



July 2022

Washington Scholarship Recipients Announced
The Washington Scholarship Committee is pleased to announce that Juliane Keiper, Quinn Lennon, Lilly Patton, and Colin Rosier are this year's scholarship recipients. Planning to attend Amherst College this fall, Juliane is interested in pursuing a career in math or science. Quinn plans to attend UMass Amherst in preparation for a career in music production. Lilly Patton has been accepted by the College of the Holy Cross and by Westfield State University's Honors Program. Her interest lies in the field of law and government. UMass Amherst will welcome Colin this fall, and he plans to major in astronomy. This year marks the 51st anniversary of the Washington Scholarship. For over 50 years, fundraisers have sustained this scholarship. Thanks to the generosity of our community, the Washington Scholarship continues to support our young people. After a hiatus due to the coronavirus, we hope to hold our Election Day bake sale this November. Stay tuned for more information as the date approaches!



Sarah May Walsh

May 14, 1979 - February 11, 2022

Dear friends and neighbors,

As many of you know, we lost our beloved daughter, Sarah, on February 11, 2022, after a lengthy illness. Sarah had been living in Austin, TX, since 2015. Sarah left this world after 4 weeks in an ICU, surrounded by her loving family.

Sarah had many dear, life-long friends and neighbors in these Hilltowns, and while many have moved away, we would like to invite those who are still living locally to a Celebration of Life, on Sunday, July 10th, at 11:30, at the Becket Federated Church, followed by a brief reception at the Parish House, (next to the church,) and an informal gathering, immediately following, at our home on 333 Frost Rd, Washington.

Sarah will be loved forever by so many. We would be honored to have you join us.

Sean and Debby Connors



On Wednesday, June 22nd the Town of Washington held the sixth leg of the Mass Walking Tour musical event at our Old Town Hall. This event started at 6pm with Tricia Drugmand introducing the 4 piece acoustic folk band that had walked the Appalachian Trail from Lee that morning. Carol Lew gave a historical presentation of "Washington Mountain" with stories from the 1920's & 1930's with a photo display from that era, followed by local Annie Guthrie who played some family songs. Her father Arlo had stopped by earlier to say hello and shared some stories before the music started.

Mark Mandeville lead the group with his partner, Raianne Richard's and played many old time favorites. The event was attended by locals and followers of the band who then walked the AT the next day, headed to Dalton to perform again that evening.



COA Classes

Chair Yoga Mondays 11:00 AM

Yoga Tuesdays at 9:00 AM

Osteoporosis Thursdays at 9:00 AM

Ti-Chi/QiGong Fridays at 10:00 AM

Pot Luck Dinner Friday, July 15 at 5:30 PM Join us for burgers and hot dogs on the grill! Come early 4:45-5:30 Cornhole will be set up for anyone who wishes to play. As always 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



Sharon the Shopper

is a full-service grocery shopping & delivery service. Direct from store to your door, we offer affordable and convenient shopping so you don't have to. Call or email today to schedule your pick-up and delivery.

A very big thank you to the Becket / Washington Community from the Becket Volunteer Firefighters Association! Through the generous donations made to the Association we can continue our support of the Fire Department, it's members and the community. The Fire Department will be purchasing a replacement for Engine 4, with a new front-line engine at Station 2 (Route 20). These donations will enable the Association to supply equipment for this truck that is needed to repair, replace, or upgrade items to meet current safety standards on the new vehicle. Your support has allowed us to do this!

As always, both the Association and Department are looking for new volunteers. We do a lot more than just fighting fires, a variety of skills and backgrounds are needed to keep the community safe! If you are interested in joining, or want more information, please reach out to Chief Paul Mikaniewicz - firechief@townofbecket.org.

Dear Washington Friends & Neighbors:

July 2022

Hot weather is coming. Becket Beach Pass request forms can be downloaded from the website and dropped off at (or mailed to) Town Hall to have passes mailed back to you. Or stop by Town Hall on Monday evenings 7–9pm or during Jodi’s Monday & Wednesday office hours 10am–2pm to pick up in person.

Retired superintendent Dave Fish has been providing some summer help with the Highway crew this year. He’s been assisting Jim with roadside mowing, to cut back some of the extra growth from recent years, as well as helping with general grounds maintenance.

