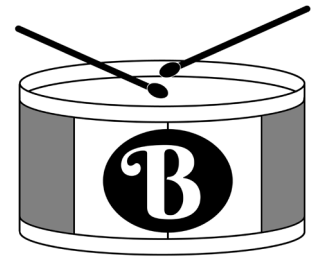


Becket Beat

Keeping neighbors connected

Vol. 3, No. 8 - September 2024



Fall Family Fun Festival: Saturday, September 28

by Kathy Dickinson

The Becket Parks and Recreation Committee is proud to present its very first Fall Family Fun Festival scheduled for Saturday, September 28th from 12 to 9pm, rain or shine. Music, food, games, a farmers market, and even a tag sale will be located at the pavilion on Main Street between Town Hall and The Country Store. The event is free of charge and will offer, what organizers describe as, an exciting variety of activities.

Gates open at noon. Games will include volleyball, kickball, and pickleball during the day; bean-bag baseball and wiffle ball in the evening. A barbecue will supplement the fare for sale by The Country Store, where patrons may buy water and sodas, and a tent is being donated by the Becket Fire Department to provide a shaded spot for beer and wine service by Papa Bob's. For those interested in participating in the tag sale, the charge is just \$5, but reservations are required (see contact information below).

A lineup of live music performances begins at 2pm with the Becket Praise Team (who are sharing their sound equipment for the whole day), followed by local favorites Rounders Revival, Razz Time, The Ladies Diane, Chris Merenda and Built 4 Comfort. Bring your own chairs or blanket and come ready to enjoy some truly great local talent. Food and beverages may be brought into the park, but no alcohol, glass or pets are permitted. While the Festival is free, there will be a "tip jar" for folks to show their appreciation for the generosity of the musicians.

The Parks and Recreation Committee is excited for this opportunity to bring the Becket Community together, but they can't do it alone. A few more volunteers are needed, and the Committee is looking for sponsors to help fund the event. They would like to at least break even, so sponsorships in the range of \$50 to \$100 would be greatly appreciated. Any extra funds will go to the Town General Fund. To sponsor this event, please mail or drop off your support (with checks made out to the Town of Becket) at Town Hall, clearly marked "Attention: Parks & Recreation". To volunteer or to reserve space for your table at the tag sale call Mo Vandesteene at 413-329-7079.

Photos of festival locations on pages 2 & 3

Becket and Dalton Awarded an \$899,810 Grant to Rehabilitate 14 Housing Units

by Marcia Parnell

The Town's March 2024 application in partnership with Dalton for a \$1 million Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for home improvement assistance to low- and moderate-income owner-occupied dwellings in Becket has paid off. Governor Maura Healey announced awards totaling \$39 million to 65 communities throughout the state, Becket and Dalton among them, on August 12th. Said Healey, "our cities and towns use these CDBG grants to fix their roadways, expand their housing options, and improve the quality of life they offer their residents." The \$1 million grant will be administered by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC).

For Becket and Dalton, the dollars will go toward Housing Rehabilitation Program (HRP) projects that will keep residents living in their homes by addressing roofing, foundation repair, energy-efficient doors and windows, plumbing, electrical repair or replacement, water supply, septic, lead paint abatement and other repairs needed to bring a dwelling into compliance with all applicable safety and sanitary codes. The maximum project cost is \$60,000. The HRP is funded through the FY 2024 CDBG program which receives its funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

Homeowner grant awards will be structured as a zero-interest payment loan secured by a 15-year lien on the property. The loan amount due will decrease each year by 1/15th of the total loan value and after 15 years is deemed forgiven. If the property is sold or transferred prior to the 15th year, then the remaining loan amount must be paid back.

In order to participate applicants must be the owner of record for the property and meet income requirements, which begin at \$61,350 for a single owner-occupied property. (A similar program was awarded to Becket in FY 2020 for which 17 residents applied

Continued on page 2

Letter From the Editors

by Marcia Parnell & Kathy Baugh

Dear Becket,

Please let us know how we are doing! Being a paper dedicated to Becket and entirely staffed by volunteers from Becket, we take your feedback to heart. We keep track of every piece of feedback we get and try to incorporate that feedback into changes we make to the paper. To this end, we are posting a brief online survey for the month of September. To access the survey, visit: www.BecketBeat.org/2024-reader-survey or scan the QR code below.

