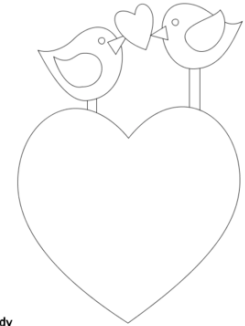


February 2011



Birding Around Town

Outside of Valentine's day, February might not seem like a particularly romantic month to most of us, but in the bird world, hormones are beginning to stir. This month the earliest breeding activity will begin to take place—most notably among owls. We're fortunate here in Washington to be able to experience almost absolute silence on these calm winter nights. If you listen carefully, especially just before dawn, you may be lucky enough to hear a distant Barred Owl (note, not a Barn Owl) deliver its distinctive call that we liken to the phrase "Who cooks for you... Who cooks for you... all". With the deep snow cover this winter, Barred Owls, the most common owl in town, offer a particularly good opportunity for being sighted as well. Since they prey on small mammals, they frequently perch alongside plowed woodland roads or near backyard feeders in daytime, taking advantage of the open ground to help them locate prey easier. Another owl you're likely to experience, my particular favorite, is the tiny Northern Saw-whet owl. Barely 8 inches in height, remarkably tame and scarcer than Barred Owls, they are much more often heard than seen. They get their name from their call, a series of incessantly repeated low whistles that bring to mind someone sharpening a saw blade with strikes of a whetstone. Although Great Horned Owls, Long-eared Owls and Screech Owls are also possible, they are far less frequently encountered in Washington. The physical adaptations that allow owls to be the ultimate night predator demand a sense of awe. Consider this, to precisely locate a still or moving prey object in utter darkness you have to be able to "see in three dimensions" with your ears and approach your quarry in absolute silence. Owls accomplish the first part by having large ear openings set asymmetrically on each side of their skull that are not only slightly different in size, but point in different directions, enabling them to pinpoint a distant object precisely. With specially modified wing feathers, they can then fly or glide down on the unsuspecting prey while air silently passes over, not noisily through their wings enabling them to maintain auditory contact without the distraction of their own movement. Pretty cool, heh. I'd be grateful to hear of any Saw whet observations in town since, as cavity nesters, they lend themselves nicely to inhabiting nest boxes—much like Bluebirds, Tree Swallows and House Wrens, and I'm trying to locate some around town in favorable spots.

On a final note, although this is not playing out to be a particularly good migration year for northern winter finches, there have been numerous sightings of Common Redpolls. These Goldfinch sized flocking finches can often be found feeding on birch catkins as well as coming to feeders. Notice their red cap and black chin patch. Some of the males can appear bright rosy breasted. With much of the natural food supply buried in snow, feeders can play an important role in sustaining some of the birds that chose to spend their winter in town.

Ed Neumuth
380 Frost Rd.
eneumuth@gmail.com
413-884-4961

To our fellow Washington residents:

Our Transfer Station Attendant, Keith Sharp, has resigned. Keith did an outstanding job for the town; he secured two separate grants to refurbish our recycle bins and added a bin for construction materials. Michelle Lampro has agreed to serve until we can hire a regular replacement for Keith. If you or anyone you know might be interested in the job of Transfer Station Attendant please contact Jodie Hostetter at 413-464-6656. Speaking of Jodie, We have gotten a couple of inquiries about filling in for her as Administrative Assistant while she is occupied with the arrival of her second child, but we have not yet hired anyone, so if you might be interested, let Jodie know!

Some updates:

- We are still waiting for Overhead Door to install the new insulated doors at the Town Garage.
- The Request for Bid on the new boiler for the Town Hall was posted and we had 7 interested bidders at a mandatory walk-through on 1/27. Bid opening is scheduled for 8 pm on 2/7 at the Town Hall. RFPs for new insulation and siding for the Town Hall are still pending.
- At the Special Town Meeting January 24 a new bylaw for small wind systems (SWES) was adopted and the first step towards creating a "municipal light plant" to participate in a cooperative effort to bring broadband to our residents was unanimously approved.

Renewable energy is a hot topic these days. While Washington might not be the best place for solar panels, we do have some exposed ridgelines that might be attractive for a wind farm. Our question to the citizens of Washington: how do you feel about commercial wind development? Or, more directly, should the Select Board encourage or discourage that kind of development? Any feedback welcomed.

What a Winter! We have already used more salt and sand than we did all last year! The good news from a budgetary standpoint is that MEMA (Massachusetts Emergency Management) may kick in with grant money to cover some of our costs. Keep in mind that our guys are out there working hard on our behalf. Please let us know what you think of how they are doing so we can continue to improve.

For all of us who enjoy the snow and winter sports, let it snow! For all of us who don't, well, the winter can't last forever.

Jim Huebner,
Select Board Chair

Shaun Lennon,
Select Board Clerk

Paul Greene, the Town's Building Inspector will not be available from February 21st to February 28th.

