 11 am–4 pm

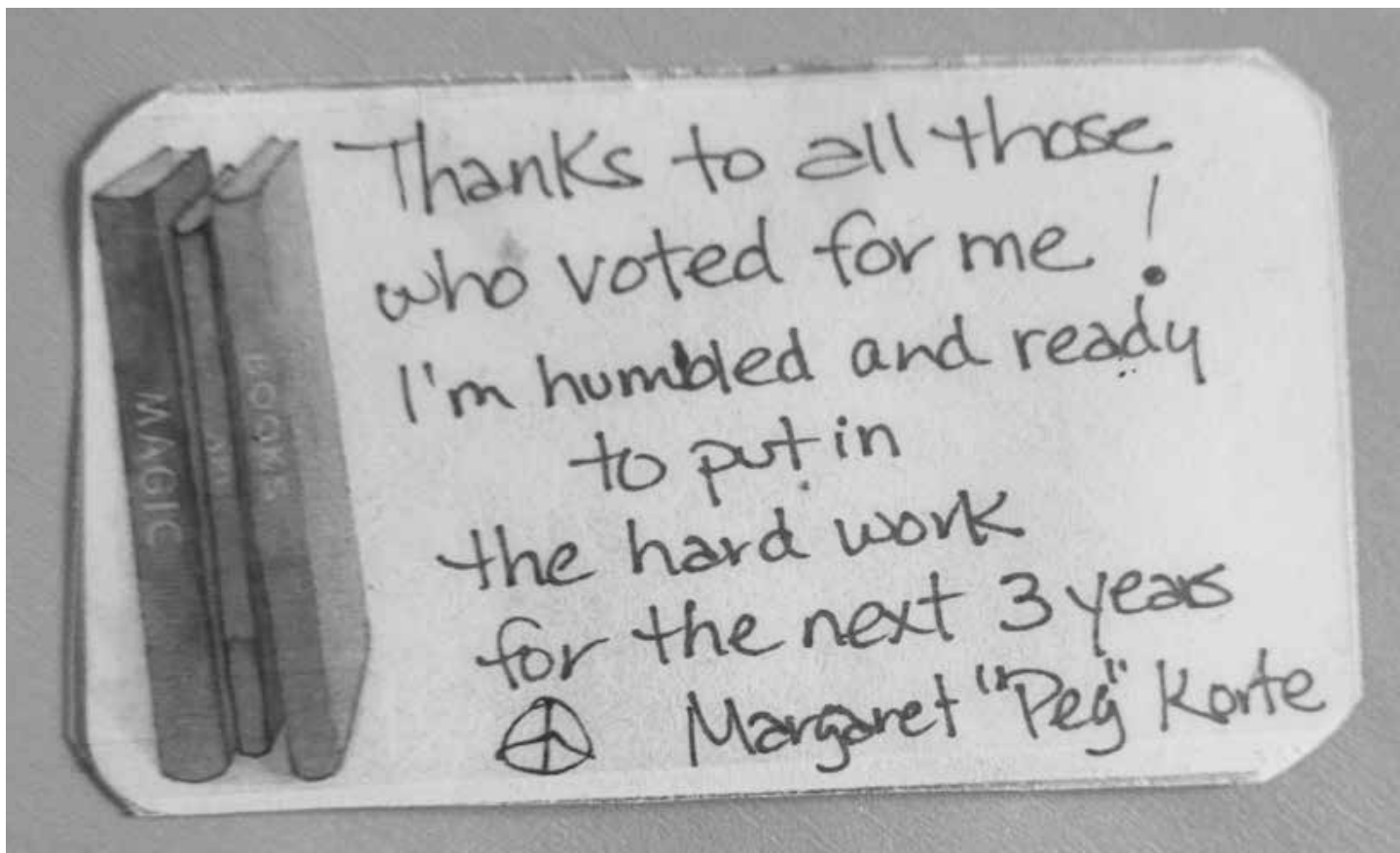
Reception: Saturday, June 6, 2–4 pm

Beauty of the Berkshires brings together the work of artists Jane Craker, Julian Craker, S.R. Aiken, Lisa Townson, and ML Kammel, each offering a distinct interpretation of life in the Berkshires. Through their varied perspectives, the exhibition explores what is seen, felt, and deeply experienced, celebrating the enduring beauty of the region that surrounds and inspires us.

Images courtesy of the artists



Top: Jane Craker; Center row from left: Lisa Townson, Julian Craker; Bottom row from left: ML Kammel, S.R. Aiken



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Pappy's Day!
Happy
Graduation Day!
Happy
Summer!!



History Quiz Answer:

The West Stockbridge village center in the early 1800s was just a stopping point on the old Albany-Hartford Turnpike. There were two inns, a few mills on the Williams River, and not much else. All the action was over in West Center or down in Williamsville. Then the railroad came. Speculators bought land in town, built houses and a church, and we became a retail and services center.

