



January 2011

Neighbor to Neighbor Fund-“Extraordinary times inspire extraordinary generosity.”

Recently the Board of Selectmen were asked about the donations made to the Neighbor to Neighbor Fund, in December of 2009 the Town of Washington raised \$1,191.50 this was matched with \$3,850.00 for a total of \$5,041.50 as of December 09 2010 \$1000.00 of that has been granted out. For those of you who are not familiar with the fund, the Neighbor-to-Neighbor program provides emergency assistance for local residents who are in economic distress. Neighbor-to-Neighbor makes small grants (generally around \$500) to help those with overdue utilities, medical bills, short-term housing costs, and transportation problems. Checks are written to the vendor (landlord, utility company, pharmacy or mechanic) on behalf of the community member in need. The funds are not intended for long-term or ongoing assistance, but for strategic intervention to help achieve a measure of stability and avert further crises. Neighbor-to-Neighbor is an expansion of Berkshire Taconic’s Emergency Relief Fund, which for more than 15 years worked with social service organizations and churches around the region to help those in desperate need. Neighbor-to-Neighbor now gives everyone in our region the opportunity to offer help to their neighbors. Donors may specify that their donations go to specific towns/communities. In 2009, two donors proposed challenge grants in support of Neighbor-to-Neighbor for Berkshire County. One offered a \$100,000 challenge to the 14,000 residents of Dalton, Becket, Cummington, Hinsdale, Peru, Washington and Windsor. Each town had to raise the amount of its population by December 21, 2009 and the donor would match \$7 to every \$1 raised. Another donor offered \$20,000 to challenge residents of the rest of Berkshire County to raise \$100,000 to support Neighbor-to-Neighbor. Both challenges were met.

Berkshire Taconic is partnering with social service agencies to distribute Neighbor-to-Neighbor funds and link them with other social services

If you know someone in need, please have them contact:

Berkshire Community Action Council, 413-445-4503

If you would like more information on the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation you may contact them by phone 413-229-0370, e-mail info@berkshiretaconic.org or online at

www.berkshiretaconic.org

Submitted by Rose Borgnis

To our fellow Washington residents:

Happy New Year!

Jodie Hostetter, our very able Administrative Assistant, has some good news: she is due to deliver her second child in early May. We congratulate her and also ask: is there any Washington resident who might be interested in filling in for Jodie for two months or so? In addition to taking minutes on Monday evenings, the work involves filing, typing and issuing the minutes, correspondence and a few other office chores. Anyone interested please contact Jodie at 413-464-6656.

Some updates:

- Overhead Door of Pittsfield won the bid for the new insulated doors at the Town Garage; the work should be starting soon.
- The Request for Bid on the new boiler, insulation and siding for the Town Hall is still incomplete. It is unlikely that any work will be done before the warm weather returns.
- The Phase I study of Maplevue showed no obvious environmental hazards. The Maplevue Reuse Committee plans to request Phase II funding from Berkshire Regional Planning to take a more thorough look. Thanks to Rose Borgnis for moving this along and thanks to Ed Bond for his efforts to keep the property from deteriorating any further.
- A Special Town Meeting will be held on January 24, not January 17 as previously reported since January 17 is Martin Luther King Day. Warrant items include bylaws for small wind systems, creating a "municipal light plant" to participate in a cooperative effort to bring broadband to our residents, and criteria for special permits for the Planning Board.

The Selectboard has appointed Cynthia Taylor to the Chapel Committee and Roy Bryan to the Westfield River Wild and Scenic Advisory Committee. Thanks to both of them for volunteering and thanks to all of our residents who volunteer their time to make Washington a great place to live. We have more than a few citizens who could live anywhere in the world they chose. We hope that *all* of Washington's residents feel the same way: there is nowhere else we would want to be.

We hope everyone had a safe and happy Holiday Season. We look forward to hearing from you and working for you in 2011.

Jim Huebner,
Select Board Chair

Shawn Lennon
Select Board Clerk

Summary of Warrant for Washington's Special Town Meeting – January 24, 2010

Submitted by Dick Spencer

Articles 1 and 2 are housekeeping to correct a mistake in Article 5 at the annual town meeting in May. All line items entries were correct; but the total amount was incorrect. This action will not result in any effect on the town budget.

Article 3 enables the town to join in the western Massachusetts broadband initiative. Technically it establishes a municipal lighting plant under Massachusetts law. This article requires paper ballot and approval by at least 2/3 of those present.

Article 4 would amend the town bylaws to establish strict guidelines for the granting of special permits including concerns regarding the environment, the neighborhood, traffic, drainage, and risks to public health.

Article 5 proposes a bylaw regarding small wind energy systems including permissible height, setbacks, and visual impact. It also addresses requirements for operation and eventual abandonment of such systems.

Article 6 proposes to simply amend the bylaw section numbering to incorporate the small wind energy systems section.

