



August 2023

Friends of the Washington Town Park present

MUSIC IN THE PARK

**FREE
SUNDAY CONCERTS
4:00 P.M.**

Sponsored by grants from the
Washington, Becket and Hinsdale
Cultural Councils.

Join in the family-friendly outdoor fun and help raise funds to improve the basketball court with the return of the 50/50 raffle! Donations also welcome.

**Returning this year, a FREE fairy garden activity.
NEW this year - ICE CREAM FOR SALE!**

7/30 Chris Merenda and The Wheel

8/6 Abe Guthrie and Randy Cormier

8/13 Krishna Guthrie

8/20 Rev Tor

8/27 Riverside Brothers

Blankets, lawn chairs and picnic baskets welcome.
Route 8 just south of the Town Hall.
Raindates to be posted.

**Annual Washington Sons and Daughters
Annual meeting at The Old Town Hall**

Sunday September 10th 12-3pm

Food and beverages will be provided. Entertainment 1-3 pm

All Washington residents and anyone who has ever lived in the town of Washington are welcome to join us, children included.

Meet your neighbors and share your memories and stories .

This year prior to the event Tom Hoffman of Washington is willing to share his knowledge of some town history , leading us to various sites in the state forest. We can drive to the sites and then walk around with Tom. Anyone wanting to attend could meet at the Town Common at 10:30am , car pool or drive to the 4 corners intersection down West Branch Road.

Carol Lew will give us an update on the great progress of the cemetery, she and others have really been working hard !

Ladies and gentlemen please bake your favorite pie and enter our contest.

Please tape your name on the bottom of the plate.

This is our dessert so please enter the contest.

Prizes will be awarded

Please join us for this event, come meet your neighbors

LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU

Special Town Election

Washington will hold a special town election on Saturday, October 21, 2023 from 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM. This election is being held to fill the vacant seat on the Select Board.

Nomination Papers Available

If you would like to take out nomination papers to run for the vacant position on the Select Board, please see the Town Clerk on Monday evenings between 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM. This position is for a 2 year-unexpired term that will be up for election again in 2025. You will need to collect 20 signatures from town residents that are registered voters, and the completed nomination papers must be returned to the Town Clerk / Board of Registrars by Thursday, August 31, 2023. Any questions please contact the Town Clerk 413-207-7526 or washington.ma.townclerk@gmail.com.

Sean Curran

washingtontownadm@gmail.com

Town Administrator will hold public hours at the Town Hall

Monday 5PM-7PM

Tuesday 9AM-12PM

Wednesday 12PM-4PM

Thursday 1PM-4PM

Friday 1PM-4PM

GO FLY A KITE!

...and hope for a light breeze and plenty of sunshine up on the Town Common opposite the Old Town Hall Saturday August 19 at noon when we gather for our first Community Picnic. Bring your lunch, your family, a frisbee, a blanket or folding chairs, and of course a kite (but please, not your beloved pup). Lemonade and iced tea will be available and residents so inclined can bring a desert to share, potluck- style. Festivities will wind-up at 3. Please come and enjoy your neighbors, get to know them —and have FUN! A rain date has been set for the following Saturday August 26.

COA

Classes

Chair Yoga Mondays 11:00 AM

Yoga Tuesdays at 9:00 AM

Osteoporosis Thursdays at 9:00 AM

Bring your steak knives !

Pot Luck Dinner Friday, Aug 18 at 5:30 PM Steve will have steaks on the grill and baked potatoes! Come early 4:45-5:30 to socialize. All seniors are welcome with or without a dish to share - we look forward to seeing you!

Questions, comments, or need assistance? Call 413-394-0003 or email washingtoncoa@gmail.com

Dear Washington Friends & Neighbors:

August 2023

July turned out to be a wet one, reminiscent of two years ago when we had several flooding events. Fortunately, we were spared the worst this time, unlike our neighbors further north. However, the Highway crew's efforts have been diverted to dealing with storm damage and road washouts. The worst were in the State Forest, which doesn't affect residents directly, but for which we are still responsible and which are time-consuming to fix.

The excessive rain has also caused delays in several of this year's construction projects. Upper Valley Road repaving was rescheduled due to standing water at the swamp. This chronic problem is made worse by issues at the culvert under the railroad and into Muddy Pond, compromising the natural drainage flow. CSX has promised to address the situation.

The Frost Road Culvert replacement has been pushed back several weeks. The road-closing is now anticipated to occur in the last week of August through the first few weeks of September. But this is subject to further change depending upon ongoing conditions. As always, keep an eye on the town website for updates as construction begins and the schedule gets refined.

The buyers for Bucksteep who had proposed nature-immersive lodging for the property have withdrawn their offer. Family Unity International says that they are in negotiations with another interested buyer, but details have yet to be shared. We will continue to monitor with our tax-title attorney and contemplate additional actions if a new resolution is not forthcoming.

A Special Election to fill the vacancy on the Select Board has been called for October 21. The nomination period will be open until September 1.

