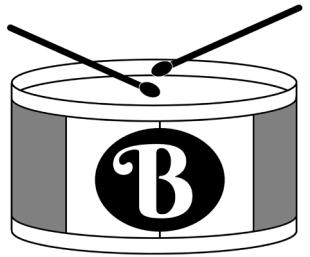


# Becket Beat

*Keeping neighbors connected*

Vol. 3, No. 3 - April 2024



## Becket's Bee Gillespie Sees No Place for Hate

by Marcia Parnell



Bee Gillespie

Lifelong Becket resident and Wahconah senior, Bee Gillespie, explains that the joy they find in meeting people and making friends, along with their desire to create change, were the drivers behind them joining and becoming a leader in the school's No Place for Hate organization. The group's work is designed to create a kind and inclusive space for everyone at Wahconah and focuses on improving "in-the-halls" behavior.

Bee attended Becket Washington and Nesaccus Regional Middle schools. At Nesaccus they were involved in a peer leader program. Once Bee got to Wahconah, they started looking for a similar opportunity. Their initial feeling was that students weren't as kind or accepting of others as they had been at Nesaccus. It was Bee's history teacher, Mr. Murphy, who told them about No Place for Hate (he's also the group's advisor) and urged them to join. Bee felt the group was making serious change so they signed up and stuck with it throughout their years at Wahconah, regularly attending meetings and taking on increased leadership roles over time. Advisor Murphy also pushed the group to become a more student-led organization with officers (Bee is vice president) and more hands-on, with students teaching other students.

It turns out that it wasn't just Bee's perception about the Wahconah environment. Several years earlier, a survey had revealed that many students didn't feel safe in the school. According to Bee, that unfortunate sentiment motivated the No Place for Hate team to make classroom education a priority. History teachers allotted one class and Bee and their teammates used the time to educate students about the harmful effects of threatening or intimidating behavior and the benefits of a caring and kind approach to others. As Bee explains, "We found that a lot of the time bad behaviors are dealt with punishment, like detention, where they do nothing. We also realized that a lot of the time things people did to people weren't evil, they were just ignorant."

Bee reports that the reactions from students who attend No Place for Hate sessions vary. From some students they see an immediate positive response

like "I agree with this." Those students are urged to come to the next No Place for Hate meeting. A handful react negatively and may make fun of the group. And finally, the majority don't have an obvious reaction. Yet, Bee explains, "It's always my hope that they take our message to heart a little bit and that, with heightened awareness, it might change behavior. Like if they hear their friend being mean or using racist language, they will tell them to stop and they'll be a little kinder."

Bee will graduate in June. They are currently in the midst of the college auditioning process with the goal of attending theater school in New York City. Bee explains they're sad to be moving on but that their experience in Becket has shaped them and made them ready for the future. Growing up, "I knew everybody in town, in my grade and the grade above me because it's such a small town. I feel like what I learned from having such close relationships is that I can go out and spread the sort of homeyness that I'm so lucky to have grown up with in Becket."

# Town Happenings

by Marcia Parnell

Find out more about how climate change is impacting Berkshire lakes and ponds as well as other waterways and surrounding flora and fauna at a free panel-led session on **Wednesday, April 3rd from 2:30-4:30pm** in the Becket Town Hall community room. The session is co-sponsored by the Conservation Commission and the Becket Lakes and Pond Council. Refreshments will be provided. Registration is required by calling Dave Johnson, Conservation Committee chair, at (978) 424-5752. For those unable to attend in person, a zoom link is available at [townofbecket.org/conservation-commission](http://townofbecket.org/conservation-commission).

A free pickleball clinic will be held on **Thursday, April 11th at 5:30pm** at the tennis court next to the playground at the Becket Washington School. Sponsored by the Parks and Recreation Commission, the clinic will be run by local David Weiler. A limited number of paddles will be available for those who don't have their own. Pick-up games will begin the following **Thursday, April 18th at 5:30pm** for anyone interested in playing with others in a mix-and-match style. The court was recently resurfaced and has new posts, nets and lines for tennis and pickleball. For more information contact David Weiler at (413) 242-4181.

