



NOVEMBER 2020



2020 COVID-19 Operation at Crane Hill Tree Farm


Crane Hill Tree Farm will be open as usual for choose and cut Christmas trees this year. However, due to the on-going coronavirus pandemic we expect to institute the following restrictions for the 2020 season.

1. All customers are strongly encouraged to wear protective masks while on the property unless in their vehicle.
2. Social distancing is strongly encouraged. Our trees are generally 6 feet or more apart (trunk to trunk); but, if 2 families are eyeing adjacent trees, social distancing will be nearly impossible. So, in that situation please wait until the other family has either decided to cut the tree or moved on to another.
3. Admittance to the shop absolutely requires a mask and will be limited to a maximum of 2 customers (or 1 family unit up to 4 people) at a time. If you prefer not to enter the shop, provisions will be available to pay for your tree outside.
4. Our usual free hot chocolate and coffee may not be available. We are waiting for further guidance from state and local officials. If available, we may need to dispense the beverage for you, possibly outside the shop, and serve it in a covered cup to be taken with you.
5. Approved disinfectant wipes and/or spray will be available for loaner saws. You may also wish to wear gloves when using one of our saws.
6. In this year's special situation we are deviating from our normal operating hours. We will still be open Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays after Thanksgiving, subject to the usual probability of selling out early. However, this year we will also accommodate customers Monday through Thursday starting November 30 **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY**. To make an appointment please email cranehilltreefarm@verizon.net or call (413) 623-5865 and leave a message with your available dates & times and a callback number.


Reminder – Crane Hill Tree Farm usually closes well before Christmas in order to preserve stock for following years. However, we committed several years ago to never turn away a Washington resident.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Washington Scholarship's biennial election day bake sale will not be held this year. Despite this fact, the committee plans to award scholarships to eligible members of the classes of 2021 and 2022. Anyone wishing to support this cause in lieu of bake sale purchases may do so by sending a check made out to Washington Scholarship and mailing it to Linda Levernoch, 387 Upper Valley Road, Washington, MA 01223. Thank you for continuing to encourage and support the youth of our community as they seek to further their education.

November 14
1-2pm
on Zoom



Questions?
413-623-5483
info@bwlibrary.org



**VIRTUAL BOOK
READING &
DISCUSSION**
Robin Catalano

Pre-registration required:
info@bwlibrary.org to receive the Zoom link

Robin Catalano believes in the power of storytelling to connect communities and cultures. For more than two decades, she's applied her creative approach to travel writing for magazines, books, blogs, and websites, and has published more than 100 articles and 2,000 blog posts. Her work has appeared in a variety of national and regional publications, including Travel + Leisure, Fodor's, the Boston Globe, Gourmet, Matador Network, Travel Awaits, Berkshire Living, and Berkshire HomeStyle. She is also the force behind Once More to the Shore, a new coastal travel blog launching this fall.

NOVEMBER 3RD



From the Finance Committee

By now, everyone has received their first tax bills for this year and noticed the substantial increase. The lion's share of that comes from a huge rise in our CBRSD school assessment, which went up by an additional \$109,000 (16%). There was just no way that amount could be offset through cuts to other departments.

Even as the Finance Committee has presided over this significant increase, we have been concerned that some taxpayers will have more difficulty than ever paying their share, especially in this current economy and particularly some of our seniors.

We want to encourage those who qualify to take advantage of programs available to provide some possible relief. Guides to Real Estate Tax Exemptions and Real Estate Tax Deferrals can be found at www.mass.gov/lists/property-tax-forms-and-guides. These programs are overseen locally by our Board of Assessors (washingtonboa@gmail.com).

Even if you can't pay the full amount due, we urge folks to make whatever partial payment you can (but must be at least 10%) before the deadline, to help minimize interest and possible penalties. Those with questions about partial payments can contact our Tax Collector by email (washingtontaxcollector@gmail.com).

Finally, although it applies after the fact, seniors may also be able to qualify for a refundable Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit based on their real estate tax burden. Information is available at www.mass.gov/service-details/senior-circuit-breaker-tax-credit.

Kent Lew Appreciation Fund

Our broadband network is nearly complete and we are enjoying the benefits of high-speed internet connection. This could not have happened as quickly or as smoothly without the hundreds and hundreds of volunteer hours put in over the past years by Kent Lew. The Town has saved tens of thousands of dollars and many subscribers have saved hundreds thanks to Kent's dedication and hard work.

The Town cannot compensate volunteer work, so the Select Board has set up a special account for anyone wishing to express their thanks to Kent by making a contribution. All proceeds will go to Kent.

Please attach the form below to your donation and address it to the Town Treasurer at the Town Hall.

To Treasurer, Town of Washington,

I, _____, of

_____,
Full Name Street Address

_____, _____ wish to make a monetary Gift
to the
City/Town State Zip

Town of Washington under MGL Ch. 44 S 53A. This gift is to be used to recognize the ongoing efforts of

Kent Lew and his efforts to bring Broadband to the community.

Signed

We have several candidates for our Treasurer position. Initial interviews will be done the first week of the month and we hope to reach a decision before year's end.

A critical (level 3) drought has been declared for southeastern Massachusetts. The Berkshires remain at level 2 which means minimizing water usage and being alert to the increased danger of brush fire.

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) announced two Community Development Block Grants to assist low-to-moderate income business owners in Berkshire County. Anyone interested in applying should go to: <https://berkshireplanning.org/microenterprise-assistance-programs-launched-in-northern-and-southern-berkshires/>

Our attorney will petition the court to appoint a receiver for Bucksteep since the owners have failed to comply with the agreement signed this past January to correct deficiencies in the water and septic systems. The receiver will fix the problems, bill the owners and have the power to sell the property if he is not paid. We will also petition for fines, attorney's fees and unpaid taxes.

Grants:

- No word yet on our FEMA grant application to replace the culvert on Frost Road. This has dragged on for over two years.
- No word on our ADA Grant application.
- We have applied for an IT Grant to install a server and back-up system for all our data needs at the Town Hall. If approved no Town funds are needed.
- We have signed a contract – finally – for the replacement of the Middlefield Road bridge over Coles Brook. No Town funds will be spent.

Our tax bills have gone out; the increased rate is entirely due to our assessment from the Central Berkshire Regional School District. We have more students this year, which increases our percentage of the operating costs and the debt service for the new Wahconah High School began this year.

- The building project is ahead of schedule and going smoothly. When it is finished and occupied next fall we can all be proud of it!

The Board and the Finance Committee agreed to increase the credit for each broadband installation by 10% to \$715.

Although COVID cases have spiked not only around the country but around the world, Berkshire County has been largely unaffected. Please keep doing what you're doing. Wash your hands, social distance if you do go out. Stay safe.

- The silver lining is that the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated social trends like emigration from urban areas, telecommuting and remote learning. Our excellent school system and our broadband network has certainly supported these trends: there is increased interest in buying and building in Washington!



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

Presorted Standard
US Postage
PAID
Permit 121
Pittsfield MA

www.washington-ma.com

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, MVB
133 South Washington State Rd
Washington, MA 01223
413.623.5329
www.hilltownsvetclinic.com

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
Keller Williams Realty
LisaPeltier413@gmail.com

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

Your Way Computer

Frank Kennedy
1153 Washington Mt. Road
Washington, MA 01223
Call: 623.5180 / Fax: 623.2018
E-Mail: carolandfranksr@carolandfrank.com
By appointment only

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.