Sean Curran, our new Town Administrator, is getting settled in and gradually taking on oversight of day-to-day Town operations. He will be working out of front office at Town Hall. Residents are encouraged to drop in to meet him during his office hours (check the website or page 2 of Tracks).

Or better yet, folks will be able to meet Sean at the **Community Picnic on the Town Common** up on Washington Mountain Rd on **Saturday, August 19**. See details elsewhere in Tracks. The ad-hoc Community-building group is hoping this will become an annual gathering.

Music in the Park, sponsored by the Friends of the Park, is back again this year with free concerts **every Sunday in August, 4–6pm, in the Town Park**. Events like this only happen thanks to the efforts of volunteers. So if you want to insure the future of the series, reach out to Jodi or Dominic of the Parks Commission to help pitch in.

We hope everyone enjoys the rest of summer — rain or shine!

Kent Lew, Select Board chair

David Ellis, Select Board clerk

A Motus Wildlife Tracking Tower At the Top of Washington Mountain?

By Susan Colgan

A Motus Tower tracks bird migration, stands 30 feet tall and looks like an old-fashioned TV antenna. Working with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the Northeast Motus Collaborative has proposed placing a tower at the top of Washington Mountain. Would it spoil the landscape if, as proposed, it is placed in the back of the meadow off West Branch Road adjacent to the forest and easily spotted from Washington Mountain Road? That's the question.

Motus Towers are important to scientists, especially ornithologists, because they help track even the tiniest birds, even some insects, on their migratory journeys to southern climes. Using this tracking system, scientists are beginning to figure out why over 3 billion migratory birds have been lost in the past 50 years.

"Birds are about place," the British nature writer Simon Barnes writes in his book *The Meaning of Birds*. "A bird is the place it lives in. It eats the place. It makes the sound of the place.... We often claim that a bird is the spirit of a place," he writes.

We have many birds that nest here in Washington, birds that give us a sense of home. The valiant chickadee winters here; and when spring comes, we see the bluebirds, juncos, robins, tree swallows and barn swallows, rose-breasted grosbeaks, cardinals, orioles, goldfinches, hummingbirds, to name a noticeable few. They nest here, they feed their young here, the young fledge here. We notice them; some of us watch them. They give us pleasure and comfort in their reliability.

But how reliable are they really? And where do they go. South, we say. The more knowledgeable might say the Caribbean, South America, maybe even Venezuela, or Costa Rica. There they define someone's else's sense of home perhaps. They fly off and slip our minds. Of course, ornithologists know much more.

Over the past thirty years, they will tell you, the science of migration has become clearer. The decline in certain species of birds—once a mystery—can, in some cases, be explained. This is primarily due to an advancement in the miniaturization of electronics, enabling the tiniest birds and even butterflies, dragonflies and bats, to be tracked by tiny transmitters or nanotags placed on their bodies.

This has been a "game changer," Scott Weidensaul, the internationally renowned ornithologist writes in his book *A World on the Wing*: "For the first time we have the ability to follow individual birds through their annual cycle of breeding, migration and wintering. This new capability has uncovered previously unrecognizable threats, in some cases explaining once mysterious declines in various bird populations." The Motus Wildlife Tracking System has made all this possible. It was developed in Canada by that country's largest bird conservation organization, Birds Canada. The Motus network has now grown to more than 1,200 receiver stations, installed from the Arctic to southern South America and increasingly in Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia. With Planning Board approval, a Motus Tower could go up here in Washington, joining the array of approximately 18 towers in Massachusetts, two of which are in Berkshire County, in Williamstown and Egremont, at the north and south ends of the county. A tower in Washington would fill in an important gap in the network.

Scientists have learned through the nanotags sending signals picked up on the Motus antennae how places

thousands of miles apart are tightly connected by specific migratory patterns. A bird who spends the summer here might spend every Washington winter in the same place thousands of miles from here. The exact location of the 30-foot Motus tower being proposed for the meadow adjacent to the State Forest is being debated. The high, wide-open meadow is ideal, according to the specifications of the Northeast Motus Collaborative. Located on state land, there is access from West Branch Road for installation and maintenance and the meadow has the necessary 15 kilometer clear line of site in several directions.

When he learned that the tower might go in the field diagonally behind his property, Kent Lew put up a ten-foot pole with a pink marker on top to give folks an idea of where it might be and how it might look, minus 20 feet and minus the aerial.

On Saturday, July 1, Carol and Kent Lew, whose field abuts the state land and Tricia and Dave Drugmand, who have an agricultural lease, also on abutting land, and who mow the meadow annually, gathered with a few town residents and Planning Board members to meet with representatives from DCR and Todd Alleger, the New England Motus installation coordinator. Alleger works for the Williston Conservation Trust in Pennsylvania, builders of the radio network in the United States.

They talked about the Tower and its placement. Balancing the concern about marring an otherwise pristine view with an understanding of the value of the tower for the study of birds and insects—and, more broadly, our environment—they moved the pole around. Would it be better closer to the forest and thus a bit less visible (and slightly less viable for the function of the tower) or behind a small birch copse where the bottom half might be hidden, at least in summer? The latter spot seemed the most popular with those concerned.