Tom and Adam will be working with Delaney Excavating to pave the newly raised section of Upper Valley Rd this month. We plan to follow up with more extensive repaving along there from Summit Hill Rd all the way to Route 8, similar to the project on Frost and Lovers Lane Rds, hopefully before winter. Other projects planned for this year include repairing the storm-damaged pavement edges along Stonehouse Rd and the driveway along Town Park to the Garage.

Faded Flowers LLC, a partnership of two veterans based in Westfield, is proposing to establish a 3,000 sq ft greenhouse to cultivate marijuana on a property on Simmons Rd. They met with the Planning Board last month to outline their proposal, but have not yet formally applied for the required special permit. They have requested to meet with the Select Board at our July 11 meeting to discuss a Host Community Agreement (HCA).

At some point, they will need to hold a Community Outreach event, as required by the Cannabis Control Commission. The timing for that is yet undetermined. But interested citizens should take the opportunity when the time comes to learn more, ask questions, and voice their perspectives. There will also be official public hearings held by the Planning Board and Select Board in the months ahead, if the proposal moves forward.

Music in the Park returns again this year, thanks to the Cultural Commission and Parks Commission. This year’s program kicks off on July 31 with the first in a series of free Sunday concerts at Town Park throughout August. It promises to be another great season.

Have a safe and happy Fourth of July, everyone.

Kent Lew
Select Board chair

David Ellis
Select Board

John Fish
Select Board

[illegible]

Property Taxes, and Possible Ways to Lessen the Pain for Seniors

by Carol Lew

Due to the sharp increases in education costs and the ever-increasing costs of running our town, taxpayers in will soon experience a rise in property taxes. It's not good news for any of us, but for some Washington residents, it could be a real hardship. There may be ways to reduce the hit for some of us. This article introduces you to the avenues available to seniors that are governed by state law. The article does not include comprehensive list of tax relief options; there are additional options for veterans or people with certain disabilities or hardships. This Insights article will be on Washington's website with clickable links.

Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit

One targeted program to reduce property taxes is called a "circuit breaker" because it protects senior citizens from a property tax "overload" just like an electric circuit breaker: when a property tax bill exceeds a certain percentage of a senior's income, the circuit breaker reduces property taxes to bring them back in line with that limit.

Seniors (65 or older before January 1, 2022), may be eligible to claim this refundable credit on Massachusetts personal income tax returns. The Circuit Breaker tax credit is based on actual real estate taxes or rent paid on the Massachusetts residential property you own or rent and occupy as your principal residence.

If you are a homeowner, your Massachusetts property tax payments must exceed 10% of your total Massachusetts income for the tax year. The assessed valuation of the homeowner's personal residence cannot exceed \$884,000.

For tax year 2021, your total Massachusetts income can't exceed:

- \$62,000 for a single individual who is not the head of a household.
- \$78,000 for a head of household.
- \$93,000 for married couples filing a joint return.

The maximum credit amount for tax year 2021 is \$1,170. If the credit you're owed exceeds the amount of the total income tax payable for the year, you'll get a refund. The schedule CB must be completed within 3 years from the last day for filing the return.

If you are a renter, there may be options to be a circuit breaker tax credit. You'll find more information on that in the link below.

You aren't eligible if you are a nonresident, if you are married and your status is married filing separately, if you are a dependent of another taxpayer, if you receive a federal and/or state rent subsidy, or if you did not complete a Schedule CB within 3 years of the tax filing date.

There are more details at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-senior-circuit-breaker-tax-credit>.

Senior Exemption

An exemption relieves a taxpayer from the legal obligation to pay all or a part of the tax assessed. Two senior exemptions are listed here; you can receive one or the other, not both.

In Washington, you may qualify if you were over the age of 65 as of July 1 of the year taxes are due. The income threshold is \$20K single/\$30K married. The asset threshold is \$40K single/ \$55K married (your home value is not part of your asset calculation). Up to \$1,000 could be exempt if you qualify.

If you are over 70 and your income is more than the above threshold, but your assets are less than \$20K (not counting your primary home), you could qualify for a \$175 exemption. The “Senior Exemption-Form 96-1” is used for both of these senior exemptions. There are other requirements, such as the number of years the applicant has resided and owned property in Massachusetts.

You must file an Exemption Application on or before April 1, or 3 months after the actual bills were mailed for the fiscal year, whichever is later. You must pay all of the taxes on your bill when they’re due, even if your application is in process. You’ll accrue interest charges that can’t be waived if you don’t. If your application is granted, you’ll receive a refund of any over-payment.