Come meet Kathe Warden, Becket Town Manager, and Robin Mathiesen, Becket Town Clerk at the Becket Art Center on **Thursday, April 11th at 5pm**. Both Kathe and Robin are Becket residents who have stepped to the plate to be in public service in their own community. Come learn what they do for all of us.

The Energy Committee will conduct a public meeting on **Saturday, April 27th at 10am** regarding its planned grant submission for a commercial-scale wind turbine project sited at, and to generate power for, Town Hall. According to the Committee, the 15kw turbine is rated at 48 decibels and the tower would be 120 ft tall with a 30 ft diameter rotor. It is expected to produce more electricity than required to operate Town Hall with the extra power potentially sold back to the grid. As planned, it would sit on the south side of Town Hall property at the corner farthest from Route 8. The Committee is currently compiling estimates and is hoping to fund project costs through a Green Communities Grant.

Mark your calendars for the 2024 Becket Annual Town Meeting (ATM) on **Saturday, May 11th at 2pm** in the gymnasium of the Becket Washington School. The Becket Town Elections will be held on the following **Saturday, May 18th at Town Hall from 10am to 7pm**. If you are currently not a registered Becket voter, please contact Town Clerk Robin Mathiesen. The deadline to register for these two Becket voting opportunities is May 1st.



## Community Day a Success

by Jeanine McAdam

The weather was cloudy and, unfortunately, the ground was bare of snow, but the Becket Beat/Canterbury Farm Community Day on March 9th was a huge success. Instead of cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, guided hikes were offered at 11am and 1pm by Dave Bacon, who shared his knowledge of the trails and trees. (Did you know the Canterbury property is a former tree farm?) Among those hitting the trail were the Hilltown Hikers, who came with their backpacks and dogs.

Before and after hiking, Linda Bacon hosted neighbors in the lodge, where they enjoyed a warm fire and hot drinks. The Becket Arts Center and Athenaeum provided materials about upcoming events and activities, and local restaurants advertised special Community Day savings on food and drink. After hiking, many headed over to the Route 8 Pub, Becket Country Store, Sherwood Shoppe or Papa Bob's Place to enjoy the offered discounts.

The goal of community day was to feature and support local businesses. Mission accomplished – see you next year!



# Growing up in Sherwood Forest: A Tale of Four Knocks to the Noggin

by Keith Robinson

One of my earliest memories of the community that surrounded my little microcosm of 60 Wells Road (Sherwood Drive back then) was of a man named Fred Drake. He owned the Sherwood Shoppe at the time and used to plow our driveway. When Fred would plow, being around one or two years old, I would stand up on the sofa facing the front window, using the back to steady myself to watch the snowplow. I watched the spinning orange light on the roof of his truck with great excitement and would point and say "Freh! Freh!". Yes, hard to believe that this future child prodigy couldn't pronounce a hard "d", but time did pass.

My first in a series of good whacks to the head was not long after enjoying Fred's light show/snow plowing. I fell into the corner of a bed frame and got my first permanent facial scar. My second bonk to the head was in 1975, when my mom and I were in a terrible accident on Route 8 in Hinsdale. There is a hard corner between Kittredge school and Wetherall's garage where Mom played chicken with a dump truck. One could say she won, since she didn't back down. One could say the dump truck won, because they didn't back down. Regardless, I learned what a windshield tasted like at the ripe old age of 3. My seatbelt at that time was my mom's quick right arm. And to her credit, the damage would have been worse without her protection.

That makes two knocks to the noggin, what about the third one? There's this little lake in Sherwood Forest named Lancelot. From as early as I can remember, that was where I went to the beach and played in the water. What I cannot remember is whether I learned to skate first or swim first on that lake. What I do remember is falling straight back heels up in the air and cracking the back of my brain bucket on a rigidly frozen Lancelot. Likely more than once, as I was a bit tenacious back in the day.

Now for the fourth and last little knock to the head. At the ripe old age of 12, a good friend of mine (who shall remain nameless) and I were constructing a fort. It wasn't on my parents' land. We were pioneers at that point and expanding into the untilled land to the south where the climate is warmer. Our desire to build, along with our ignorance of safety led to a large piece of timber being thrown from a second story of a structure on the site that landed directly onto this writer's head. Since I am still alive and writing this, the damage wasn't horrible. But I did see moths and butterflies for a moment, and when I put my hand on my head, it felt warm and wet – not good. At that point, I ran to the house and grabbed ice and a towel to compress the wound. Luckily, Mom and Dad were on the ambulance squad, which was certainly a stroke of good luck for this intrepid adventurer. Mom and Dad came home, saw the damage, and to their credit, calmly brought me to the emergency room. A split noggin was not the worst they had witnessed. Now to credit my long-winded Uncle Kurt: I am going to make a long story short. They stitched my head, gave my parents and me the usual protocol for wound care and off we went.

