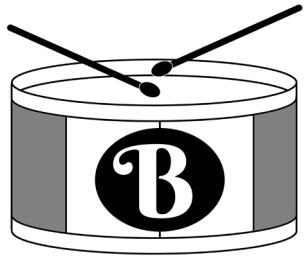


Becket Beat

Keeping neighbors connected

Vol. 1, No. 5 - September 2022



AROUND TOWN

Becket-Washington Elementary, Not Your Old Fashioned One-Room Schoolhouse

by Ann Krawet



Tucked away at the end of Maple Street in North Becket is our multi-story, contemporary Becket-Washington Elementary School where Pre-K through 5th grade students use their school-provided personal Chromebook (laptop) to support the teaching and learning happening throughout the building. Students use their Chromebooks to access information, complete assignments and tests, use teacher approved apps for practice and skill remediation, and to create original digital content that reflects what they are learning. Every classroom is equipped with an interactive, wall mounted projector which the teacher and students (with teacher approval) can use to project internet images and information during a lesson. Technology is used to support instruction, and encourage collaboration and critical thinking among students.

No, this is NOT your old-fashioned country schoolhouse! There are more markers and dry erasers, no chalk, and fewer pencils and pens. Each student has their own whiteboard for writing and drawing, which means less paper and fewer notebooks. Another critical difference is that individual desks have been replaced by tables seating 4 or 6 children to better implement the UDL (Universal Design for Learning) education model. The grouping doesn't mean individuality is lost. Instruction is delivered to the whole group, in small groups, and individually as needed. Also, gone is the old didactic model where the teacher stands in the front of the room and lectures at the students. Now, each class has one teacher-facilitator along with paraprofessionals and other support staff who come in and out of the classrooms to offer assistance and guidance under the teacher's direction. There is a room between each classroom designated as a quiet workspace for students and teachers. The student-teacher ratio is 1 to 11. The teachers are 100% highly qualified and have met all state requirements. The average class size is 15 children for each grade level. Approximately 110 Pre-K through 5th graders will be in attendance this year, similar to last year, and consistent with the last 5-year enrollment numbers.

The physical plant and curriculum mirror the school philosophy: do what is best for each child and promote responsibility, respect, and active learning. The "Bobcat" program does just this. Every week each class nominates one child to receive recognition for being a kind, responsible, respectful person, and an active learner. The nominee receives a Bobcat pencil or paw charm, leads the Pledge of Allegiance, and can invite a parent or guardian to the Friday luncheon where they sit on the stage in the "cafetorium."

All students participate in Science, Math, Reading and Writing, Social Studies, Gym, Art, and Music. All classes emphasize experiential, hands-on learning designed to develop skill acquisition, critical thinking and problem solving. Grades 3 through 5 can join the chorus and 4th graders and 5th graders can receive instrument lessons and participate in band. All perform in concerts held twice a year. For reading, there is a bright, inviting, regular library and the "leveled book room" where books are



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History in the Hilltowns

by The Hilltown Hikers

What we know of today as the Jacob's Ladder Trail (Route 20) began as a series of connected local roads in the early nineteenth century which eventually became part of the "Becket Turnpike," a proposed route between Springfield and the Berkshires. But in its early days it was known to the earliest automobile drivers as a treacherous route with steep grades, frequent washouts, and disabling mud.



Summit House 1926/27 (working on the porch and tower)

Locals referred to it as the Jacob's Ladder, said to be a reference to the appearance of the many water bars placed across the road to channel water off the road, giving the road a "ladder-like" appearance. Motorists using the route were not as kind, dubbing one of the steepest hills the "three-dollar hill" as that was the usual rate charged by local farmers to pull their automobiles out of the mud with their oxen teams.