Support Our Local Businesses

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

Independent Stampin' Up! Demonstrator
Sue Paquette
"quality stamp sets, card stock, ink pads, etc -
I offer creative & fun parties for you and your
friends in your home or mine.
623.5918

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

From Your Way Computer

I suspect not everyone is familiar with snopes.com and/or truthorfiction.com for determining whether information received via email is just that: true/false or fact/fiction. You will find Both sites are excellent resorces.

Advice from snopes.com VERY IMPORTANT!!

1) Any time you see an email that says "forward this on to '10' (or however many) of your friends", "sign this petition", or "you'll get bad luck" or "you'll get good luck" or "you'll see something funny on your screen after you send it" or whatever --- it almost always has an email tracker program attached that tracks the cookies and emails of those folks you forward to. The host sender is getting a copy each time it gets forwarded and then is able to get lists of 'active' email addresses to use in SPAM emails or sell to other spammers. Even when you get emails that demand you send the email **on if you're not ashamed of God/Jesus** --- that is email tracking, and they are playing on our conscience. These people don't care how they get your email addresses - just as long as they get them. Also, emails that talk about a missing child or a child with an incurable disease "how would you feel if that was your child" --- email tracking. **Ignore them and don't participate!**

2) Almost all emails that ask you to add your name and forward on to others are similar to that mass letter years ago that asked people to send business cards to the little kid in Florida who wanted to break the Guinness Book of Records for the most cards. All it was, and all any of this type of email is, is a way to get names and 'cookie' tracking information for telemarketers and spammers -- to validate active email accounts for their own **profitable** purposes.

You can do your Friends and Family members a GREAT favor by sending this information to them. You will be providing a service to your friends. And you will be rewarded by not getting thousands of spam emails in the future!

Do yourself a favor and **STOP** adding your name(s) to those types of listing regardless how inviting they might sound! Or make you feel guilty if you don't! It's all about getting email addresses and nothing more.

You may think you are supporting a GREAT cause, but you are NOT!

Instead, you will be getting tons of junk mail later and very possibly a virus attached! Plus, we are helping the spammers get rich! Let's not make it easy for them!

ALSO: Email petitions are NOT acceptable to Parliament or any other organization - i.e. social security, etc. To be acceptable, petitions must have a "signed signature" and full address of the person signing the petition, so this is a waste of time and you are just helping the email trackers.

See below

Tips for Handling Telemarketers

Three Little Words That Work!

(1)The three little words are: **'Hold On, Please...'**

Saying this, while putting down your phone and walking off (instead of hanging-up immediately) would make each telemarketing call so much more time-consuming that boiler room sales would grind to a halt.

Then when you eventually hear the phone company's 'beep-beep-beep' tone, you know it's time to go back and

hang up your handset, which has efficiently completed its task.

These three little words will help eliminate telephone soliciting..

(2) Do you ever get those annoying phone calls with no one on the other end?

This is a telemarketing technique where a machine makes phone calls and records the time of day when a person answers the phone.

This technique is used to determine the best time of day for a 'real' sales person to call back and get someone at home.

What you can do after answering, if you notice there is no one there, is to immediately start hitting your **# button on the phone, 6 or 7 times as quickly as possible**. This confuses the machine that dialed the call, and it kicks your number out of their system. Gosh, what a shame not to have your name in their system any longer!

(3) Junk Mail Help:

When you get 'ads' enclosed with your phone or utility bill, return these 'ads' with your payment. Let the sending companies throw their own junk mail away.

When you get those 'pre-approved' letters in the mail for everything from credit cards to 2nd mortgages and similar type junk, do not throw away the return envelope.

Most of these come with postage-paid return envelopes, right? It costs them more than the regular 44 cents postage, 'IF' and when they receive them back.

It costs them nothing if you throw them away! The postage was around 50 cents before the last increase and it is according to the weight. In that case, why not get rid of some of your other junk mail and put it in these cool little, postage-paid return envelopes.

One of Andy Rooney's (60 minutes) ideas.

Send an ad for your local chimney cleaner to American Express. Send a pizza coupon to Citibank. If you didn't get anything else that day, then just send them their blank application back!

If you want to remain anonymous, just make sure your name isn't on anything you send them.

You can even send the envelope back empty if you want to just to keep them guessing! It still costs them 44 cents.

The banks and credit card companies are currently getting a lot of their own junk back in the mail, but folks, we need to OVERWHELM them. Let's let them know what it's like to get lots of junk mail, and best of all they're paying for it...Twice!

Let's help keep our postal service busy since they are saying that e-mail is cutting into their business profits, and that's why they need to increase postage costs again. You get the idea!

If enough people follow these tips, it will work ---- I have been doing this for years, and I get very little junk mail anymore.

*Wishing everyone a
Happy & Healthy
New Year!*



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