



June 2022

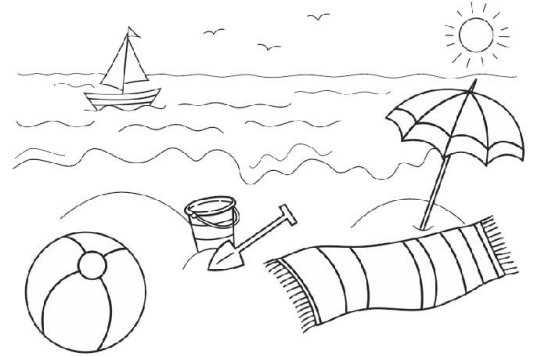
Beach Passes are Now Available

The cost of the family beach pass is increasing to \$25.00 this year. In the past, we've only charged the \$5.00 surcharge that Becket charges us for the passes. But we have also appropriated \$2,500 annually from taxes to pay Becket to allow our residents this access to their beach. The Parks Commission and Finance Committee have recommended moving to a model where the fees for a pass cover both the assessment and the per-pass surcharge. The goal is to raise enough from user fees to eliminate the annual appropriation and remove the cost of the beach from our property taxes.

We are also introducing a Beach Pass Request Form to assist us in collecting the information the Town of Becket requires of us. The plate number collected is used to confirm the pass is going to a Washington household. It is not necessary to purchase more than one as the pass can be used by any vehicle belonging to a resident of the household. You may have already received the form in the mail if someone in your household purchased a pass last year. If you need one, forms can also be found at the Town Hall or on the new website.

If you would like to purchase a family pass to use the Becket Beach accessed using Mecum Way (blue sign) off Route 8 please return the form along with a self-addressed stamped envelope and \$25.00 check payable to the Town of Washington. Return by using the drop box outside the Town Hall, by mail or stop in during Town Hall hours.

Administrative Assistant, Select Board



Harm Reduction Mobile Services in Washington

The Berkshire Harm Reduction Services mobile van will be parked at Town Hall on the last Tuesday of every month from 10:00 to noon. Check the website calendar for up-to-date schedules.

The Harm Reduction Services van provides free naloxone and overdose education; syringe services and safe sharps disposal; testing and prevention for Hepatitis C, HIV, and STDs; as well as outreach for local recovery programs.

For more program details, visit www.berkshirehealthsystems.org/programs-and-services/berkshire-harm-reduction/

