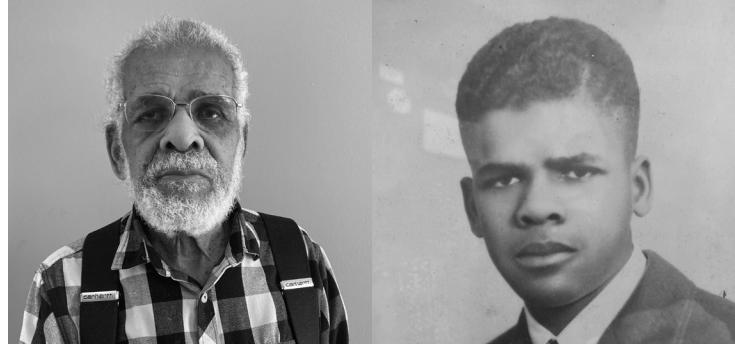
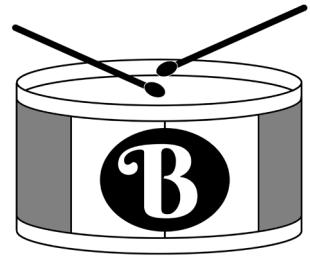


Becket Beat

Keeping neighbors connected Vol. 4, No. 3, April 2025



Becket's Oldest Resident Reaches Milestone Birthday

by Adele Levine

William "Bill" F. Robinson, Sr., whose life spans a remarkable chapter of American history, will mark his centennial birthday on April 24th.

Born in Naugatuck, Connecticut, Robinson has called Becket home for decades, residing at Robinson Farm — in the Robinson family since 1906 — alongside his son David.

When reflecting on the most significant historical moment of his hundred-year journey, Robinson doesn't hesitate. It isn't world wars or moon landings that first come to mind, but something far more personal: his connection to his grandfather, who was born into slavery.

"I think of those who came before me and those who will come after me," Robinson shared. "I'm aware of the progress that Black people have made since my grandfather's time and of the many problems that still remain."

After gaining freedom following the Civil War, Robinson's grandfather journeyed northward, eventually planting roots in Naugatuck, Connecticut — creating a family legacy that now stretches across five generations. Today, Robinson serves as the living bridge between America's past and its future, through his three children, eight grandchildren, and 13 great-grandchildren.

Though he acknowledges the challenges of growing old, Robinson views his longevity as a blessing. Each morning begins

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TOC: Becket's Oldest Resident, Small Wind Turbine Project, P1 / CHP Mobile Health Unit Suspends Service, Kids' Corner, P2 / Spotted Lanternfly, P3 / April Community Calendar, P4-5 / Becket Community Day, P6 / Cellphones at Wahconah, Affordable Homeownership, P7 / BWCP News, P8

Good News/Bad News for Town Hall Small Wind Turbine Project

by Marcia Parnell

After several years of planning and hard work, Town officials and the Energy Committee got some good news on March 4th. The State's Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Green Communities division had approved an award of \$139,500 to fund the Town Hall Small Wind Turbine Project. The 120-ft tall, 15-kwh small monopole turbine is to be placed behind the Town Hall and will generate enough power to offset the current energy needs of both Town Hall and a portion of the Highway Department garage. A balloon test to demonstrate height and public information meetings helped get locals on board. In order to fully cover the \$186,000 total cost and installation, and avoid Town expense, the project also relied on \$46,500 in Federal tax credits. Not a mere "nice to have," the turbine project was formulated to help Becket meet the recent statewide renewable electricity



Monopole turbine example, not actual height



Lattice turbine example, not actual height

Continued on page 3

with the same ritual — a prayer of gratitude: "Thank you, Heavenly Father, for giving me another day on planet Earth. I love you."

And his hopes for the year ahead? "Good health!"

The Robinson family is planning an event for his birthday to honor this most remarkable centenarian.