Let us know how we are doing and what we can do to become even better at being your source of news in and about Becket.

Becket Beat Reader Survey
Your Opinion Matters!
Scan the QR code



Voting Reminder:
State Primaries - Tuesday, September 3rd
7am - 8pm at Becket Town Hall

Ad Hoc Buildings Committee Volunteers Needed

The Select Board has directed the Town Administrator to establish an Ad-Hoc Buildings Committee of five to seven volunteers who will work together to establish a vision for the Town's future municipal building needs. The Committee's work will include a review of existing municipally owned buildings, establishing a list of the Town's needs, a review of the potential for rehabbing current buildings and a review of the possibility of constructing a new building.

The Ad-Hoc Buildings Committee will serve in an advisory capacity to the Town Administrator and Select Board.

Architects, engineers, contractors and other community members are encouraged to apply. Please send your letter of interest to administrator@townofbecket.org by October 10, 2024.

Becket and Dalton Awarded Grant, cont.

and seven properties were rehabilitated.) For Becket, there is currently an applicant wait list of 51 households, which includes carryover applicants from 2020 as well as residents who expressed interest earlier this year when the Town's grant application was announced. BRPC Senior Housing Planner, Brett Roberts, says that the long wait list relative to the number of potential projects "shouldn't discourage people from thinking about the program" because income levels change annually as do individual and family situations and needs. Once on the list, applicants are considered on a first-come, first-served basis and there is no predetermined grant share allocated between Becket and Dalton. Getting on the waitlist involves learning specifics about the program as well as some preliminary vetting. Roberts urges anyone interested to contact him by email at broberts@berkshireplanning or BRPC Grant Specialist, Christie Lewis, at clewis@berkshireplanning.

A tentative time frame for the entire process, said Roberts, begins now with BRPC addressing Massachusetts Historical Commission preservation standards, completing an environmental review document, issuing a public Notice of Intent requesting release of the grant funds, and after review, executing a contract with the Town of Becket. Once that's complete (approximately 45 to 60 days or around October 15th) BRPC will reach out to wait list contacts and begin the application and documentation process. Roberts is hopeful contracts will be signed with resident applicants by mid-December, with work starting within 30 days of signature. Longer-than-anticipated waits for building materials are a wild card, he says, but the hope is that all projects will be completed by year-end 2025.

Becket Cultural Council Seeks Grant Applicants for FY 2025

Apply September 1 - October 16

Information and application at:
www.townofbecket.org/becket-cultural-council



Playground Pavilion next to Becket Town Hall, photo by Art Alpert




Ball field next to Becket Town Hall, photo by Art Alpert



Playground next to Becket Town Hall, photo by Art Alpert

Thank you to all of our amazing advertisers!
The *Becket Beat* wouldn't be able to do what we do without you.



CORMIER LANDSCAPING

Lawn Service	Driveways	Clean Ups
Excavation	Patios	Tree Work
Retaining Walls	Mulching	Plowing
Decks	Custom Property Design	Stone Work

PO Box 148
 Becket, MA 01223
 413 822-0739
 gerrycormier@yahoo.com

Proprietors:
 Gerry Cormier
 Randy Cormier




Cormier Tree Service

Tree Removal	Excavation	Plowing
Tree Topping	Driveways	Stonework
Wood Chipping	Patios	Land Clearing
	Mulching	

PO Box 148
 Becket, MA 01223
 413-822-0739
 gerrycormier@yahoo.com

Proprietors:
 Gerry Cormier
 Randy Cormier



DELANEY EXCAVATING & TRUCKING INC.

THOMAS DELANEY
 1253 SOUTH WASHINGTON STATE RD.
 WASHINGTON, MA. 01223

delaneyexcavating@yahoo.com
 413-822-9808 CELL 413-623-5395 OFFICE



TOM SERMINI
Owner

SERMINI MASONRY
 Masonry Repairs and Restorations

1820 Jacobs Ladder Road
 Becket, Ma. 01223

413-274-0115
 serminimasonry@gmail.com

PAPA BOB'S

Where friends Meet...