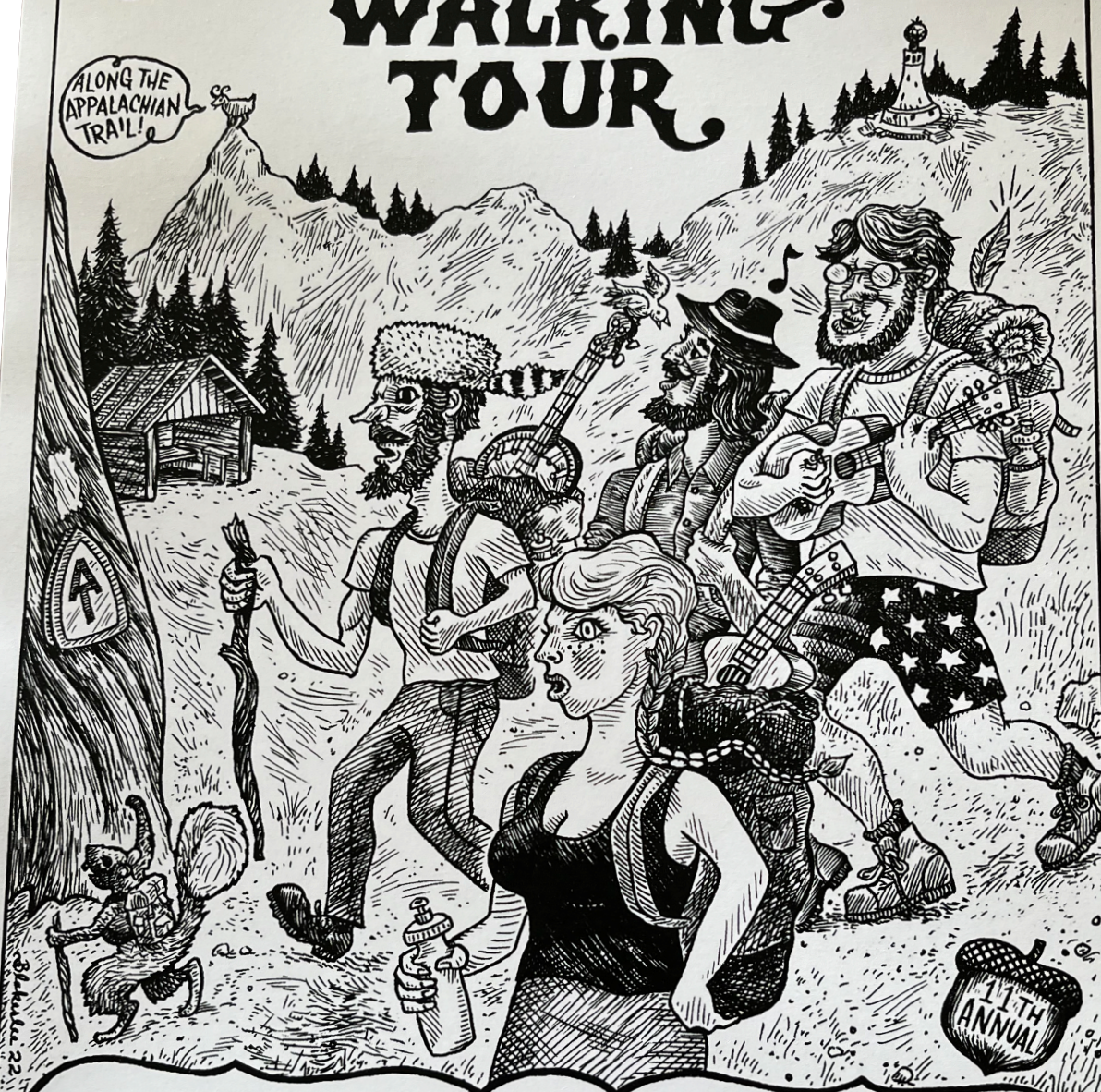
Our community is not immune to the unfortunate trends affecting Berkshire County regarding declining mental health and increased substance abuse, which have only worsened during the Covid pandemic.

This mobile program helps bring these vital health services directly to rural areas like ours where access and support can otherwise be out of reach.

MARK MANDEVILLE · RAIANNE RICHARDS · VITO CACCAVELLI · KYLE SWARTZWELDER

MASSACHUSETTS WALKING TOUR

ALONG THE
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TRAIL!



JUNE 22 2022 6PM **FREE COMMUNITY CONCERT**

OLD TOWN HALL

WASHINGTON MOUNTAIN RD. WASHINGTON MA 01223

SPONSORED BY A GRANT FROM THE WASHINGTON CULTURAL COUNCIL



VISIT WWW.MASSWALKINGTOUR.ORG

RESULTS

TOWN OF WASHINGTON ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION

SATURDAY, MAY 21, 2022

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Debra (Meg) Megas*	71
Write-ins:	
Craig Willis	1
Blanks	7
Total	79

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Linda Levernoch	78
Write-ins	
Blanks	1
Total	79

MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD

John McElwain*	78
Write-ins	
Blanks	1
Total	79

PLANNING BOARD

Write-ins:	
Shaun Lennon	6
David Fish	3
Don Gagnon	3
Patricia Drugmand	2
Ed Neumuth	2
John Fish	1
Michael Burke	1
Richard Spencer	1
Patricia Thornton	1
Blanks	59
Total	79

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

John Fish	72
Write-ins:	
Patricia Drugmand	1
Blanks	6
Total	79

TREE WARDEN

Write-ins:	
Craig Willis	12
Sean Connors	6
Chet Thomas	1
Ed Neumuth	1
Blanks	59
Total	79

BALLOT QUESTION

Shall the Town of Washington be allowed to assess an additional \$150,000 in real estate taxes for the purposes of funding the Town's operating budget and Regional School District assessment for the fiscal year beginning July 1st, 2022?