Mark your calendar for these important upcoming Town events:

Becket Annual Town Meeting

Saturday, May 10th at 2pm (note afternoon rather than evening) at Becket Washington School

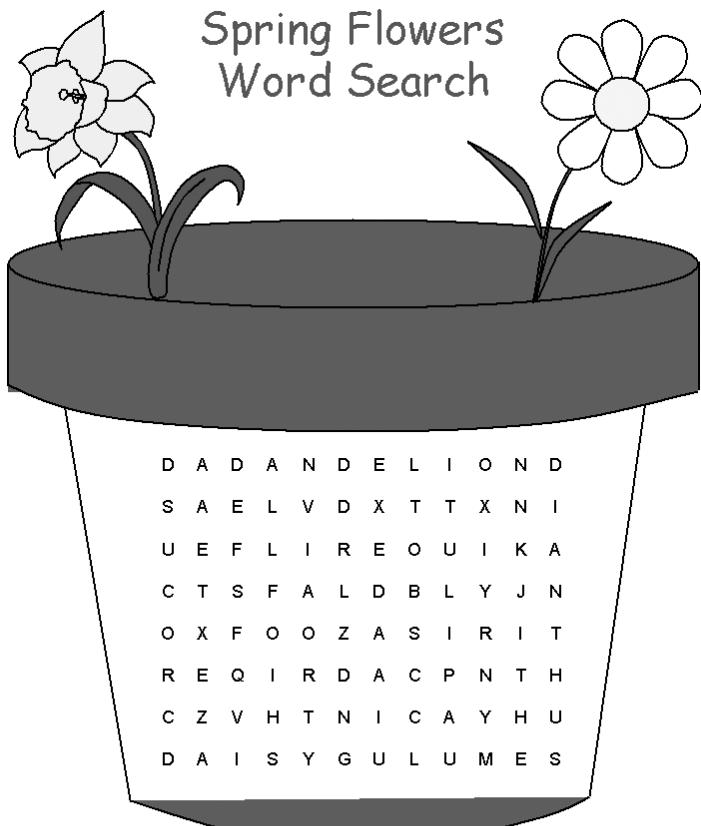
Becket Annual Election

Saturday, May 17th, polls open from 10am-7pm at Becket Town Hall

Deadline to register to vote in Town Election is Wednesday, April 30th

Kids' Corner

Spring Flowers Word Search



D A D A N D E L I O N D
S A E L V D X T T X N I
U E F L I R E O U I K A
C T S F A L D B L Y J N
O X F O O Z A S I R I T
R E Q I R D A C P N T H
C Z V H T N I C A Y H U
D A I S Y G U L U M E S

azalea
crocus
daffodil

daisy
dandelion
dianthus

hyacinth
iris
lilac

Community Health Program (CHP) Mobile Health Unit Suspends Service

by Marcia Parnell

Citing financial constraints, CHP management has suspended its Mobile Health Unit. A much-used option during the covid epidemic, participation has dropped off to just a handful of users each day, according to CEO Bethany Kieley, as reported in the Berkshire Eagle on 2/26/25. Although it always operated at a loss, CHP could no longer support the Mobile Unit from other revenue sources within the organization. Gale LaBelle, Becket's Board of Health Chair, does not expect Becket residents to experience any loss of health care services. The Town, she explains, is able to meet the needs of underserved residents through its partnership with the Berkshire County Board of Health.

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Spotting the Spotted Lanternfly

by Cathy Terwedow

Yet another invasive species is winging its way to our beautiful Becket. This time, it's the spotted lanternfly (SLF), a native of China that hitched a ride into Pennsylvania in 2014 on a shipment of crushed stone.

I first encountered this pest in mid-January while hiking in Worcester. Ahead of me on the trail were two Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) employees awkwardly reaching long poles high into the treetops, so I stopped to talk to them.

Using binoculars, they scan the bottoms of branches for the telltale gray egg masses. Once spotted, they use telescoping poles to reach the branches and scrape off the eggs. It's difficult work!

"The threat to economic crops is serious enough that Massachusetts has three government organizations surveying high-risk areas for SLF," they said as they handed me a laminated "Have you spotted a lanternfly" identification card that could be used to scrape egg masses from trees.

First seen in Massachusetts in 2021, SLF breeding populations are now found in locations around the commonwealth, especially around Springfield, Worcester, and throughout MetroWest. Last year, an infestation was discovered in Westfield. The lanternfly, also known as a lantern moth, is neither a fly nor a moth. It's a type of plant hopper. As such, it does not bite or sting. Instead, it's a sapsucker that wreaks havoc on more than 100 types of plants, potentially becoming a serious agricultural pest. "Spotted lanternfly is currently one of our top invasive species management priorities," said MDAR Commissioner John Lebeaux.



