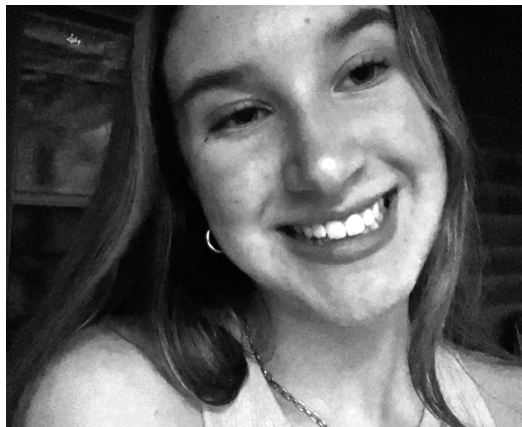
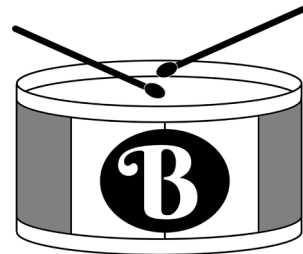


Becket Beat

Keeping neighbors connected

Vol. 1, No. 6 - October 2022



Celebrating Indigenous Peoples' Day in Place of Columbus Day

by Sheffield Drewry

Sheffield Drewry is a senior at Wahconah Regional High School. This essay, written to Leslie Blake-Davis, Central Berkshire Regional School District Superintendent, and reprinted here with Sheffield's permission was the impetus for the CBRSD changing Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day on the school calendar.

As a human rights advocate and member of the No Place For Hate club at Wahconah, I am writing to urge you to consider changing Christopher Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day.

Although there is not a great amount of diversity within our CBRSD community, we need to find ways to enrich and educate our people about different cultures. I feel that it is extremely important that students leave high school knowing how to properly treat people that are different than they are. Since this holiday was established in 1792, we have learned a myriad of things about Columbus, including that he is responsible for the genocide of at least 12 million natives. The remaining individuals who were not murdered were sold into slavery, thus bringing the inauguration of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. This explorer pictured these people as "savage" subhumans who were in the way of a white man's world. Today, it is vital that we treat everyone with respect, including racial minorities. If we continue to observe Christopher Columbus Day, indigenous people will feel as if they are not respected in our community.

Not only does this holiday honor someone who murdered millions of indigenous people, it is also not historically accurate. Christopher Columbus was not the first person to discover the Americas. Almost 500 years prior to his arrival, a Viking explorer named Leif Erikson documented his journey to what he called Vinland, now known as Newfoundland. Before even the Vikings, some believe that Irish Monks came ashore to the Americas. Most Americans believe Columbus discovered the Americas, when in

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Don't Forget to Vote in the State Elections!

- The last day to register to vote in the State Election is **Saturday, October 29** from 9am-5pm at Becket Town Hall
- There are 7 opportunities to early vote in the State Election at Town Hall – no appointment necessary:
 - **Saturday, October 22**, 9am to 1pm
 - **Tuesdays, October 25** and **November 1**, 10am to 12pm
 - **Wednesdays, October 26** and **November 2**, 6pm to 8pm
 - **Thursdays, October 27** and **November 3**, 4pm to 6pm
- Mail-in voting application requests must be received by **Tuesday, November 1**
- Mail-in ballots can be dropped off or delivered to Town Hall in the drop box or inside by 8pm on **Tuesday, November 8**; those mailed in must be received by 5pm on **Friday, November 11**
- **Election day is Tuesday, November 8, in-person voting will be held at Town Hall from 7am-8pm**

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



Meet Our New Town Administrator: Kathe Warden

by Ann Krawet



Katherine (Kathe) Warden is able to stack wood, can and jam, build a house, and bake cinnamon rolls, having spent her early years in Lee and then moving in 2003 to a 32 acre property in upstate NY before returning to the Berkshires and settling in Becket six years ago. She also is one of those successful, self-directed, career women who manages to do it well. She raised three sons and is blessed with a husband who shares her life and aspirations. Together they have four sons and eight grandchildren. She worked for 24 years in the Lee MA/CT/NY Waste Removal industry dispatching up to 120 truckers and running transfer stations. Kathe was Administrative Assistant to the Hinsdale Select Board and served for three years as the Chester Town Administrator. Along the way, she earned a Syracuse University Certificate in Municipal Finance.