By 1875, the commercial census lists these businesses on Main Street: two hotels, furniture, jewelry, and hardware stores, a drugstore, tailor shop and dressmaker, a beauty parlor, three dry goods stores, and two meat markets. We even had two oyster restaurants (no record of where the oysters came from).



Public Market. Photo courtesy of West Stockbridge Historical Society

West Stockbridge was a retail hub, both due to easy access on the railroad and the convenience to other rural towns across the border in Columbia County or north to Richmond and Hancock. Main Street was comparable to a full-size Walmart or Target with everything you could need. There was also a wagon shop and farm equipment supplier nearby on Depot Street.

Like many retail centers, that all changed, and by World War I many of those businesses were gone. By the 1920s, transportation via road became easier by automobile. Passenger rail service was discontinued. Our location advantage was gone, and the larger towns that offered Pittsfield's North Street and Great Barrington's Main Street became the retail hubs.

Then there were major fires in the 1930s that leveled commercial buildings on Main Street. The biggest fires were in 1937–38 with the spaces south of the current Queensboro Wine & Spirits store and the current town parking lot next to the Old Town Hall destroyed. Other, smaller fires also took out buildings on Main Street during the series of fires in the early 1980s.

The one remaining business close to its original form is the Public Market. It was opened after 1847 by Richard Hunt as a dry goods and grocery store. His daughter, Abigail Bristol, owned it after her father's death. In 1873 she sold it to John Buckley. His son, Andy Buckley, converted the Public Market into the well-known Buckley's Saloon.

Buckley's Saloon was considered a "high-toned" establishment. Rumor has it misbehaving customers were pushed out the back door into the Williams River (a practice discontinued by the current owners, fortunately). The saloon lasted until Prohibition in 1919. It was idle until the mid-1920s. Then the Fallon family bought it, removed the saloon features, and converted it into a grocery and meat retailer. It remains in the Fallon family and is our one place in town to find groceries, meats, sandwiches, and local gossip.



Do you enjoy writing or photography?

The *Local Yokel* needs regular and occasional contributors.

Please call John Parker

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email info@thelocalyokel.org,

or visit www.thelocalyokel.org
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June Donor Roll Call

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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.)

**Lyme Alliance
of the Berkshires**
Patient Support, Community Education

Ticks Are Pandemic Support and Information

68% of TICKS of ANY SIZE carry disease: 100 strains of Lyme Disease in the US, 300 Lyme strains worldwide and over 350 Co-infections; as well as viruses, parasites & pathogens; many are not yet named and many have no tests yet.

Prevention Is Key

Use tick repellent for skin and Permethrin (in the sports section of stores) for clothes and shoes. Tick check yourself daily.

What To Do If Bitten

If bitten and the tick is not engorged position tweezers as close to the surface of your skin and pull straight up with steady even pressure. Do not twist or turn as this releases more tick fluid into you. Embedded, engorged ticks can be super hard to remove and it's best to have them removed at the nearest Emergency Room by professionals.



Never Throw A Tick Away

Preserve your tick with a piece of moist paper towel in a small plastic bag and mail it to **UMass Labs** after filling out their online form at www.tickreport.com. This can save you time and money by learning early on if a tick carried disease and what you need to be treated for, if you were infected.

Get The Facts

Bullseye rashes appear only 35% of the time. Many rashes have all kinds of shapes and sizes. Photo all changes in your body. Document all symptoms. This information can help determine treatment.

Have A Plan In Place Before You Get Bitten

Determine which Lyme Literate Medical Professional you will see. You can find Lyme Literate doctors at lymenet.org, ilads.org, lymediseaseassociation.org or email berkshir Lyme@yahoo.com.

For Helpful Treatment Options

attend a Berkshire Lyme Alliance meeting for information. If infected it is important to stop Lyme Disease/Co-infections from multiplying inside you, asap.