Yes	53
No	25
Blanks	1
Total	79

*Incumbent Candidates

Total Registered Voters: 412

Total Votes Cast: 79

Voter Turn-Out: 19.2%

Dog License Late Fees

The grace period to apply for a 2022 dog license ended on May 31st. If you have not applied for a 2022 dog license for each of your dogs, you will be receiving an invoice for the license fees and a \$25 late fee from the Town Clerk.

Becket Athenaeum

- Pre-School STEAM Program - Tuesdays at 1pm through June 14 (preregistration required)
- Library Storytime & Craft - Wednesdays at 10:30am
- June 5, 5-6pm - Tantra Yoga: It's Not About Sex. The Truth about the Path to Inner Peace and Unreasonable Happiness (on Zoom)
- June 7, 1:30pm - Book Club: Saint X (on Zoom or offsite)
- June 13, 6pm - Cookbook Club
- June 14, 6-8pm - Herbal Infusions with Kali Tomasi
- June 17 & 24, 9-12pm - Youth Program with Sarah Reedy
- June 18, 10-4 - Book sale fundraiser
- June 18, 11am - Magnificent Monster Circus presented by Cactus Head Puppets
- June 18, 2pm - Lauri Fitz-Pegado presentation & reading from Dancing in the Dash
- June 21, 6-8pm - Herbal Tinctures with Kali Tomasi
- June 22, 3:30-5pm - Banned Book Club: first half of The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas
- June 23, 4pm Author Reading: Alexis Portillo and Jana Laiz, Thirty-Five Days To Baltimore
- June 29, 3:30-5pm - Banned Book Club: second half of The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas

Tim Zimmerman and The King's Brass will appear in concert on Wednesday, June 8, at 7pm at Hope Church, 259 Kemble Street, Lenox, MA. By teaming together, these Christian professionals from around the United States perform a wide variety of music from Gabrieli to hymn classics, from Handel to jazz spirituals, from Christmas carols to patriotic marches. For forty years, The Kings' Brass have performed over one hundred concerts each season, and we are delighted to welcome this group back to Lenox. Mark your calendars; you'll not want to miss this special evening. A free-will offering will be taken during intermission.

Dear Washington Friends & Neighbors:

June 2022

Summer is here. Ice scrapers and mittens have been replaced by trowels and mud gloves as gardeners get set for another growing season. We'll see what this year has in store weatherwise.

The Select Board welcomes new member John Fish and thanks outgoing member Tricia Drugmand for her many years of service. Thanks to the 19% of voters who turned out for the election. The Levy Override question passed by two-thirds. Higher taxes are no victory, but this will allow us to meet our skyrocketing education obligations without needing to completely eliminate other services to compensate. Next month's *Insights* article will delve into senior tax exemptions and tax credits that may be of help to some. Meanwhile, the Select Board and Finance Committee will keep seeking longer-term strategies to better address our huge tax burden.

Thanks to the voters who participated in Annual Town Meeting. The Board is grateful for the authorization to continue pursuing a part-time Town Administrator. Next steps include exploring a shared position with another town and potential grant assistance to help cover the transition.

Repaving on lower Frost Rd and Lovers Lane Rd is complete. The line-painting won't be done until next month, as the funds for that won't be available until the new fiscal year. The next major Highway project this year is to finish raising and repaving the north end of Upper Valley Rd.

We'll also be repaving the driveway to the Town Garage that was damaged by last summer's flash floods. This will be paid out of Storm Damage funds we have received from the State. Those funds will also go toward covering the reconstruction of the Eden Glen embankment (thanks, White Wolf) and fixing some of the worst affected roadside edges, like Stonehouse Rd.

Becket Beach passes are now available. Following recommendations from the Parks Commission and Finance Committee, the fee for a pass has gone up to \$25. Yes, that's a big difference. It is part of an overall goal to make Parks and recreation activities self-funding and move them off the property taxes.