Her work experience has prepared her well for her present position. As Chester Town Administrator, she resolved a serious problem when seven households could not access internet fiber because they were beyond the cut-off location. Working with Comcast and state officials, she was able to navigate the red tape to have the households provided with service. When a water main break stopped delivery of potable water to Chester residents, she worked with both MEMA (MA Emergency Management Administration) to deliver potable water and with town officials to get the repairs done as quickly as possible.

Kathe sees her job in Becket as being part of a team, the “navigator” for the town after the Select Board lays out the path. When she confronts a problem, she will consult others who have the required information and, if needed, contact those up the chain of command to make things happen. She intends to focus on next year’s budget and apply for state grants to finance essential town projects. When interfacing with businesses wanting to establish here she will set forth town parameters and priorities – economic growth in the right places and be attractive for the town. As many in Becket would agree, she thinks that a gas station and basic staples store would be nice.

Happy to be employing her skills in our town, Kathe believes “when you find that place in life where your soul feels good, that’s the place.” Welcome to Becket Kathe Warden!

Contact information for Kathe is 413-623-8934, Ext. 113 or administrator@townofbecket.org

Indigenous People’s Day, continued from page 1

reality he never stepped foot in North America. He only explored the Central and South American Coasts. Why is the United States celebrating an explorer who never discovered North America? Our school district can put a stop to this by opting to celebrate Indigenous Peoples’ Day instead.

One might argue that Christopher Columbus should be recognized because he represents the Age of Exploration in world history. However, there are many other explorers who did not commit mass genocide or completely wipe out native tribes. Don’t we owe it to our indigenous students to stand with them? How are they supposed to celebrate a man who killed natives similar to those of their ancestors? Natives celebrating Christopher Columbus is the equivalent to Jewish Americans having to celebrate Adolf Hitler.

Both our middle and high school are named in honor of Nessacus and Wahconah, two Native Americans who were deeply in love with each other. As the Wahconah Warriors, the goal of our school district is to promote equality, and standing by our native students is a step we need to take in doing so. According to *Newsweek*, 79 percent of college students support getting rid of Columbus Day and celebrating Indigenous Peoples’ Day instead. In celebrating Indigenous Peoples’ Day, we would be able to educate the community about their culture, instead of supporting a man who tore it down. This would promote respect and a far better understanding of how the country was shaped to be the way it is today.

Thank you for your consideration. I ask that you please kindly consider changing Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples’ Day in the Central Regional School District schedule if it is in your power to do so. If we truly want to welcome diversity into our school community, we must abolish praising individuals that oppress others.

Please visit www.BecketBeat.org/Community-Calendar to learn about local Indigenous People’s Day events and gatherings.

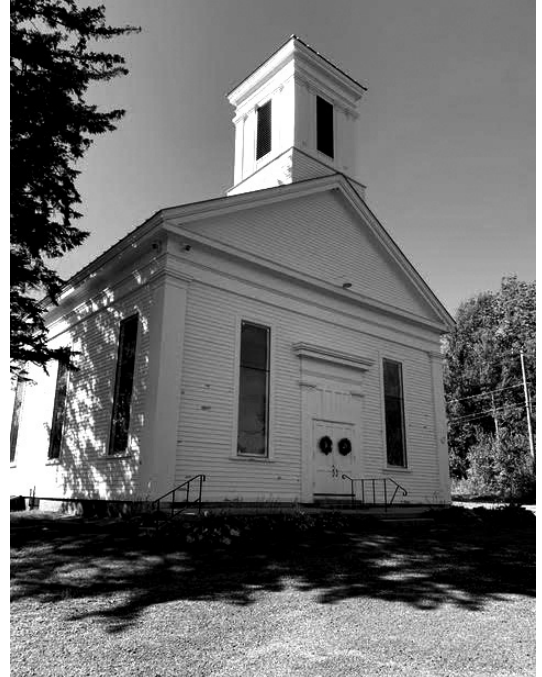
Restoration at the Becket First Congregational Church Continues