In 1904, Cortland F. Bishop, a wealthy resident of Lenox and an avid motorist, began his long campaign to improve Jacob's Ladder and convinced the Becket Selectboard to allocate public funds for addressing the most hazardous portions of the road. At the same time, he advocated in Boston for the state to take over the maintenance of the road. In this quest he was assisted by Senator Allen T. Treadway, who also happened to own the Red Lion Inn, which would benefit from a direct and safe route into the Berkshires.

Their efforts paid off and the state began improvements to the road, culminating with the official celebration of the completion of the road in September of 1910. A crowd of around 1,000 people attended the opening ceremonies held at the summit of the road in Becket. Today there is a cairn at the site marking the summit.

Just a few years later a transcontinental route across the northern United States was proposed with the new Jacob's Ladder Trail incorporated as part of that route. It eventually became the Yellowstone Trail, spanning the country from Plymouth, Massachusetts to Seattle, Washington, thus cementing the Jacob's Ladder Trail as the main east-west route into the Berkshires.

The heyday of the Jacob's Ladder Trail as a commercial and tourism magnet was from that period until 1957 when the Massachusetts Turnpike was completed.

In the 1990's the road was officially designated as a Scenic Byway and in 1992 the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway Advisory Board (JLTB) was created with representatives of Russell, Huntington, Chester, Becket, and Lee, along with representation from the local regional planning commissions. The JLTB works to promote the scenic byway and protect its legacy as the original "mountain crossing." Visit our blog - westernmasshilltownhikers.com - for all of our adventures!

BWS Elementary, continued from page 1

shelved according to reading level and updated frequently.

Additional offerings include partnering with the Becket Athenaeum on various activities around research, nature, planting, and local history; field trips to the Connecticut Science Museum, Plymouth Plantation, Hancock Shaker Village, the Colonial Theater, the local fire station and local parks. After school programs have included "stream exploring," academic support, art lessons run by IS183, and music lessons by the Berkshire Music School. There are also "read-aloud days" with visiting volunteer readers; partnering activities with the Becket Outdoor Center, and PTO-sponsored community activities, which this year included a "Picnic in the Park." In addition, free breakfast and lunch are available for all students.

A question often asked of school principal Mary Kay McCloskey concerns the positive and/or negative aspects of BW's small size. She sees it only as a positive! The teachers and the support staff have the time to know and care about each child throughout their school career, allowing them to attend to their emotional as well as their academic wellbeing. For any questions about the school and the PTO, or to arrange a visit, contact Mary Kay McCloskey, school principal, at 413-623-8757 or mmccloskey@cbrsd.org.

The Becket Cultural Council - Funding the Arts!

by Cathy Terwedow

Have you ever wondered how a small town like Becket can offer so many free events and cultural opportunities? Where does the money come from? A portion of the funds comes through a group you've probably never heard of, the Becket Cultural Council. We're an all-volunteer organization that allocates money from the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) to support local projects and programs related to the arts, sciences, humanities, and the environment.

We're not talking small potatoes. For the 2021-22 year, we funded \$5,000 to local groups! Next year looks even better, as the state's FY23 budget includes a record \$22.5M for MCC programming - a 12.5% increase over last year.

Help us Choose Next Year's Grant Recipients! This year's grant recipients included the community art connection at Becket's summer camp, storytellers at the Athenaeum, musicians at the Becket Art Center, "ART centric" at Becket Washington's elementary school, free passes to a wonderful array of museums, and more!

Each year we receive more funding requests than we can support, so every two years we survey Becket residents and second homeowners to determine which programs you'd like to see. Take our 3-minute survey: <https://tinyurl.com/BCCsurvey2022>

Based on your interests, we give priority to projects and programs that meet the following criteria:

- Offer direct benefit to local organizations and local citizens
- Are of interest to various age groups
- Provide cultural diversity
- Will be held in a local venue with local support and/or in an online format directed to the local community

Applying for a Grant. If you're interested in receiving a grant for your 2023 event, apply online at massculturalcouncil.smartsimple.com between September 1 and October 17, 2022.