On June 22, there will be a free community concert at the Old Town Hall, part of the MA Walking Tour along the Appalachian Trail, sponsored by our Cultural Council. And later this year, we'll see the return of last summer's popular series of free Sunday Concerts at the Town Park.

Covid-19 cases in the Berkshires have spiked recently, becoming the highest transmission county in the state, and one of the highest in the country. There are links on the Town website, under Board of Health, for guidance on what to do if you or a family member tests positive and where to seek free treatment if necessary. Let's all take extra care.

Kent Lew
Select Board chair

David Ellis
Select Board

John Fish
Select Board

Washington Insights

Berkshire Birding In Washington

the County's Premier Location

By Susan Colgan

We set out at 7 am on a morning in early May. It was sunny and cold. Longtime resident and expert birder, Ed Neumuth, agreed to take me, an amateur, on several early morning expeditions. I wanted to learn what makes Washington such an exceptional place for birding.

We have the premier spot in all the Berkshires, according to Ed. “We have the habitats for a wide variety of species. We needn’t go anywhere else...

“Good birding is all about the habitats. We have elevation, and we have wetlands. What we lack are grasslands; they have diminished over the years.” Ed explained that birds come for the habitats they prefer for breeding; we get as many as 17 species of warblers, for instance, who come to nest and raise their young. Last year, Ed compiled a list of 156 species of birds in our town. He’s hoping to break his record this year.

Birding starts early. For some it can be as early as midnight. We began on a sunny morning, an hour or so after dawn, to make our way to the State Forest. Our three-hour expedition took us along West Branch Road to the Four Corners and right on to Lenox-Whitney Place Road to Schermerhorn, across the plateau and down the hill to Felton Lake.

Ed drove slowly, stopping often. Then we’d get out of the car to look and listen. We saw Mallards mating in a black marsh pool on the left of West Branch and in the evergreens across the way, a Magnolia Warbler darting in a spruce tree. Ed could hear the “treadle” sound of the Swamp Sparrow and then the ethereal fluting sounds of the Hermit Thrush. But it was the Common Yellow Throat we got to see, and the Black-throated Green Warbler that likes nesting in hemlocks.

Further along, Ed spotted the Blue-headed Vireo with a yellow wash to its sides, its white breast, and its telltale white spectacles. Moving on, we see a beautiful Red-breasted Nuthatch, another Common Yellow Throat, and a Black-throated Blue Warbler. The Chestnut-sided Warbler in a beach tree against the sky took my breath away.

Down at Felton Lake we watch a White-throated Sparrow hop along a log in the brush. It stops, staying perfectly still, watching us. Ed is sure it is guarding its nest.

As we walk toward the lake, an Osprey, with its broad angled wings, glides slowly to a limb in a tree across the water. The Osprey wouldn’t nest here, according to Ed; it is probably migrating to its breeding ground further north or east.

Aside from the birds that winter here, like the Chickadees, Juncos, and Titmice, we get two types of migrants who come here to breed, Ed tells me: the Neotropical Migrants and the Weather Migrants. At this time of year, we also see migrants that stop here on their way to their breeding grounds, like the Osprey.

Neotropical Migrants winter in places like Mexico, and South and Central America. Our Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Scarlet Tanagers, the Wood Thrush, and the Ruby-throated Hummingbird are examples. They arrive predictably with the changes of light, often to the day. The Rose-breasted Grosbeak is usually spotted around the 4th of May, and the Ruby-throated Hummingbird, around April 30th.

Weather Migrants, who winter in States south of us, come when the weather is favorable. This year with the wet and the cold winds, weather migrants were late to arrive. With the warmer weather in the second week of May, birds like the tiny House Wren could finally be spotted. And a week later, the Scarlet Tanagers.

It is not just the State Forest that offers exemplary avian habitats in Washington. Wending around the roads in town with Ed, I quickly learn there are birding opportunities everywhere. The hills, swamps, and flowing streams hold many secrets.

