



February 2024

COA Classes

Chair Yoga Mondays at 11:00 AM * Yoga
Tuesdays at 9:00 AM * Osteoporosis Thursdays
at 9 AM

Pot luck dinner on Friday February 16 th at
5:30 PM

Steve & Deb have Swedish meatballs and
noodles on the menu. All seniors are welcome
with or without a dish to share.

COA has a generous offer of several knitting
needles to start a knitting group. If you are
interested please let me know!

Questions, comments or concerns contact Rose
at 413-394-0003 Washingtoncoa@gmail.com

2024 Dog Licenses are Available

We have received the 2024 dog tags. The 2023
licenses and tags do not expire until March 31,
2024, but you are welcome to get the 2024
license/tag anytime you would like before the
current one expires. You can see the Town
Clerk on Monday evenings with the following:

- Current rabies certificate
- Proof of spay or neuter, if applicable
- Fee: \$4.00 if spayed/neutered or \$10 if
not

You can also mail the above (checks payable to
Town of Washington) to the Town Clerk, 8
Summit Hill Rd, Washington, MA 01223 and a
license and tag will be mailed back to you.

Please note that if you received a 2023 late fee
invoice, you will have to pay that first before
receiving your 2024 license/tag.

Town Nomination Papers Available

Nomination papers are available for the following
town positions that are up for election this year:

- Finance Committee - 3 year term
- Finance Committee - 2 year unexpired term
- Planning Board - 5 year term
- Select Board - 3 year term
- Municipal Light Board - 3 year term
- Town Clerk - 3 year term

If you would like to take out nomination papers,
please see the Town Clerk on Monday evenings
from 6:00 - 9:00 PM. You will need to collect 20
signatures from town residents that are registered
to vote and the completed nomination papers must
be returned to the Town Clerk by Friday, March 29,
2024. Any questions please contact the Town Clerk
413-207-7526

or washington.ma.townclerk@gmail.com.

2024 Annual Town Census

The 2024 Annual Town Census was mailed the
first week in February. The deadline for returning
the census form is Thursday, February 29th. Please
remember to sign the census form.

Included in the census mailing this year

- A return envelope to mail the census form to
the town hall. Alternatively, you can drop
the census form in the drop box at the town
hall.
- A dog license application. If you have
already registered your dog(s) for 2024 or
do not have a dog(s), you can disregard this.
- A Welcome to Washington brochure. We
created this brochure for new families that
move into town, but it is full of useful
information that all residents can use, so we
are sending one to each household. We hope
that you keep this for future reference, but if
you do need it, please return it to the town
hall or the transfer station.

Presidential Primary Reminders and Deadlines

Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024

Polling Hours: 7:00 AM - 8:00 PM

Polling Location: Washington Town Hall, 8 Summit Hill Rd

Voting methods:

- **Vote by Mail:** return the I WANT TO VOTE! postcard sent out by the state. The postcard must be received by the Town Clerk's office by 5:00 PM on Tuesday, February 27th. The postcard must be signed, and for unenrolled voters, you must indicate which party ballot you want for the primaries. Incomplete postcards will be rejected and returned for missing information. You can opt to vote by mail for all 2024 elections or just a specific election.
- **Absentee Ballot Application:** application must be received by the Town Clerk's office by 5:00 PM on Tuesday, February 27th
- **In-Person Early Voting:** the Town Clerk's office will hold in-person voting on the following dates and times. No appointment is necessary to vote during these times.
 - Saturday, February 24: 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM and 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM
 - Monday, February 26: 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM
 - Wednesday, February 28: 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM
 - Thursday, February 29: 7:00 AM - 9:00 AM
- **In-Person Absentee Ballot Application:** application must be received by the Town Clerk's office by 12:00 PM on Monday, March 4th
- **In-person on Election Day:** polls will be open from 7:00 AM - 8:00 PM

Returning 'vote by mail' ballots:

- **USPS:** must be received at the Town Hall by 8:00 PM on Tuesday, March 5th. Please allow at least five days for USPS delivery.
- **Drop box:** must be received at the Town Hall by 8:00 PM on Tuesday, March 5th. The drop box is located at the front of the Washington Town Hall.
- **Hand delivered:** must be received at the Town Hall by 8:00 PM on Tuesday, March 5th. Can be delivered to the Town Clerk's office anytime the Town Hall is open.

If you are not currently registered to vote in Washington, or would like to change your party affiliation, the deadline to do so is Saturday, February 24th. The Town Clerk will hold a voter registration session on this date from 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM and 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM at the Washington Town Hall.

Voting in a primary:

If you are a registered Democrat, registered Republican or registered Libertarian, you will receive that party's ballot. If you are an unenrolled voter, you must select a ballot from one of these parties.