Food • Drinks • Entertainment

HOURS

TUES - FRI:
Open at 3pm

SAT & SUN:
Open at 1pm

closing times vary

Private rentals available
Mondays

71 Chester Rd, Becket
413-623-8777



Sherwood Shoppe

413-623-2338

**"From Scratch"
Baking & Cooking
NOW OPEN**

**Tues. - Sun.
8am -7pm**

Community Calendar September 2024

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

see page 5
for more >>



BECKET ARTS CENTER

Sunday, September 1: "Quillings, Drawings, and Block Prints" by Joan Rooks - Closing Reception / 2-4pm
Thursdays, September 5, 12, 19, 26: Yoga with Rima Sala / 9:30-10:30am / \$12 (\$6 for BAC members)
Friday, September 6: 2nd Member Art Show Opening Reception / 5-7pm / Free
Saturday, September 7: Storywalk® Launch / 12pm / Free (in partnership with the library)
Tuesday, September 10: Plein Air in Becket / 10am-1pm / \$10 (free for BAC & Guild of Berkshire Artist members)
Thursday, September 12: Speaker Series, The Definition of Insanity with Gabriel London / 5-7pm / \$5 (Free for BAC members)
Saturday, September 14: Music Brings Communities Together - Hold On Honeys / 5-7pm / Free
Sunday, September 15: "Centered" Closing Reception / 2-4pm / Free
Friday, September 20: "Nature is Wild" Opening Reception / 5-7pm / Free
Saturday, September 21: A special event and reading featuring Chris Noth & Ken Cheeseman / 2 & 7pm / Cost TBD
Saturday, September 28: Music Brings Communities Together - Seth & Liz / 5-7pm / Free
Sunday, September 29: 2nd Member Art Show Closing Reception / 2-4pm / Free

BECKET ATHENAEUM

Sunday, September 1: Book & Bake Sale Fundraiser / 10-4pm / By donation (cash or check)
Tuesdays: Baby & Toddler Playgroup / 10-11am / Free
Saturdays: Storytime with Stay & Play / 10:30am-12:30pm / Free / Stay after Storytime for snacks and a chance for kids to play and caregivers to connect with each other.
Saturday, September 7: Storywalk® Launch: *The Breakdancing Bear in Becket* by Town of Becket campers / 12pm / Free (in partnership with BAC)
Monday, September 9: Cookbook Club: *Bring It! Tried and True Recipes for Potlucks and Casual Entertaining* by Ali Rosen / 6-7:30pm / Free
Tuesday, September 10: Book Club: *Signal Fires* by Dani Shapiro / 1:30pm / Free
Tuesday, September 10: Movie Night for Adults / 6:30-9:30pm, movie starts at 7pm / Free
Wednesday, September 11: Wonderful World of Bats with Mass Audubon / 6pm / Free
Thursday, September 19: Game Night / 6-8pm / Free
Thursday, September 26: The Becket Athenaeum Big Read Climate Change Panel / 6pm / Free
Tuesday, October 1: Book Club: *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig / 1:30pm / Free

HIMALAYAN HIGH
2727 Jacobs Ladder Rd. / Becket, MA

Recreational Cannabis Dispensary
HIMALAYANHIGHLLC.COM

Hours: 8:30am-8:00pm / Mon-Sun
care@himalayanhighllc.com / 413-327-7018

MON - WED 7AM-7PM
THURS-SUN 7AM-9PM

FARM & CRAFT MARKET
FRIDAY AFTERNOONS
ALL SUMMER

413-679-3606

MENU AND ONLINE ORDERING:

413-447-5846

Ginger Conner, The Becket Connection

RED HORSE REAL ESTATE
www.RedHorseRealEstate.com
PO Box 111 Becket MA 01223
Ginger@RedHorseRealEstate.com

CHP's Mobile Health Unit offers wellness visits, chronic disease management, sick visits, and vaccines throughout Berkshire County.