Property Tax Abatements

An abatement is a reduction in the tax assessed on your property. Generally, abatements are granted when taxpayers are able to prove that the fair market value of their property is less than its assessed value. A taxpayer may apply for abatement for the following reasons:

- Overvaluation – The taxpayer disagrees with the local assessors' appraisal of the fair cash value of the property or believes the valuation reflects a data or other error.
- Disproportionate assessment – The taxpayer believes the property is valued at a higher percentage of fair cash value than other properties due to an intentional, discriminatory assessment policy.
- Statutory exemption – The taxpayer believes an exemption applies based on the ownership or use of the property.

You’ll find an Abatement application and a link to “Property Tax Abatement Tips” at www.washington-ma.gov/property-tax-abatements

Property Tax Deferral for Seniors

Under Clause 41A, seniors may also be able to delay payment of their property taxes. A property tax deferral does not reduce the tax obligation like an exemption. Instead, it defers payment until the senior sells the property or passes away. A deferral allows seniors to use resources that would go to pay taxes to defray living expenses instead.

To be eligible, you must be 65 or older, your domicile must have been in Massachusetts for at least 10 consecutive years, and there are other detailed requirements regarding ownership of the property. Your income for the year previous to filing cannot exceed \$20,000 as an individual or couple. You may defer payment of all or part of the taxes owed each year so long as you continue to qualify, and the deferred taxes and accrued interest are not more than 50% of your proportional ownership share of the fair cash value of the property. Interest on deferred taxes accrues at 8%. The payment of deferred taxes and accrued interest is due when the property is sold or you pass away, unless your surviving spouse continues to defer. As of that date, the interest rate goes up to 16%. If 6 months later, the deferred amount has not been paid, the treasurer may petition the Land Court to foreclose the lien on the property.

All of this can be pretty confusing! Fortunately, we have someone in town who knows all of the ins and outs of most of these tax savings avenues. Except for the Circuit Breaker Tax Credit (which has to do with State Income Tax), Mary Jarvie can answer questions you might have. She works in the Assessors’ Office at Town Hall, and she’s the one who processes applications for exemptions, and abatements. You can find her in the Assessors Office most Monday evenings between 6 and 8pm, and she’d also be happy to answer questions by phone. Her number is 413-329-6953. There are Tax Savings Tip flyers on a bulletin board in the hallway outside of her office as well; they explain all of the details of the different exemptions available. And you can find more detailed information and forms for exemptions at www.washington-ma.gov/property-tax-exemptions.

The Town of Washington Parks Commission held its annual volunteer town park cleanup on Saturday June 11th from 10 am - 1 pm. We had a nice turnout of supportive volunteers of which couldn't be more pleased and grateful! The volunteer efforts focused on cleaning up the playground area where we spent the hours weeding, edging, weed whacking and mulching the playground area. We think it looks great and hope you will head over to enjoy it! Anyone who wasn't available for the event but would like to volunteer please reach out to the Park Commission for more details. Thank you again to all the volunteers, your time and effort was much appreciated!



Matt York kicks off the Music in The Park FREE summer concert

series, performing in the Town Park gazebo on Sunday, July 31st 4PM – 6PM.

The series continues with performances scheduled every Sunday in August from 4PM to 6PM.

Rev Tor on August 7th, Bobby Sweet on August 14th, Krishna Guthrie on August 21st

Rain dates and schedule additions will be announced at a later date.

This series is supported by the cultural councils of Washington, Becket and Hinsdale,

local agencies which are funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Becket Athenaeum

- Tuesday, July 5, 1:30pm - Book Club: The Woman They Could Not Silence
- Wednesdays, July 6, 13, 20, 27, 10:30am - Library Storytime & Craft
- Monday, July 11, 6pm - Cookbook Club: An Unapologetic Cookbook
- Saturday, July 23, 10-4 - Book sale fundraiser
- Saturday, July 23, 11am - Magnificent Monster Circus presented by Cactus Head Puppets
- Saturday, July 23, time TBD - Nutritional Eating with the Seasons with Corinne Conry
- Tuesday, July 26, 6pm - Author Reading: Elsewhere by Alexis Schaitkin, moderated by Lara Tupper

Becket Arts Center

Your Gathering Place for Arts in the Berkshires

Becket Arts Center's Fourth Annual Open-Studios DriveAbout will be Bigger than Ever

This year it will be a two-day event: Saturday, August 6, from 12p.m. to 5p.m., and Sunday, August 7, from 10a.m. to 5p.m. Painters, sculptors, jewelers, photographers, print makers, a wood craftsman, fiber artists, and stained-glass workers will be welcoming visitors at their studios - or at the historic Becket Arts Center on Route 8. Fourteen Becket artists will exhibit their work. Other towns represented in this fourth annual event include Lee, Middlefield, and North Chester, making this Open Studios DriveAbout the biggest yet.