Allison Mikaniewicz
Town Clerk
Washington, MA



Bobby Sweet & The Chaps (Washington natives Abe Guthrie & Jodi Lampro) along with Steve & Pete Adams and Steve Sears are opening the night followed by a spaghetti buffet while we watch a classic Clint Eastwood spaghetti western!
www.stationery-factory.com

Dear Washington Friends & Neighbors:

February 2024

Winter has finally arrived in the Berkshires. With a vengeance, it seems: bringing snow/rain storms that seem to drag out 12, 18, 24 hours or even longer. Many thanks to Tom, Jim, and Zack on our Highway crew for putting in the long hours late at night, early in the morning, and over weekends, to keep our roads drivable and safe.

The Governor's office recently announced the release of disaster relief funds to compensate several Western MA municipalities for extraordinary damages sustained during some of last summer's severe rainstorms. Washington was spared the worst devastation seen by towns further north. But we still had our share of flooding and road washouts. We received \$20,000 as our share of those relief funds, which will go toward offsetting the cleanup and repair expenses and help with spring repair of dirt roads.

Just after the first of the year, the Select Board received word from County Ambulance that they had decided not to renew our agreement to provide primary EMS coverage for the Town of Washington. So, rather than a choice to consider, we are now pursuing a contract with Becket Ambulance as a necessity. County Ambulance will continue to provide primary response until an alternative can be arranged, which we aim to have in place for the new fiscal year in July. We will work with the Finance Committee to try to minimize the tax impact in the FY25 budget.

Once an EMS contract is finalized, we will want to have a Community Meeting with the Becket Town Administrator and EMS Director to answer any questions about service and talk about how to improve response times. The Select Board has been talking about using grant money for an initiative to improve our town's compliance with 911 signage at all residences by covering the costs of the signs. Stay tuned for an opt-in signup in spring.

After many years of service, Jim Huebner has stepped down from his role as chair of our Board of Health. Among other accomplishments, Jim was instrumental in the formation of the Berkshire Public Health Alliance, which has benefited many communities across the county, not just Washington. We sincerely thank him for his many contributions to our town. The Select Board has appointed Steve Deloye to fill the BOH vacancy.

Our Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness planning team is wrapping up its work. They will be presenting three priority climate-response projects for community input and feedback. The listening session is tentatively scheduled for the evening of March 19. And grant money will be paying for catered food, to encourage a good turnout. So save the date and stay tuned!

Kent Lew
Select Board chair

David Ellis
Select Board clerk

Mike Case
Select Board

Resident Profile: Don Gagnon, Planning Board Chair

Interviewed by Susan Colgan

Following Carol Lew's article "The Running of our Town", the insight's team thought an intermittent series of articles on individuals in Town who have worked long and hard on the various committees would both honor their work and also give folks an idea of what community involvement looks like. This is the first of these articles.

A few minutes before seven pm on the second Tuesday of the month, Don Gagnon can be seen entering the Washington Town Hall with the quiet confidence of a man who keeps his own council. He takes his seat at the center of the conference table. After chatting with colleagues, he glances up at the wall clock, checks that a quorum of members are seated, and at seven he begins the monthly Planning Board meeting.

Don has had years of practice: 24 years on the Washington Zoning Board of Appeals, ten years on the Planning Board and five years as Planning Board chairman.

When the Gagnons moved to Washington in the early '80s there were many young people here, many with young children. They formed a food co-op and many took on jobs in the community. Ed Bond, one of the group, asked Don to serve on the Zoning Board of Appeals, and so his years of service to Washington began.

"Sue and I are native Berkshires," Don says. "In 1977 we moved over the New York State line for Sue to get her MSW at SUNY Albany. When Sue finished her degree we were both working in Pittsfield. We were expecting our first child and wanted to move back—we wanted our children to be educated in the Central Berkshire System."

The house that belonged to Dick and Eunice Hurley on Route 8, just south of Beach Road, was for sale and, according to Don, "It fit the bill." The Hurleys owned the house and 50 acres from Route 8 all the way back to the railroad tracks. Two acres with the house were carved out and put up for sale. This was before Washington adopted four acre zoning.

Three years after the Gagnon's moved in, Pittsfield Sand and Gravel bought the rest of the Hurley's land. They immediately began large-scale gravel processing and the abutting neighbors were up in arms. The Washington Select Board and Planning Board took action. There was concern about the wetlands abutting the headwaters of the Housatonic River, as well as for the wells of the neighboring properties. Eventually, Don explained, the company was persuaded to redirect traffic out of the area via Bullard's Crossing Road. The Planning Board developed an Earth Removal Bylaw to control the impacts on abutting properties and ground water. According to Don, the community rallied in support of the action.