If you'd like to join the council, please contact one of our members or email us at becketculturalcouncil@townofbecket.org. Currently serving are Shelley Chanler, Secretary; Drea Rossi Pecor, Treasurer; Tracy Wilson, Publicity; Roberta Goldman, Andrea Nix, Sarah Reedy, Carole Rivele, Lisa Rosier, and Cathy Terwedow, Chair. We'd love to have you join us! We're always looking for new members.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Be Ready to Vote in Massachusetts 2022 Elections!

Important Dates:

- **Tuesday, September 6:** State primary election (7am-8pm, Becket Town Hall; early primary voting on Thurs, Sept 1, 4-6pm)
- **Saturday, October 29:** Last day to register to vote for state election
- **Tuesday, November 8:** State and town elections

Not registered? Currently registered as Unaffiliated and want to cast a party vote in the Primary? Prefer to vote by mail?

Get all the details you need at: www.townofbecket.org/town-clerk/pages/voter-registration
www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleupcomingelections/upcoming-elections.htm



Roberta Goldman (left) and Cathy Terwedow (right) distributing BCC surveys at Jacob's Pillow Community Day in July.

Chicken BBQ Fundraiser for Yoked Parish Churches

A chicken BBQ fundraiser will be held on **Saturday, September 3 from 12-2pm** at the Congregational Church on YMCA Road in Becket. (Rain date will be Sunday, September 4). The Yoked Parish churches are raising funds for building repairs. They will be serving 1/2 chicken, potato salad, corn on the cob, and homemade blueberry crisp for dessert. The cost is \$18 for adults and \$9 for those under 12. Patrons will be able to eat inside, take out, or eat on the grounds at picnic tables provided for your comfort. Drinks will be provided for those eating inside or on the grounds. For reservations please call 413-623-8300 or 413-623-6455.

Becket Arts Center Seeks New Board Members



The Becket Arts Center is looking for new board members with an immediate need for a treasurer. This person is ideally familiar with QuickBooks, non-profit tax filing and accounting, and is interested in enriching their own life while getting involved in a wonderful, creative community.

Our active, working board along with the executive director work collaboratively with artists of all kinds to provide our local community with access to a broad array of art exhibits, programming, and fellowship; learn more at becketartscenter.org. If you would like to get involved, please contact Mary Manning Cohen at mary@manning-assoc.com.

Becket Athenaeum

Pre-School STEAM Program Returns

Beginning September 20, Tuesdays at 10:30am

The program does not meet during school vacations.

Did you ever think that some things are too hard to do at home with your kids? We will give you fun, easy, and not too messy ways to practice STEAM at home with your child/children. Join Wendy Provencher for an hour of great fun! This is an opportunity to inspire your kids to engineer, create, design, explore, and build!

Preregistration required: BecketAthenaeum.org/events.



BECKET & WASHINGTON COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Becket Cultural Council Funding the Arts

**NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS
For FY23 Grants!
Sept. 1 – Oct. 17, 2022**

<https://massculturalcouncil.smartsimple.com/>

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The Becket Beat is published monthly.

Submission guidelines

and more at:

www.BecketBeat.org

Community Calendar September 2022

Full listing & details: www.BecketBeat.org/Community-Calendar

see other side
for more >>



ARTS, CULTURE & MUSIC

Thursdays (7pm), Sept 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, Open Mic &
Fridays (8pm), Sept 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, Karaoke / Papa Bob's

Saturdays, Sept 3, 10, 24: Live Music / Route 8 Pub / 6:30pm / See calendar for more information

Saturdays (4-7pm), Sept 3, 10, 17, 24 & Sundays (3-6pm), Sept 4, 11, 18, 25: Live Music / Papa Bob's

Wednesdays, Sept 7, 14, 21, 28: Open Jam / Route 8 Pub / 6pm

Saturday, Sept 10: Latin Roots Live Music / Becket Arts Center / 5pm / Free

Saturday, Sept 10: 2nd Annual Wheels Poker Run / Route 8 Pub / Registration @ 10am / \$30 entry fee