Berkshire Lyme Alliance MEETS at Pittsfield Library

MONDAYS: April 6, May 4, June 1, 2026 ~ 6-8 pm

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

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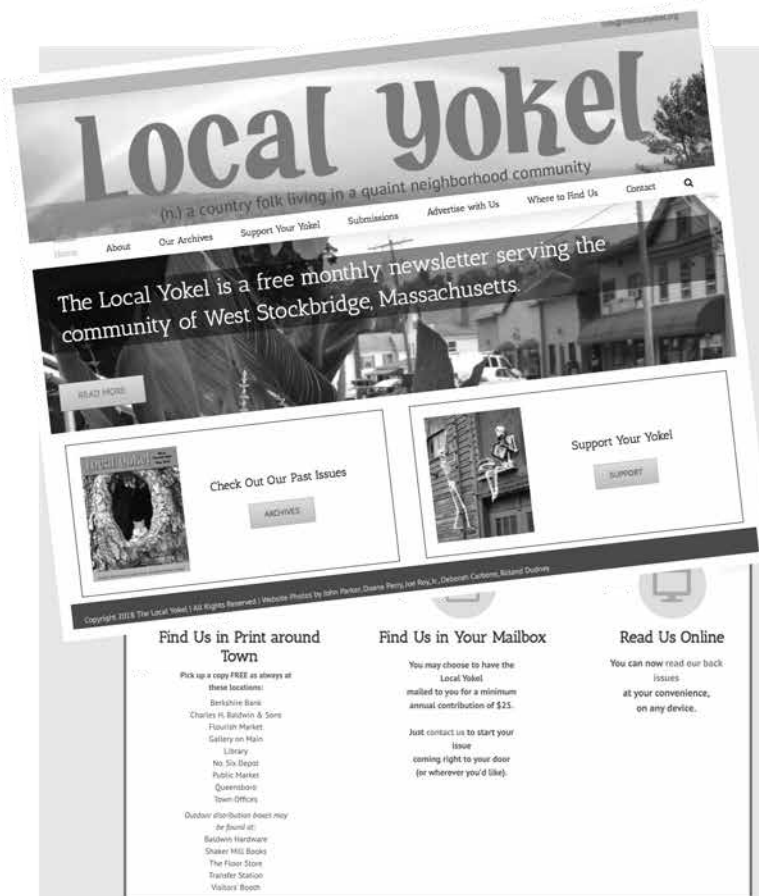
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Assessors Office	<i>Mary Stodden</i>	232-0300	ext. 303	Tues. 1-5 pm; Thurs. 9 am-1 pm
Board of Health	<i>Earl Moffatt</i>	232-0300	ext. 314	Hours by appt. using website contact email
Select Board	<i>Kathleen Keresey Andy Krouss Tobias Casey</i>	232-0300	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>Mike Renton</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>Mike Renton</i>	911 or 232-8500 (non-emergency)		24 hours, 7 days/week
Post Office	<i>Randy Bates</i>	232-8544		Lobby: 7 am-7 pm; 7 days/week; Window: Mon.-Fri. 9 am-4:30 pm; Sat. 9 am-12 noon
Sewer & Water Commission	<i>Michael Buffoni</i>	232-0309		
Town Accountant	<i>Elaine Markham</i>	232-0300	ext. 317	Leave Message for Inquiries
Town Clerk	<i>Ronni Barrett</i>	232-0300	ext. 300	Tues. & Thurs. 1:30-3:30 pm
Town Collector	<i>Kelli Bradbury</i>	232-0300	ext. 302	Tues. 1-5 pm; Wed. 7 am-12 pm; Thurs. 1-6 pm
Town Historian	<i>Robert Salerno</i>	232-4465		
Town Treasurer	<i>Benjamin Gelb</i>	232-0300	ext. 316	Tues. 9 am-4 pm
Transfer Station	<i>Wayne Cooper</i>	232-0307		Tues. & Thurs. 10 am-6 pm and Sat. 8 am-6 pm
Tree Warden	<i>Andrew Fudge</i>	212-9206		
Veterans Agency	<i>Tom Beasley</i>	528-1580		
Zoning Board of Appeals	<i>C. Randolph Thunfors</i>	232-0300	ext. 300	

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

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The Floor Store

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From Jennifer Kujawski



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June						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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	1	2	3	4

June Calendar of Events

6/1	Select Board meeting	6 pm	Town Offices and on Zoom
6/3	Conservation Commission meeting	6 pm	Town Offices
6/3	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room
6/4	Farmers Market	3-6 pm	Foundry Green, Harris Street
6/8	Select Board meeting / Public Safety Building presentation	6 pm	Town Offices and on Zoom
6/10	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room
6/10	Friends of the Library Committee meeting	3:30 pm	Community Room
6/11	Farmers Market	3-6 pm	Foundry Green, Harris Street
6/14	Flag Day		
6/14	Stockbridge Grange Dinner; see ad in this issue for details	12-1:30 pm	Grange Hall, 51 Church St., Stockbridge
6/15	*** Deadline for the next <i>Local Yokel</i> ***		Send to info@thelocalyokel.org
6/16	Council on Aging Craft Group meeting	9:30 am	Richmond Town Library
6/17	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room
6/17	Writing Workshop with Lara Tupper	5-7 pm	Town Offices
6/18	Farmers Market	3-6 pm	Foundry Green, Harris Street
6/19	Juneteenth holiday: Town Offices closed		
6/21	Father's Day		
6/21	First Day of Summer		
6/22	Select Board meeting	6 pm	Town Offices and on Zoom
6/24	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room
6/25	Farmers Market	3-6 pm	Foundry Green, Harris Street
Note: Town Offices (including Community Room and Library) are located at 21 State Line Road, West Stockbridge			