It was a busy time to be on the ZBA. In 1986 the town was reviewing a residential minimum of four acre zoning. "The reasoning behind increasing the size of a building lot to four acres," Don explains, "was based on the issue of well and septic separation and placement. The Planning Board noted that due to the ledge, wetlands and slope issues prominent in Washington, moving to a four acre minimum would improve housing development. It passed in 1987." With these compelling issues, Don could not help but become interested in the planning for the town.

In 2009, when a seat opened up on the Planning Board, Don took out papers and decided to run. For ten years he worked as clerk for Marilyn Wiley. During that time, the Board adopted the Wireless Communication bylaw and also developed solar and wind-power bylaws. When Wiley resigned in 2019, Don became the Chair.

It was also in 2019 that Don retired from Crane Paper Company where he worked as Senior Supply Chain Manager for the Currency Division.

Work on The Town Plan was well underway when Don became Chair. Don credits Jim Huebner, longtime chairman of the Select Board, for launching work on the Town Plan and creating interest in the community. Don recalls that Jim applied for the grant to help finance the project, and worked to include the various board chairs and other residents in the process—with a boost from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.

“From my perspective it is vital getting feedback from the town.” And it is that vital feedback Don is counting on when the Planning Board and the Town Steering Committee take up the work of bringing all the Town’s bylaws up to date. The goal is to ensure that the wording of each bylaw reflects the original intent and takes the town’s current needs into account.

The project will take the next two years. We will all be called in to vote on the revisions and rewording. “It will give residents a sense of ownership,” Don hopes — “an understanding of what our town is about, where issues lie.”

Don foresees the next two years as an “opportunity to make changes that need to be made, molding the town as we go. Many of the group of us that formed in the ’80s have moved on. Our kids have grown. Now we have a new wave of residents who we hope will become engaged.”

Planning Board

The primary purpose of the Planning Board is to understand and implement the Washington Zoning Bylaws, as well as make additions and revisions to the bylaws as needed and approved of by the town.

The Planning Board is the Special Permit granting authority for the Town. In addition, the Planning Board is also responsible for reviewing “Form A” subdivisions of land ANR (Approval Not Required) and implementing the Rules and Regulations governing the subdivision of land.

The Planning Board is responsible for initiating and facilitating the process of creating and overseeing a Master Plan and assists the Select Board and other town departments and committees with making decisions on said planning topics.

Andrew Jay Garry joined his Heavenly Father on December 14, 2023. He was born on April 1, 1939 in Summit, NJ, the third son of James and Anne Garry. He joins his parents and older brothers, James and Joseph Garry, in Heaven. Jay attended Georgetown University where he was a proud member of the Delta Phi Epsilon Professional Foreign Service Fraternity. He served as Social Manager his Junior year and President his Senior year. Most notably, Jay met the love of his life, Mary Louise Stuart on the stairs of the Delta Phi fraternity house at the corner of Prospect and 34th Streets in Washington, DC. A Southern belle from Montgomery, AL, Mary Lou was on Thanksgiving break from Mary Baldwin College when her classmate arranged this blind date that became an extraordinary 66-year love story. Their whirlwind courtship included many dates at Martin's Tavern in the dugout and picnics on Skyline Drive in the Shenandoah Valley where Mary Lou impressed him with her beauty, charm, fried chicken and deviled eggs. Jay and Mary Lou married on June 1, 1963 and had three beautiful daughters, Lucy, Lynn and Kate.

After graduation, Jay enlisted in the United States Navy and was commissioned Ensign in December of 1962. Jay went through Naval Air Training in Pensacola, FL and was assigned to Navy Attack Squadron 10 as a Bombardier Navigator. He was deployed several times on aircraft carriers, including flying A3 Fighter Aircraft off the USS Constellation during the Vietnam War. He retired with the rank of Commander and joined Piper Aircraft International as a Sales Executive.

In 1970, Jay moved the family to Atlanta, GA where he joined Merrill Lynch. He held various positions during his career at Merrill Lynch as a Retail Broker, Institutional Broker and Office Manager. In 1979, he opened the first satellite office branch for Merrill Lynch at Peachtree Center in downtown Atlanta and managed it until 1991, fostering lifelong friendships with colleagues and clients; he cherished and will always be grateful for these relationships and the opportunity to develop talent. After retirement in late 2004, Jay stayed busy playing golf at the Capital City Club where he was a 40-year Life Member. He also enjoyed spending time with family and friends at their beach cottage, "Snug Harbor," in Perdido Beach, AL where he treated guests to fishing in the Gulf of Mexico and countless other boating adventures.

Jay and his family also spent quality time at their Berkshire County, MA mountain home, "The Top," where he loved working outside cutting hay, clearing fields and forest and maintaining the property.