Calendar of local meetings - all are open to the public and you are welcome to attend any that are of interest
Unless otherwise noted all meetings are held at the Town Hall

Board of Health Monday Nights 8PM No Meeting Presidents Day, Feb 28 (Jim Huebner Chair)

jimh@mbd.cc

Conservation Commission (1st Thur) Feb 3 6PM (Lisa Peltier Chair)

Washingtonconcom@hotmail.com

Finance Committee (2nd Monday) Feb 14 7PM (Richard Spencer Chair)

[rvspencer2@verizon.net](mailto:rjspencer2@verizon.net)

Planning Board (2nd Tuesday) Feb 8 7PM (Marilyn Wiley Chair)

marilynwiley@toast.net

Selectmen's Meetings (Monday Nights 7-9 PM) Feb 7, Feb 14, Feb 21-No Meeting Presidents Day, Feb 28
(Jim Huebner Chair)

jimh@mbd.cc

St.Andrews Chapel Committee (4th Tuesday) Feb 22 6PM (Rose Borgnis Chair)

rborgnis@roadrunner.com

Westfield River Wild and Scenic (Roy Bryan Representative from Washington)

roy@roybryan.net

It's that time of year & I am looking to let you all know that the Family Fun Day at the Washington Town Park will be on **Saturday June 25th** (it's always the last Saturday in June). **Please save the date, drop me a line if you plan on attending & SPREAD THE WORD!!!!** We are always looking for participants & aside from vendors, we always need people to help direct cars, sell tickets, etc... We also need raffle items donated, so if you have any connections on that end, please *Go For It!* And of course, we are always looking to improve the event, so if you have any ideas, please let me know. On that note, I'm sorry, but I've got to change this contact email address to my personal one, which is "hemigirlone@hotmail.com". Please email me there

Lisa Peltier
413.623.5911



Presidents' Day, originally known as Washington's Birthday, falls on the third Monday of February. This year Presidents' Day falls on February 21, 2011.

Support Our Local Businesses

Bucksteep Manor

Casual fun atmosphere
885 Washington Mt. Rd
Washington, MA
(413)623.5535

The Bucksteep Pub will be open with light fare

Friday 11am-4pm
Saturday 11am-4pm
Sunday 11am-4pm

Also featuring dinner specials every Saturday evening 5:30-9pm

By reservation only Call 413.623.5535 for more information (reservations need to be made by 12:00 the Thursday prior)

Independent Stampin' Up! Demonstrator

Sue Paquette
623.5918

"quality stamp sets, card stock, ink pads, etc - I offer creative & fun parties for you and your friends in your home or mine.

The Becket General

30 Washington Street
Becket, MA 01223
Al & Tracy Lussier, Owners
Coffee bar, Deli, Sandwiches & Pizza
Beer, Wine, Groceries & Dairy Products
Ph: 623.5700 / Fax: 623.5707

Your Way Computer

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

Horace Mann Insurance Agency

Po Box 772 Becket Ma. 01223.
Phone 413)623-2112.
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Provide all Personal Lines of Insurance. Provide Financial and retirement products too.

To advertise your local business in the Washington Tracks,
please email me at mrsabeski@mac.com

February is National Pet Dental Health month!

Does your beloved dog or cat have "not so fresh" breath? When they come up close for affection, do you want to turn away and run? If so, they may be exhibiting the beginning signs of dental disease. According to the American Veterinary Dental Society, dental disease affects an astounding 80% of dogs and 70% of cats by the age of 3 years old. The most common signs of dental disease in pets are yellowing or browning of the teeth and foul smelling breath. Other signs may include excessive drooling, reddening of the gums, oral bleeding, and a sudden change in eating or drinking habits. If left untreated, dental disease can lead to other health problems such as tooth loss, oral infections, diabetes, and even kidney and heart problems as well! The best way to prevent dental disease is to become more aware of it. At Hilltowns Veterinary Clinic, we want to help you to adopt a regular dental health care routine for your pet(s). Proper dental health includes having your pet's teeth checked, and if necessary, professionally cleaned and polished. Implementing an at-home routine as well as professional oral care can help your pet to live a longer, happier life! During the month of February, Hilltowns Veterinary Clinic will offer discounted dental exams, cleanings, and treats. Space is limited, so call us now at (413)623-5329 for an appointment!



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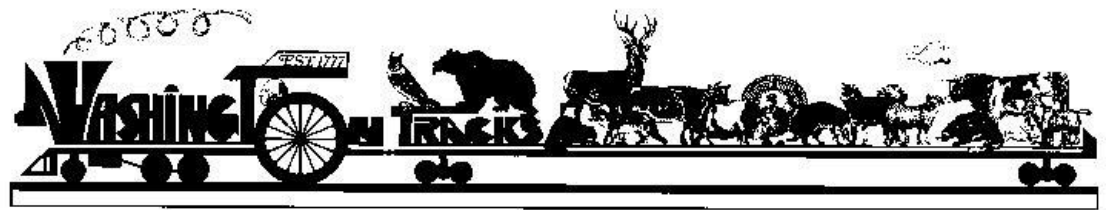
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Send your Tracks info to mrsabeski@mac.com or if you do not have email, call Lisa at 623.5088

Supplement
to



FEB. 11, 2011

WAIT! STOP! DO NOT DO THAT!

Do not click that "REPLY" button when you get an e-mail with attachments especially if they are photos or PDFs. When you do this the sender gets every thing back that they sent you. Now the original sender has duplicates.

WAIT! STOP! DO NOT DO THAT!

Do not hit that "FORWARD" button. When you do this everyone get everones e-mal address including "SPAMMERS"

WAIT! STOP! DO NOT DO THAT!

Avoid using "CC" (CARBON COPY) unless you realy undestand how it works.

WAIT! STOP! DO THIS INSTEAD!

If you feel the need to; urge to; or compulsion to; pass a long an e-mail to everyone in your address book use the BCC function instead. In the "TO" box put in your own address. The recipient of the e-mail will only see your address.



Spring is right around the the corner

Only 37 days to go



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[Home Page](#)
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