For an appointment or the Mobile Health Unit schedule, call 413.528.0457 or visit chpberkshires.org/mobile.

CHP Excellence in Health Care
444 Stockbridge Rd. | Great Barrington, MA 01230

Community Calendar September 2024

see page 4
 << for more



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

TOWN GOVERNMENT

Tuesday, September 3: State Primaries / 7am-8pm
Wednesday, September 4: Board of Health / 5pm
Wednesdays, September 4, 18: Select Board / 7pm
Thursday, September 5: Parks & Rec Committee / 9am
Tuesday, September 10: Finance Committee / 5pm
Tuesday, September 10: Historical Commission / 7pm
Wednesday, September 11: Planning Board / 6pm
Wednesday, September 18: Bylaw Review Comm. / 10am
Tuesday, September 24: Conservation Comm / 6pm

For more on live and local music events, visit:

www.route8pub.com
www.facebook.com/PapaBobsentertainmenthall
www.thedreamawaylodge.com/events



Pease Store

11 Main Street, Chester MA

Open Saturdays 9-2 • Lots of great deals!
 Caps and sweatshirts for 12 hilltowns
 Work clothes, boots, galoshes,
 adult and children's shoes, and more
 Guest vendors most Saturdays including
 local bakers and craftspeople

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Mondays, September 2, 9, 16, 23, 30: Chair Yoga for Seniors / Washington Town Hall / 11am / Free
Mondays, September 2, 9, 16, 23, 30: Bean Bag Baseball / Becket Center Town Park Pavilion / 6-9pm
Tuesdays & Thursdays, September 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, 26: Council on Aging Lunch & Bingo / Becket Town Hall / 11am-2pm / \$3 for lunch
Tuesdays, September 3, 10, 17, 24: Yoga for Seniors w/ Rima Sala / Washington Town Hall / 9am / Free
Wednesdays, September 4, 11, 18, 25: Yoga / Becket Town Hall / 9am / \$3
Fridays, September 6, 13, 20, 27: Berkshire Mobile Farmers Market / Town Hall Pavilion / 3:30-6pm
Fridays, September 6, 13, 20, 27: Farm & Craft Market / Becket Country Store / 2-7pm
Friday, September 6: Free Pasta Dinner / Becket Federated Church / 5-7pm / Free
Saturdays, September 7, 21: Food Pantry / Becket Federated Church / 9-11am
Monday, September 9: Smitty Pignatelli and Paul Mark speak about MA state budget and legislation / Becket Town Hall community room / 6:30pm / Free
Saturday, September 28: Fall Family Fun Festival / Becket Center Pavilion / 12-9pm / Food, music, games, tag sale & more

Chris Maccarini, PMP

Owner

617-816-6152
info@crmhomewatch.com
crmhomewatch.com
 PO Box 791, Becket, MA 01223

Unoccupied
 Property Specialists
 Residential & Commercial
 Homes • Buildings • Property



LICENSED BONDED INSURED

Tom's Painting

INTERIOR/EXTERIOR
 POWER WASHING,
 DECKS AND MORE

203.589.0653

tomsalzer49@yahoo.com
 Becket, MA 01223

ROUTE 8 PUB
413-623-5500
 3235 Main St. Becket, MA.



William Pitt | Sotheby's
 INTERNATIONAL REALTY

LOCAL REAL ESTATE EXPERT

THOM GARVEY

TGARVEY@WPSIR.COM

508-371-8219

GREAT BARRINGTON BROKERAGE

306 & 308 Main Street | 413.528.4192

WILLIAMPITT.COM

The Becket Truant School Experiment

by Marilyn Fish

The school year in Becket has always begun in September and ended in June, right? Actually, wrong. It was only in 1852 that Massachusetts began to regulate school terms and make attendance compulsory. A new law intended to give youngsters a basic education and keep them off the streets provided that children between the ages of 8 and 14 must attend school for 12 weeks per year, six of which had to be consecutive. Despite this, truancy and crimes perpetrated by truants remained a problem. By the mid-1870s county commissioners recognized that jailing juveniles was not the answer and moved to establish truant schools “for the confinement, discipline, and instruction of minors.”