He lived his life by the Golden Rule and shared his wisdom, core values, guidance and faith with his wife, children, grandchildren, extended family, colleagues, friends and his children's friends, taking extraordinary interest in the care of, and service to others.

Jay is survived by his beautiful wife, Mary Louise Garry; three daughters, Lucy Garry Flinn (Peter Ramsay Tanham), Lynn Garry Muller (John Crawford Muller), and Kathryn Garry Wadley (David Conan Wadley); and six grandchildren, Lucy Elizabeth Flinn, William Stuart Flinn, Sophia Louise Flinn, John Crawford Muller III, Robert Andrew Muller and James Garry Muller.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Cathedral of Christ the King, 2699 Peachtree Road, Atlanta, GA 30303.

Events for the Yoked Parish of Becket for 2024

February
Friday, Feb 2: Free Pasta Dinner / Becket Federated Church / 5-7pm
Saturday, Feb 3: Food Pantry / Becket Federated Church / 9-11am
Saturday, Feb 17: Food Pantry / Becket Federated Church / 9-11am
Saturday, Feb 24: Breakfast / Becket Federated Church / 8-10:30am / \$8
March
Friday, Mar 1: Free Pasta Dinner / Becket Federated Church / 5-7pm
Saturday, Mar 2: Food Pantry / Becket Federated Church / 9-11am
Saturday, Mar 16: Food Pantry / Becket Federated Church / 9-11am
Saturday, Mar 30: Breakfast / Becket Federated Church / 8-10:30am / \$8
Sunday, Mar 31: Free Easter Dinner / Becket Federated Church / 1:30-3:30pm



Upcoming Events at the Becket Athenaeum

3367 Main St, Becket

BecketAthenaeum.org



- **Library Storytime**
Saturdays, February 3, 17, 24
10:30-11:30am
- **Movie Night for Adults** Saturday, February 3
6:30-9:30pm, movie starts at 7pm
- **Book Club: Still Life** by Sarah Winman
Tuesday, February 6
1:30pm
- **Creative Movement & Storytime with Laurel Lenski**
Saturday, February 10
10:30-11:30am
- **Cookbook Club: Felidia: Recipes from My Flagship Restaurant**
by Lidia Bastianich
Monday, February 12
6pm
- **Game Night**
Thursday, February 22
5-7pm
- **Virtual Programs**
Topics include Black History, Job Interview Success, Armchair Travel, Gardening, and more!
Throughout February
Full details at BecketAthenaeum.org/events



February

Becket Arts Center Events

Yoga

Thursdays, February 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, 9:30am- Rima Sala leads yoga for all abilities. \$10 (\$5 for BAC members) Class is cancelled if CBRSD is closed.

Dance

Fridays, February 2, 9, 16, 23, 12pm- Diane Firtell leads Nia for all abilities. \$15 (\$10 for BAC members) Class is cancelled if CBRSD is closed.

Craft

Saturday, February 10, 12pm - Crafters Workshop - Coffee Bag Fundraiser. Join us for a free open workshop to explore how to turn your burlap coffee bag into a work of art. Use our materials, talk to other creatives and generate ideas. Free.

Music

Saturday, February 10, 7pm - Music is My Story with Chris Merenda. Enjoy an evening of music in the upstairs gallery. This program is supported in part by the Cultural Council of Becket and the town of Becket. Donations welcome.

Stories

Friday, February 16, 7pm - "How We Met" - Community Storytelling. A casual & cozy community storytelling session. Come to listen and/or share stories of how you met you lover(s); inquiring minds want to KNOW! Free.

Learn

Saturday, February 24, 4pm - Join Chris Merenda for a songwriting workshop. \$25 per person. Free for students 14-18.

becketartscenter.org/events

Pick up your coffee bag too!

becketartscenter.org/coffee-bag-fundraiser



Ivor Parry, Ethiopian Goat

CALLING ALL ARTISTS CRAFTERS & CREATIVES

Our friends at Barrington Coffee Roasting Company have donated their coffee bags and we want YOU to CREATE a piece of ART! Pick up your bag Wednesdays-Saturdays, 10-4 (supplies are limited).



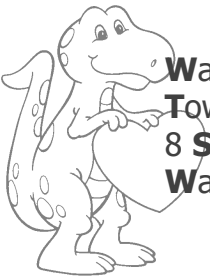
\$100 CASH PRIZE

We will award a cash prize to the best creation. All pieces will be auctioned off at the end of March with proceeds going to support free art programming for youth at Becket Arts Center.

Becket Arts Center
7 Brooker Hill Rd. Becket
413.623.6635

becketartscenter.org/coffee-bag-fundraiser





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I will convert your old 8mm movies, VHS
tapes and video cassette tapes to DVDs.
Call or email for pricing.

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.