by Marcia Parnell

Phase 2 of the restoration project at the Becket First Congregational Church will kick off this month with work to repair powder post beetle damage in the Church's basement. Four beams will be replaced and supports and new footings installed to strengthen the remaining structural elements. Those involved with the project expect it will take a year to complete and cost nearly \$90K. Four beams will be replaced and supports and new footings used to strengthen the remaining beams and joists.

Phase 1 involved restoration of the belfry, which since 1850 had been home to a 716-pound Paul Revere bell – reportedly the only Revere bell in Berkshire County – donated to the Church by Lt. David Brown. Powder post beetles had compromised the belfry's timber supports, rendering the bell unusable and the church unsafe.

The first phase was partly financed by a \$100K grant from the Community Preservation Commission that was approved by town voters in May 2021. To raise an additional \$70,000, church volunteers rolled up their sleeves to organize tag and bake sales, hold fundraising dinners and also accepted the generous donations of Becket residents and others. Work began on the belfry in August 2021 and was completed just in time for Christmas services. Parish volunteer and organist Rita Furlong called it "a magnificent project," adding, "Cars stopped on the road to watch the boom lift the belfry back into place."



With no additional grants expected, Church members plan to repeat the dinner, the bake sales and accept donations to finance Phase 2. And they already have their sights set on Phase 3: the restoration of the historic horse shed that housed wagons used to shuttle parishioners to and from services in the 1800s. It is in need of \$12K in repairs to its foundation. According to Furlong, "we hope it's something we can work on ourselves once an engineer tells us what to do."



You can see the belfry repair work on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VvErJ3bL130>. In addition, anyone interested in donating can do so via GoFundMe.com Save-the-Bell project or mail a check to the First Congregational Church of Becket, PO Box 327, Becket, MA 01223.

JOB OPPORTUNITY

NOW HIRING: Part-Time Administrative Assistant to the Planning Board

Approximately 8 hours per week, the non-benefited position of Administrative Assistant to the Planning Board requires attending night meetings and maintaining regular office hours. Wage: approximately \$17.50 per hour. Please submit a letter of interest and resume to:

Town Administrator, 557 Main Street, Becket, MA 01223 or administrator@townofbecket.org with the subject: Administrative Assistant to the Planning Board.



Pastor Bill Mulholland to be Ordained

The Yoked Parish of Becket will hold the Ordination of Pastor Bill Mulholland at the First Congregational Church on Sunday, October 9. At a time when many churches around the country are closing, the Old Church gathered in 1758 is still serving and the Revere bell is still ringing!



Becket Arts Center - Your Input & Help Are Needed!



The 2022 Becket Arts Center survey is now live and ready for your input. The survey results help inform the development of future year-round programming for the Becket community and beyond. Visit www.becketartscenter.org and click on the "Take Our 2022 Survey" button at the top right.

Installing a heating system in Seminary Hall, the home of the Becket Arts Center is essential to the future of the BAC and its ability to deliver on its mission year-round. To make this a reality, BAC needs to raise \$10,000 to match the generous town funding and grant funding it has already been able to secure. To donate and help make a difference, visit: www.becketartscenter.org/donate.