Soon citizens of Berkshire County who had been sending their truants to a Hampden County institution pressed for a location closer to home. Almost 10 years passed before commissioners chose the East Becket property of George Keeler as the location. Keeler had recently built a house for summer boarders. It was about 45’ x 65’, two stories high, with a garret, cellar, dining room and about 15 bedrooms. Outbuildings dotted the surrounding 45-acre farm, which was located high on a hill, near a lake, two miles from Becket Center. The Keeler house had failed as a summer retreat and was falling into disrepair when the county rented it for \$65 per year.

Deputy Sheriff Robert M. Savery and Mrs. Sarah J. W. Savery accepted the jobs of superintendent and matron for a salary of \$600 (later \$900) per year plus board. The Saverys restored the property, making it ready for the boys (girls were not specifically excluded but none attended) from throughout the county who were considered “ripe” for reformation. They furnished a schoolroom with desks and blackboards and engaged a teacher. A few barred windows and a fenced yard were meant to keep the more troublesome students confined. The boys would be expected to work on the property and care for their own rooms.

The school opened on September 1, 1887. Within two years a controversy as to its value erupted in the *Berkshire Eagle* and the *Pittsfield Sun*. In January 1889, *The Eagle’s* editor claimed that “The county truant school in Becket is the most expensive institution for the benefits derived from it that there is in the county.” The overall expense in 1888 had been \$2,500.48 (about \$45,000 in 2024 dollars) which was spent in the care of only two boys. The *Pittsfield Sun* objected, saying that “The *Eagle* willfully and maliciously misrepresents the financial facts about the truant school.”

The newspapers soon published detailed lists of school expenditures proving the integrity of its managers. Robert and Sarah Savery were found blameless in the expenditures involved in maintaining the property and its unwilling boarders. The school remained open and the county commissioners, still convinced of its viability, purchased the Keeler property for \$1,500. However, the controversy simmered beneath the surface and by the end of 1896 county commissioners obtained permission to abolish the school for want of inmates. It had proven more difficult than expected to “convict” a boy of truancy. Teachers and truant officers generally declined to make formal court-mandated complaints and believed that parents, if properly informed of their children’s absences, could best deal with them at home. Furthermore, towns were reluctant to pay \$2.00 per week per detainee to the county. In July, 1899, Mr. M. A. Fenton of Lynn, Massachusetts, purchased the truant school and its surrounding acreage and by the end of the year had added verandas and remodeled the interior, restoring it to its original purpose as a summer boarding house. Known as York Villa, it attracted a loyal following until it succumbed to fire in 1910.



York Villa, circa 1900. The Becket Truant School occupied this building from 1887 to 1896 or '97. M. A. Fenton, the next owner, added the verandas.

Sources: Contemporary accounts in *The Berkshire Eagle* and *The Pittsfield Sun*.

Don't Forget to Fill Out the Short Becket Beat Reader Survey
Your input is important and can help us make the Becket Beat better!
Visit www.BecketBeat.org/2024-reader-survey or Scan the QR code



On Our Doorstep: Upper Housatonic Valley National Area Heritage Walks

by Marcia Parnell

Don't miss out on an amazing opportunity over five weekends – Saturdays and Sundays beginning September 7th and 8th through October 5th and 6th – to participate in up to 70 free historic interpretive walks, hikes and even one bicycle tour throughout Berkshire County and northwestern Connecticut surrounding the Housatonic River Valley. There's virtually something for everyone in this broad array of outdoor activities and most are relatively short and over level terrain.

Hoping to entertain your kids, have family or guests visiting and looking for something they might enjoy or know they want to visit, or maybe you just need a reason to get out and enjoy a beautiful day here during our unbeatable fall season? In Becket or very nearby are several outings: History Hike to the Keystone Arches Bridges on 9/7 from 9:30am – 1pm; Exploring the Historic Becket Quarry and Forest on 9/22 from 10am – 12pm; The Secrets of Muddy Pond and the Building of the First U.S. Railroad Mountain Crossing, 9/28 from 10am – 12pm; Chester and Becket Railroad, the Granite Line on 9/29 from 1pm – 4pm; and 92 Seasons of Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival on 10/5 from 11am – 12pm.