Driving down Frost Road with the windows open on another chilly morning, it dawns on me that hearing is as vital to birding as seeing. I had thought you held up your binoculars and searched. But it is the birdsong that tells you where to look!

As we pass the Transfer Station, Ed remarks that it's the only place in town to see pigeons. We are heading to Cross Place Road and then will make our way to the swamp alongside Upper Valley Road.

Opposite the blue 441 marker on Cross Place Road, we pull into a spot overlooking a vast wetland meadow. In the distance Blackbirds cavort in the trees. Behind us, in the evergreen woods, Ed hears the Oven Bird. We turn and spot instead a stunning Yellow Warbler, so vivid in the sunlight it is easy to see its characteristic red streaks on its yellow breast. We follow it with binoculars flying back and forth among the pine boughs.

Then Ed follows another bird song—the weese, weese, weese of the Black and White Warbler. We are able to spot it too as it darts among the evergreens not far from the Yellow Warbler.

I hear what sounds to me like a lilting series of whistles. We turn toward the swamp and there at the top of a bare tree over the road are the blazing black and orange feathers of the Baltimore Oriole against the clear blue sky.

High above the wide marsh at Upper Valley Road, a Broad-winged Hawk soars in a thermal. But what we have come to see, if we are lucky, is the secretive Virginia Rail that lives in the thick grasses here. We follow the curve of the road to the north side of the marsh, stop, and listen. The grass barely moves when, as if tiptoeing, out it comes: a long-legged, plump, rust-colored water bird with a startling, long, red-streaked bill. Never would I have thought such a creature lived here!

We are so fortunate to have such avian treasures in our beautiful landscape, if we care to look and listen, day or night.

TOWN OF WASHINGTON JUNE 2022 CALENDAR

Sunday		Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday	
TOWN HALL	5	TOWN HALL	6		7	TOWN HALL	8	TOWN HALL	9	TOWN HALL	10	TOWN HALL	4
		Administrative Assistants 10AM-2PM <i>Select Board Meeting 7:00 - 9:00PM</i> Assessors Office 6:00 - 8:00PM Tax Collector 6:00 - 8:00PM Town Clerk 7:00 - 9:00PM Police Department 7:00 - 9:00PM Parks Commission Meeting 6:00 PM Chair Yoga with Rima 11AM			Yoga with Rima 9AM	Administrative Assistant 10AM-2PM Building Inspector 1PM-2PM Transfer Station 5PM-8PM Girl Scout Troop 40367 6PM-8 PM		OSTEOPOROSIS CLASS 9AM		TAI-CHI/QI-GONG CLASS 10AM		Transfer Station 8AM-4PM	
	12	TOWN HALL	13		14	TOWN HALL	15	TOWN HALL	16	TOWN HALL	17	TOWN HALL	18
		Administrative Assistants 10AM-2PM <i>Select Board Meeting 7:00 - 9:00PM</i> Finance Committee 7:00 - 9:00PM Assessors Office 6:00 - 8:00PM Tax Collector 6:00 - 8:00PM Town Clerk 7:00 - 9:00PM Police Department 7:00 - 9:00PM Chair Yoga with Rima 11AM		Yoga with Rima 9AM Planning Board Meeting 7PM		Administrative Assistant 10AM-2PM Building Inspector 1PM-2PM Transfer Station 5PM-8PM Girl Scout Troop 40367 6PM-8 PM		OSTEOPOROSIS CLASS 9AM		TAI-CHI/QI-GONG CLASS 10AM Council On Aging Polluck Dinner 5:30PM-7PM		Transfer Station 8AM-4PM Parks Clean Up Day 10AM to 1PM	
	19	TOWN HALL	20		21	TOWN HALL	22	TOWN HALL	23	TOWN HALL	24		25
Father's Day		Administrative Assistants 10AM-2PM <i>Select Board Meeting 7:00 - 9:00PM</i> Assessors Office 6:00 - 8:00PM Tax Collector 6:00 - 8:00PM Town Clerk 7:00 - 9:00PM Police Department 7:00 - 9:00PM Chair Yoga with Rima 11AM		Yoga with Rima 9AM		Administrative Assistant 10AM-2PM Building Inspector 1PM-2PM Transfer Station 5PM-8PM Girl Scout Troop 40367 6PM-8 PM Mass Walking Tour Music Event at the Old Town Hall 6PM		OSTEOPOROSIS CLASS 9AM		TAI-CHI/QI-GONG CLASS 10AM		Transfer Station 8AM-4PM	
	26	TOWN HALL	27		28	TOWN HALL	29	TOWN HALL	30				
		Administrative Assistants 10AM-2PM <i>Select Board Meeting 7:00 - 9:00PM</i> Assessors Office 6:00 - 8:00PM Tax Collector 6:00 - 8:00PM Town Clerk 7:00 - 9:00PM Police Department 7:00 - 9:00PM Chair Yoga with Rima 11AM		Yoga with Rima 9AM Berkshire Harm Reduction Services Mobile Van parked at rear of Town Hall		Administrative Assistant 10AM-2PM Building Inspector 1PM-2PM Transfer Station 5PM-8PM Girl Scout Troop 40367 6PM-8 PM		OSTEOPOROSIS CLASS 9AM					