Becket Athenaeum - Berkshire Libraries Fall Crawl: October 17-22

Explore the Berkshires by visiting libraries across the county including the Becket Athenaeum! Just pick up a passport at the first library you visit and then drive from library to library, collecting passport stamps, entering prize raffles, and making crafts to keep or share. Take a photo of yourself at each library along the way and tag us with #BerkshireLibraryCrawl2022. If you can't make the trip in person, you can still participate in our virtual crawl by visiting milnelibrary.org to enter a raffle for some great prizes.



Participating libraries: Adams, Becket, Cheshire, Lanesborough, Lee, Lenox, Otis, Pittsfield, Richmond, Stockbridge, West Stockbridge, and Williamstown.

Becket Cultural Council - Funding the Arts

Applications for FY23 grants due by **October 17**.
<https://massculturalcouncil.smartsimple.com/>

Public Flu/COVID Vaccination Clinic

Tuesday, October 18 / 3:00-6:00 pm
Becket Town Hall (557 Main St)
<https://home.color.com/vaccine/register/berkshire>
Questions: call 413-442-1521 x52 or email ldrager@berkshireplanning.org

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The Becket Beat is published monthly. Submission guidelines and more at: www.BecketBeat.org

Community Calendar October 2022

see other side
for more >>



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

ARTS, CULTURE & MUSIC

Thursdays (7pm), Oct 6, 13, 20, 27: Open Mic &
Fridays (8pm), Oct 7, 14, 21, 28: Karaoke / Papa Bob's

Wednesdays (6pm), Oct 5, 12, 19, 26: Open Jam &
Saturdays (6pm), Oct 8, 15, 22, 29: Karaoke / Route
8 Pub

Saturday, Oct 1: Rock 201 / Papa Bob's / 7pm

Saturday, Oct 1: All Over the Map / Route 8 Pub /
6:30pm

Sunday-Monday, Oct 1-3 & 7-9: Exploring Vision
Exhibit / Becket Arts Center / 12-4pm / Free

Saturday, Oct 8: Alliance for a Viable future Presents –
Honoring Native America / Mahaiwe Performing Arts
Center / 7:30pm / \$25 (free for students)

Sunday, Oct 9: Listening Deeply: Indigenous Voices
Panel - A Livestream Experience / Virtual / 7:30pm

Monday, Oct 10: Indigenous Peoples' Day: Ceremonial
Walk on Main Street in Great Barrington / 11am

Sunday & Monday, Oct 9 & 10: Indigenous Peoples'
Day Workshops / Mission House Museum in
Stockbridge / 11am

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Community Calendar October 2022

see other side
for more >>



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

TOWN GOVERNMENT

Saturday, Oct 1: Special Town Meeting / Becket Washington School / 7pm

Wednesday, Oct 5: Board of Health / 5pm

Wednesdays, Oct 5, 19: Select Board / 7pm

Wednesday, Oct 12: Planning Board / 6pm

Tuesday, Oct 18: Public Flu/COVID vaccine clinic / 3-6pm / Becket Town Hall

Tuesday, Oct 25: Conservation Commission / 6pm

MORE COMMUNITY EVENTS

Saturday, Oct 15: Turkey Dinner Fundraiser / First Congregational Church / 4:30-6:30pm / \$18 (2 for \$32; under 12, \$8)


Monday, Oct 17: Cookbook Club-*The Cuban Table* / Becket Athenaeum / 6pm

Saturday, Oct 29: All You Can Eat Breakfast / Becket Federated Church / 8-10:30am / \$8

Weekdays after school (2:55-5:30pm):

Kids Club After-School Care at BWS.

Contact Jon Yetto at the Dalton CRA (413-684-0260 or jyetto@daltoncra.org) for information and to sign up.

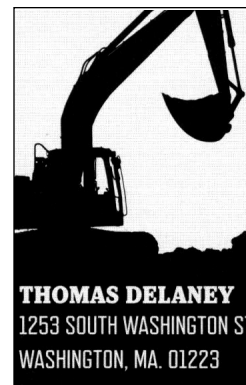


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