More information and an interactive map can be found at www.Becketartscenter.org

Becket Arts Center

7 Brooker Hill Rd., Becket, MA
413-623-6635
becketartscenter.org

July

Nature Seen - Juried Exhibit 2 - Friday, June 24 to Monday, July 12; 12:00-4:00pm, Friday-Monday (closed July 4). Free and open to the public.

Yoga with Rima Sala - Fridays, July 8, 15, 22, 29; 9:30am. \$10 per class

Stanley Marcus Sculptures Dedication - Saturday, July 9; 3:00pm

Music Brings Communities Together: Cliff Eberhardt - Saturday, July 9; 5:00pm. Outdoors on BAC lawn (rain location at Becket Federated Church diagonal to BAC). Free and open to the public. Donations welcome.

Come Dance With Us! Fran Hamburg & Louise Heit - Mondays, July 11, 18, 25, Aug 1; 10:30am.

Inline - Juried Exhibit 3 - Friday, July 15 to Monday, Aug 1; 12:00-4:00pm, Friday-Monday. **Artist Reception: Saturday, July 16; 2:00-4:00pm.** Free and open to the public.

Community Storytelling - Sunday, July 17; 5:00pm. Bring a dish to share and a story about life in the hilltowns or just come to listen.

Exploration Series Lecture: Kevin O'Hara, Author of "Ins and Outs of a Locked Ward", July 18; 6:30pm. \$5 suggested donation for non-members of Becket Arts Center.

Music Brings Communities Together: Brian Conway and Conor Hearn - Saturday, July 23; 5:00pm. Outdoors on BAC lawn (rain location at Becket Federated Church diagonal to BAC). Free and open to the public. Donations welcome.

Close Encounters With Music Student Performance at First Congregational Church - YMCA Rd. in Becket - Thursday, July 28; 5:00pm. Free and open to the public. Donations welcome.

Garden Tour - Saturday, July 30 (Rain Date: July 31); 10:00am-3:00pm

MEMBERS MAKE THIS POSSIBLE

BECOME A 2022 BAC MEMBER

www.becketartscenter.org/membership



Washington Tracks
Town Hall
8 Summit Hill Rd.
Washington, MA
01223

Presorted Standard
US Postage
PAID
Permit 121
Pittsfield MA

www.washington-ma.gov

Support Our Local Businesses

Horace Mann Insurance Agency

PO Box 772 Becket Ma. 01223
Phone 413.623.2112
Fax 413.623.5551
Provide all Personal Lines of Insurance
Provide Financial and retirement products too

Hilltowns Veterinary Clinic

Dr. Sharon Lynch, MVs
133 South Washington State Rd
Washington, MA 01223
413.623.5329
www.hilltownsvetclinic.com

John Fish Piano Service

413-281-6130
johnfishpiano.com
Piano tuning, repair & restoration; 20 years
experience

Justice of the Peace

Dorothy Filanowska
413.446.6921 justicedora@gmail.com
<http://www.justicedora.com>

Mark F. Roos, Broker Associate ABR

The Kinderhook Group
413.822.6143
markfr909@gmail.com
Helping buyers and sellers achieve their dreams

Pinnacle Painting Company

578 South Washington State Rd
Washington, MA 01223
413.623.8737
Over 35 years experience Painting, wall covering &
light carpentry

Realtor & Notary

Lisa Peltier
500 S. Washington State Rd.
413.822.1257
Neilsen Realty
lisa@neilsenrealty.com

Sharon The Shopper

Sharon Davis
Grocery Shopping & Delivery
srd52957@hotmail.com
760.831.1555

Summit Hill Campground

34 Old Middlefield Rd.
Washington, Ma. 01223
413.623.5761
Great Family Camping
Tents, R.V.s Motor Homes
Full Hook Ups
Pet Friendly
Seasonals Welcomed
Events scheduled May through Sept

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.