I thought I was done with head injuries at that point, but then I became a dad. When my son was 11 years old, he fell on his head after a simple shoving match at school. We were warned about a possible concussion and there was a very scary conversation about how to watch for possible long-term issues and how to avoid them. Luckily, my son's multiple head whacks from then on were insulated by the use of the modern bicycle helmet. I shudder to think what would have happened if he had continued to receive unprotected knocks to the noggin. Would he have ended up as a quirky writer, like his dad? Now he wears a helmet all the time in the form of a massive head of hair. Color me jealous. P.S. Wear a helmet.



## BWS Students Support Local Food Pantry

On March 12th, these Becket Washington School second graders demonstrated kindness and community spirit by collecting and delivering boxes of food to the Becket Food Pantry at the Federated Church Parish House.

# The Importance of High School Sports for All Students

by Paetyn Tatro

Participating in team sports during the high school years provides valuable experience for all students, with opportunities for personal growth for boys as well as girls. Involvement in sports can increase confidence and self-esteem, boost mental health, and improve physical wellness, fitness, and social skills. While traditionally there has been a legacy of support for boy's sports, these days there are many more opportunities for girls to participate and benefit, particularly in track and field, soccer, and basketball, although support for girls' teams may still be lagging. However, we may be in the midst of a re-write on that score -- just look up Caitlin Clark's latest triumphs on the national college basketball scene!

Here at Wahconah, one discrepancy has been the number of coaches involved. In track and field, boys' coaches outnumber girls' coaches two to one. When asked, Athletic Director Allie Borowsky shared that "the same number of coaches are hired at Wahconah – a Head Coach and an Assistant – and coaches are the ones who recruit additional volunteers, so the coach may have asked for additional people." Student athlete Matty Beatty suggested that "We are playing the same sport and we go to basically all the same meets, so maybe we should just share coaches." In sports as in life, it's always good to level the playing field.

In celebration of the start of the spring sports season at Wahconah, it's important to remember that sports are for everyone's enjoyment. The most important element is to have fun and build lasting relationships while supporting equal opportunities to participate. So this spring, please get out and support all our student athletes!

## BECKET WASHINGTON COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP (BWCP) NEWS

### Local Efforts Raise \$4,700 for Fuel/Emergency Fund

The Yoked Parish of Becket extends their thanks to the community for its generous support of the recent Valentine Cookie Sale to benefit the Fuel/Emergency Fund of the Yoked Parish. The cookie sale along with the Labor Day Chicken BBQ event raised \$4,700 that will be used to help local residents that are in need of fuel, food, electrical, and plumbing assistance.

### Becket Arts Center - Speaker Series, Special Events, Music & More

Our Speaker Series resumes in April with Kathe Warden & Robin Mathiesen speaking about "Leadership in Hilltown Communities." Louise Mosrie performs on April 13 and returns on the 27th for a songwriting workshop. On April 19 & 20 we welcome Steevee Dee (aka Stephanie Dodd - one half of the local cabaret duo, The Fremonts) as she presents "Must Be Nice or Today I am a No." Plus, yoga and Nia continue on Thursdays and Fridays respectively. Visit [becketartscenter.org/events](http://becketartscenter.org/events) for a complete schedule.



### Eclipse Prep Party and Baby & Toddler Playgroup at the Library

On April 4, all ages are invited to the library to prepare for the upcoming solar eclipse! Stop in between 3 & 6pm to create a safe eclipse-viewing device, enjoy solar crafts and snacks, and leave with a pair of solar eclipse glasses (while supplies last).

Families with children ages 0-3, join us weekly on Tuesdays from 10-11am (starting April 30) for circle time, stories, movement, music, and play. Siblings are always welcome. Coffee and tea for caregivers, snacks for kids.