Entity	Contact	Number	Entity	Contact	Number
Assessors	Karen Avalle	717-7216	Finance Committee	Sean Connors	212-1182
Board of Health	Jim Huebner	655-8668	Parks Commission	Dominic Sinopoli	623-2086
Building Inspector	Paul Greene	446-0964	Planning Board	Don Gagnon	822-8385
Chapel Commission	Rose Borghis	394-0003	Police Chief	Nicole Miller	446-4294
Clerk	Allison Mikaniewicz	623-2185	Select Board	Kent Lew	623-0202
Conservation	Michelle Lampro	464-2388	Tax Collector	Gina Campbell	623-0146
Council on Aging	Rose Borghis	394-0003	Transfer Station	Michelle Lampro	464-2388
			Veterans Agent	John Herrera	499-9433

Please **CALL AHEAD**



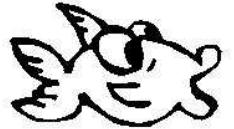
FIND THE HIDDEN WORDS

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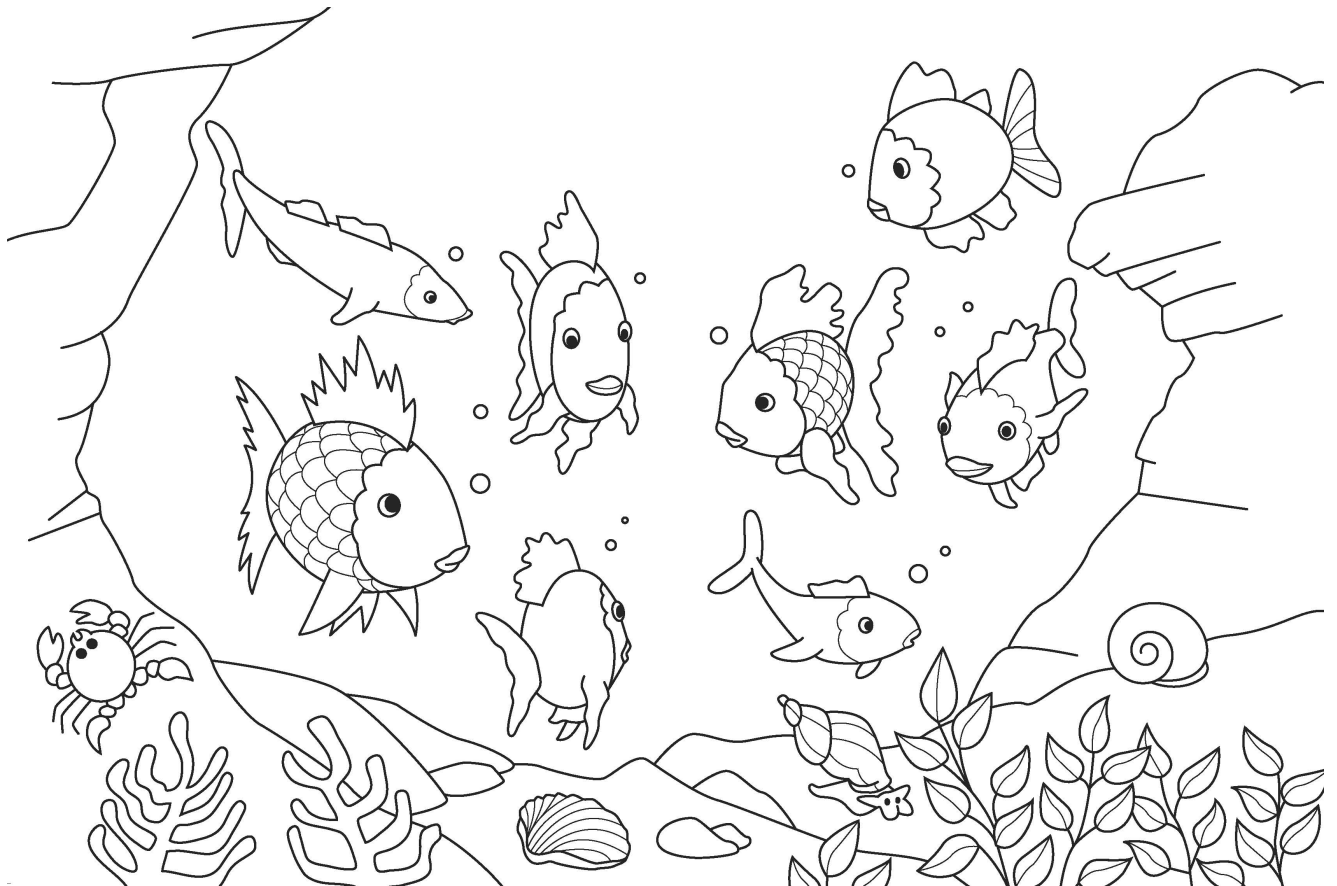
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Becket Arts Center



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

June

2022 Season Opening - Saturday, June 4, 12:00-4:00pm

BAC Silent Auction Opens: 12:00pm, Bill Wurtzel Funny Food Art Artist Reception: 12:00-2:00pm, Jazz Guitarist: 1:00pm, Celebrating Color Artist Reception 2:00-4:00pm.

Celebrating Color - Juried Exhibit 1

Friday, June 3 to Monday, June 20, 12:00-4:00pm, Friday-Monday. Free and open to the public.

Special Exhibition: Bill Wurtzel, Funny Food Art

Friday, June 3 to Monday, June 27, 12:00-4:00pm, Friday-Monday. Free and open to the public.