Saturday, Sept 17: Exploring Vision Exhibit Opening Reception (2pm) / Failure Cabaret Open Rehersal (7pm) / Becket Arts Center / Free

Saturday, Sept 17: Karaoke / Route 8 Pub / 6:30pm

Saturday, Sept 24: Louise Mosire with Simon Ruiz Guthrie Live Music / Becket Arts Center / 5pm / Free

Saturday, Sept 25: Oysters & Wine / Canterbury Farm / 2pm / \$25 (presale) \$30 (day of event)

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MORE COMMUNITY EVENTS

Friday, Sept 2: Free Dinner @ Federated Church / 5-7pm

Saturdays, Sept 3, 17: Food Pantry / Becket Federated Church / 9-11am

Mondays, Sept 5, 12, 19, 26: Chair Yoga Washington Town Hall / 11am / Free

Tuesdays, Sept 6, 13, 20, 27: Senior Yoga w/ Rima Sala / Washington Town Hall / 9am / Free

Tuesday, Sept 6: Book Club-*My Life In France* @ 1:30-2:30pm / Becket Athenaeum / Free

Wednesdays, Sept 7, 14, 21, 28: Storytime & craft for kids / Becket Athenaeum / 10:30-11am

Wednesdays, Sept 7, 14, 21, 28: Yoga / Becket Town Hall / 9am / \$3

Fridays, Sept 9, 16, 23, 30: Tai Chi / Becket Arts Center / 10am / \$10 per class

Saturday, Sept 10: Becket Athenaeum Book Sale Fundraiser & family friendly events / 10am-4pm

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413-623-8777

Community Calendar September 2022

Full listing & details: www.BecketBeat.org/Community-Calendar

see other side
for more >>



TOWN GOVERNMENT

- Thursday, Sept 1:** Finance Committee / 3pm
- Thursday, Sept 1:** Early Voting - State Primary / 4-6pm / Town Hall
- Tuesday, Sept 6:** State Primary / 7am-8pm / Town Hall
- Wednesdays, Sept 7, 21:** Select Board / 7pm
- Wednesday, Sept 7:** Board of Health / 5pm
- Wednesday, Sept 14:** Planning Board / 6pm
- Tuesday, Sept 27:** Conservation Commission / 6pm

MORE COMMUNITY EVENTS

- Monday, Sept 12:** Cookbook Club-*Against All Grain* / Becket Athenaeum / 6pm
- Tuesdays, Sept 20, 27:** Pre-school STEAM Program / Becket Athenaeum / 10:30 am / Free
- Saturday, Sept 24:** All You Can Eat Breakfast Becket Federated Church / 8-10:30am / \$8



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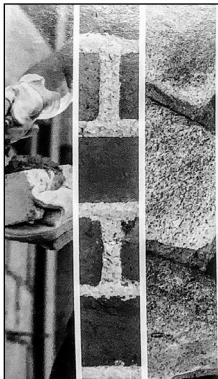
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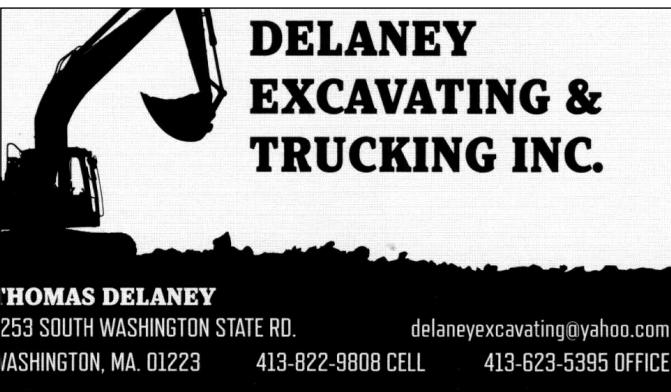
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