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*The Becket Beat is published monthly (with a combined Jan/Feb issue)*  
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Find the Becket Beat at:  
Becket Arts Center; Becket Athenaeum; Becket Country Store; Becket Post Office; Becket Town Hall; Neon Newt; Papa Bob's; Route 8 Pub; Sherwood Shoppe; Transfer Station

# Community Calendar April 2024

Full listing & details: [www.BecketBeat.org/Community-Calendar](http://www.BecketBeat.org/Community-Calendar)

see reverse  
for more >>



## BECKET ARTS CENTER

**Thursdays, April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30:** Yoga w/ Rima Sala / 9:30-10:30am / \$10 (\$5 for BAC members)

**Fridays, April 5, 12, 19, 26:** Nia with Diane Firtell / 12-1pm / \$15 per class (\$10 for BAC members)

**Thursday, April 11:** Speaker Series Kathe Warden & Robin Mathiesen "Leadership in Hilltown Communities" / 5-6pm / \$5 (Free for BAC members)

**Saturday, April 13:** Music is My Story with Louise Mosrie / 7pm / Donations appreciated

**Friday, April 19 (7-9pm) / Saturday, April 20 (2-4pm):** Must Be Nice or Today I am a No with Steevee Dee (aka Stephanie Dodd) / Free

**Saturday, April 27:** Songwriting Workshop with Louise Mosrie / 4pm / \$25

## BECKET ATHENAEUM

**Tuesday, April 2:** Book Club: The In-Between: Unforgettable Encounters During Life's Final Moments by Hadley Vlahos / 1:30pm / Free

**Thursday, April 4:** Solar Eclipse Prep Party / drop in between 3 & 6pm / Free

**Saturday, April 6, 20, 27:** Library Storytime / 10:30-11:30am / Free

**Saturday, April 6:** Movie Night for Adults / 6:30-9:30pm / Free

**Monday, April 8:** Cookbook Club: Tu Casa Mi Casa by Enrique Olvera / 6-7:30pm / Free

**Saturday, April 13:** Creative Movement & Storytime with Laurel Lenski / 10:30-11:30am / Free

**Thursday, April 18:** Game Night / 6-8pm / Free

**Tuesday, April 30:** Weekly Baby & Toddler Playgroup / 10-11am / Free

**Tuesday, May 7:** Book Club: Klara and the Sun by Kazuo Ishiguro / 1:30pm / Free

## Spring Writing Workshop Series (online) with Lara Tupper

A friendly and supportive group for writers of fiction/nonfiction.

Five Thursdays in May from 6:00 - 8:00 pm ET (Zoom) - (May 2 - May 30)

**DETAILS:** <https://www.laratupper.com/events.htm>  
**Contact:** <https://www.laratupper.com/contact>

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see reverse  
for more >>



## TOWN GOVERNMENT

**Monday, April 1:** Community Preservation Comm / 9am  
**Tuesday, April 3:** Climate Change Meeting / 2:30pm  
**Wednesday, April 3:** Board of Health / 5pm  
**Wednesday, April 3, 17:** Select Board / 7pm  
**Tuesday, April 9:** Finance Committee / 5pm  
**Tuesday, April 9:** Historical Commission / 7pm  
**Wednesday, April 10:** Planning Board / 6pm  
**Tuesday, April 16:** Energy Committee / 4pm  
**Tuesday, April 23:** Conservation Comm / 6pm

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

**Mondays, April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29:** Chair Yoga for Seniors / Washington Town Hall / 11am / Free

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

**Tuesdays, April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30:** Yoga for Seniors w/ Rima Sala / Washington Town Hall / 9am / Free  
**Tuesdays & Thursdays, April 2, 4, 9, 11, 16, 18, 23, 25, 30:** Council on Aging Lunch & Bingo / Becket Town Hall / 11am-2pm / \$3 for lunch  
**Wednesdays, April 3, 10, 17, 24:** Yoga / Becket Town Hall / 9am / \$3  
**Wednesdays, April 3, 10, 17, 24:** Community Open Jam / Route 8 Pub / 7pm  
**Saturdays, April 6, 20:** Food Pantry / Becket Federated Church / 9-11am  
**Saturday, April 27:** All You Can Eat Breakfast / Becket Federated Church / 8-10:30am / \$8

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