Exploration Series Lecture: Bill & Claire Wurtzel, Funny Food Art - Monday, June 6, 6:30pm.

Music Brings Communities Together: Local Roots & Bluegrass - Saturday, June 11, 5:00pm. Outdoors on BAC lawn (rain location at Becket Federated Church diagonal to BAC). Free and open to the public. Donations welcome.

Community Storytelling - Sunday, June 12, 5:00pm. Bring a dish to share and a story about life in the hilltowns or just come to listen.

Exploration Series Lecture: Ralph Pearson, "The Group of Seven" - June 20, 6:30pm. \$5 suggested donation for non-members of Becket Arts Center.

Nature Seen - Juried Exhibit 2

Friday, June 24 to Monday, July 12, 12:00-4:00pm, Friday-Monday (closed July 4); **Artist Reception: Saturday, June 25, 2:00-4:00pm**. Free and open to the public.

Music Brings Communities Together: Bobby Sweet & Band - Saturday, June 25, 5:00pm. Outdoors on BAC lawn (rain location at Becket Federated Church diagonal to BAC). Free and open to the public. Donations welcome.

BAC Silent Auction closes - Saturday, June 25, 7:00pm.

MEMBERS MAKE THIS POSSIBLE

BECOME A 2022 BAC MEMBER

www.becketartscenter.org/membership



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Mark F. Roos, Broker Associate ABR

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LisaPeltier413@gmail.com

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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.