If you're willing to venture a bit further from home, there are loads of interesting options like the History of Indian Town in Stockbridge, summit walks at Mt. Greylock and Bascom Lodge in Lanesborough/Adams, a tour of the gardens and landscape at the Mount, Edith Wharton's home in Lenox, and a short walk and talk at the National Historic Landmark site of the home of W.E.B. Du Bois in Great Barrington. And that's just to name a few.

A complete list of events including dates, times, locations, registration requirements and map is available on line at housatonicheritage.org/heritage-walks. Hard copy brochures may also be found at libraries, post offices and newspaper racks around the area. Participants are urged to wear sturdy footwear, carry a water bottle and bring insect repellent.

The Walks are a program of the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area in partnership with the National Park Service and are conducted by historians, naturalists and environmentalists.

Becket Summer Scenes - Photos by Art Alpert



Arts and Crafts Marketplace at the Becket Arts Center



Indian Lake Regatta



Becket Town Beach



Music Brings Communities Together at the Becket Arts Center

More Becket Summer Scenes Photos by Art Alpert



Berkshire Mobile Farmers Market in Becket



Summer Party at the Dream Away Lodge

Have an idea for a
story or a photo
you'd like to share?
Email
info@becketbeat.org

BECKET WASHINGTON COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP (BWCP) NEWS

Two Associate Pastors Ordained

Come celebrate the ordination of Associate Pastor Kathleen Vseteeka and Associate Pastor Linda Shaw at the Becket Federated Church (3381 Main St.) on Sunday, September 8, 3pm. There will be a ceremony by Pastor William Mulholland with a reception to follow at Parish House. Please RSVP to Nina at 413-297-2673 / ninaann1382@gmail.com

Becket Arts Center - Music, Exhibits, Talks & More

Exhibit openings, closings, lectures, music and more await visitors to the Becket Arts Center in September. Our 2nd Member Art Show opens on September 6 and runs through the 29th. The juried exhibit "Nature is Wild" opens on September 20 and runs through October 13. Hold On Honeys perform on September 14 and Seth & Liz take the stage on September 28 as part of our Music Brings Communities Together series. Yoga continues on Thursdays at 9:30am with Rima Sala and we welcome director/producer Gabriel London to screen and speak about his documentary *The Definition of Insanity* on Thursday, September 12 at 5pm. And don't miss Chris Noth & Ken Cheeseman for a special event on September 21 at 2 & 7pm. Visit Becketartscenter.org for more information or to become a member.



The Becket Athenaeum Big Read Launches!

The library has been awarded a 2024-2025 National Endowment for the Arts Big Read grant to support the first-ever community read for Becket and Washington! The book is *The Bear* by Andrew Krivak (available at the library) and there will be several exciting free programs in collaboration with community partners within the theme of environmental awareness culminating in a visit from the author in May 2025. Join us for the kick-off event, a Climate Change Panel, on Thursday, September 26th at 6pm. The panel will feature local leaders in climate organizations discussing climate disruption and environmental awareness. There will be time for questions. More information on our website: www.becketathenaeum.org/bigread



Becket Beat

Business Manager
Adele Levine

Editors
Kathy Baugh
Marcia Parnell

Photo Editor
Art Alpert

Layout/Design
Aaron Beatty

Facebook Administrator
Jeanine McAdam

Advertising Manager
Shelley Chanler

Circulation Managers
Amy Alpert
Shelley Chanler
Ann Krawet

Reporters/ Writers
Al Blake

Kathy Dickinson
Marilyn Fish
Tommie Hutto-Blake
Ann Krawet
Tom Lynch
Marcia Parnell
Cathy Terwedow

Treasurer
Cathy Terwedow

Webmasters
Jeremy Dunn
Dave Labrecque

The Becket Beat is published monthly (with a combined Jan/Feb issue) Articles may not be reprinted without obtaining author permission from the Becket Beat.

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