Alleger says that often people who have the Motus tower in their community are excited about what is happening and feel: It's a tower, but it is our tower. I am a part of this.

The data the Motus System collects is available for the public to explore on the project's website, www.motus.org. Anyone can click on an individual receiver location, like the one here in Washington were it to go up, and check what has been flying through their skies.

So, come to the public hearing now scheduled for September and learn more about The Motus Tracking System and its possible placement in our town. Learn how your neighbors feel, share how you feel about it and help the Planning Board decide if this is something for our town.



A FUNDRAISER FOR BECKET ARTS CENTER

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CASH BAR

FOOD & DRINK BY:
**SAVORY
HARVEST**

Becket BASH

MUSIC BY:

**JACK
WALDHEIM**

27

SUNDAY
AUGUST

GATES OPEN AT : 05:00 PM

CAMP WATITOH, 1885 MAIN STREET, BECKET

\$55
THROUGH 8/20

TICKETS



OR BUY AT:

BECKET ARTS CENTER

7 BROOKER HILL RD. BECKET



2023 BECKET ENERGY COMMITTEE INFORMATIONAL SESSION

Saturday, August 26th

9:30 AM – 12:30 PM (refreshments 9:30-10)

Becket Town Hall Community Room, 557 Main Street

Zoom option available - listed on the
town website www.townofbecket.org and go to Community Calendar

Learn about recent renewable energy programs, legislation and other topics relevant to all of us as energy consumers

Free Coffee and Pastries 9:30-10:00

Please RSVP by 8/24 (attending In Person or Zoom)
Beverly Gilbert adminasst@townofbecket.org or (413) 623-8934 ext 100.

Estate/Barn Sale at the Drugmands

Sat, Sept 2nd & Sunday, Sept 3rd. 9-3pm. Rain or Shine

572 Washington Mountain Rd, Washington. (Up at our barn)

Furniture, lamps, rugs, Waterford and Tiffany glassware, vases, bowls, Rockwell figurines, assorted housewares, microwave, oven, Cuisinart ice cream maker, copper bowls, miniature clocks, brass candlesticks, linens, books, garden items, large baskets, saddle, harness, fencing, dog kennel, some tools, lots more really good stuff.....

2023 ANNUAL HOUSATONIC HERITAGE WALKS ANNOUNCED

5 Weekends of Free, Guided Regional Interpretive Tours

The Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area announces the 21st annual autumn Housatonic Heritage Walks on **Sept. 2 & 3, 9 & 10, 16 & 17, 23 & 24 and Sept. 30 & Oct. 1**. 80+ free, guided interpretive tours will be offered throughout Berkshire County, MA, and Litchfield County, CT.

The public is invited to participate in these family-oriented, interpretive walks, offered in partnership with our region's historic, cultural, and outdoor recreation organizations and the National Park Service. The Heritage Walks are the ideal opportunity to experience and learn about our region's rich and varied local history.

Historians, naturalists, and environmentalists will lead participants on explorations through historic estate gardens and town districts, behind-the-scenes cultural site tours, nature walks, trail hikes, and tours of many of the industrial-site ruins that were once thriving local industries. There will be Native-American and African American history walks & a bike tour on scenic country roads.

Detailed Heritage Walks brochures are available at libraries, post offices, restaurants and grocery stores in the region. The Walks schedule is also available at: <https://housatonicheritage.org/events/heritage-walks/>

To request a brochure by mail, email programs@housatonicheritage.org

Becket Athenaeum

3367 Main St, Becket

BecketAthenaeum.org

- Tuesday, August 1, 1:30pm
- Book Club: Muppets in Moscow by Natasha Lance Rogoff
- Saturdays, August 5, 19, 26, 10:30-11:30am
- Library Storytime
- Tuesday, August 8, 6:30-9:30pm, movie starts at 7pm
Movie Night for Adults
- Wednesday, August 9, 7pm
A Discussion on the Value of Community Journalism with representatives from local newspapers, moderated by Don Morrison
- Saturday, August 12, 10:30-11:30am
- Creative Movement & Storytime with Laurel Lenski
- Monday, August 14, 6pm
- Cookbook Club: Recipes from an Italian Summer
- Saturday, August 19, 10am-4pm
- Book Sale Fundraiser on the library lawn (weather permitting). By donation (cash or check). All proceeds support the services & programs at the Becket Athenaeum!
- Saturday, August 19, 11am-12pm
- Buildwave: A hands-on building game!
- Registration required: bit.ly/BA-build
- Tuesday, August 22, 6-8pm
- Game Night
- Tuesday, August 29, 7-8:30pm
Poetry of Mary Oliver with Lara Tupper
Registration required: bit.ly/BA-Oliver



**Washington Tracks
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Email your TRACKS info by the **25th of the month** to get in to next month's
issue to Lisa at: **mrsabeski@mac.com**
Please put TRACKS in the subject line.