DCR employees scan the bottoms of branches for telltale gray egg masses using telescoping poles to reach the branches and scrape off the eggs.

Photo credit: Cathy Terwedow.



Egg Masses
September – May



Early Nymph
April – October



Late Nymph
April – October



Adult
July – November

Image credit: Jeri Rohr

SLF is visually striking, especially when the lower bright orange wings are exposed. The adults are about an inch long and half an inch wide.

Preferred hosts are tree-of-heaven, grapevines, fruit trees, hops, and shade and forest trees such as black walnut, beech, birch, and maple. The sticky "honeydew" produced by SLF accumulates near locations where the insects feed, including plants, vehicles and yard furniture. Extremely difficult to wash off, the honeydew attracts stinging insects and leads to the growth of a pungent-smelling fungus known as sooty mold that can further damage plants.

As of this writing there are no known sightings of SLF in Becket, but their range is expanding so vigilance is critical. If you see (or suspect you've seen) a spotted lanternfly, submit a photo to <https://massnrc.org/pests/slf> or email slf@mass.gov. More info: <https://www.mass.gov/spotted-lanternfly>.

Turbine Project, continued from page 1

standard requiring every town to have 30% fossil-free energy generation by 2030.

The bad news? Energy Committee Vice Chair Cathy Defoe reports that the Committee has already been advised that Chinese tariffs will increase the cost of the monopole unit, but just how much at this point is unknown. Changing energy policy is also expected to eliminate the Federal tax credits. For now, Defoe, along with the rest of the Energy Committee and Town officials, are reviewing options for moving forward with the turbine. A less expensive lattice turbine unit could be substituted but it is considered less desirable. And the \$46,500 gap in unit cost and installation expenses, plus whatever additional funding may be needed, will likely have to be borne by the Town and approved by voters at the Annual Town Meeting on May 10th.

Community Calendar April 2025

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

see page 5
for more >>



BECKET ARTS CENTER

Thursdays (except April 24): Yoga with Rima Sala / 9:30-10:30am / \$15 per class (discount for members)

Sunday, April 6, 13, 27: Intro to Guitar with Dave Brown / \$20/class (\$15 for members; students in grades 9-12 free)

Thursday, April 10: Speaker Series w/ Allen Williams of Chester Granite / 5-6pm / \$5 (free for members)

Tuesday, April 15: The Art of Whiskey Tasting Series 2: Rye Tasting with Colin Goundry / 7-8pm / \$50

Monday, April 21-Friday, April 25: Creative Teens Free Workshops / 9:30-11:00am & 12:30-3:00pm www.becketartscenter.org/youth-programs

Saturday, April 26: Follow the Laugh with Kenny Raskin / 2-5pm / \$TBD (discount for members)

Saturday, April 26: Kilashandra LIVE! Album Release Celebration / 7-10pm / \$TBD

Wednesday, April 30: Drum with Rick Shrum! / 4-5pm / \$15 (\$10 for members)

BECKET ATHENAEUM

Tuesdays: Baby & Toddler Playgroup / 10-11am / Free

Tuesday, April 1: Book Club: The Woman Who Smashed Codes by Jason Fagone / 1:30pm / 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!

Thursday, April 10: Mindful Making for Teens / 5:30-7pm / Free

Thursday, April 10: The Bear Book Discussion: A Big Read Program / 6-7pm / Free / Route 8 Pub

Monday, April 14: Cookbook Club: Jacques Pépin Cooking My Way by Jacques Pépin / 6-7:30pm / Free

Thursday, April 17: Game Night / 6-8pm / Free

Saturday, April 19: Movie Night for Adults / 6:30-9:30pm, movie starts at 7pm / Free

Monday, April 21: Debris Shelter Building with Taz: A Big Read Program / 2-5pm / Free / Offsite / Registration required

Thursday, April 24: Mindful Making for Teens / 5:30-7pm / Free

Wednesday, April 30: Author Visit: Andrew Krivak: A Big Read Program / 7-9pm / Free / Becket Arts Center

Tuesday, May 6: Book Club: Within Arm's Reach by Ann Napolitano / 1:30pm / Free



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Community Calendar April 2025

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

see page 3
<< for more



TOWN GOVERNMENT

Wednesday, April 2: Board of Health / 5pm
Wednesday, April 2, 16: Select Board / 7pm
Tuesday, April 8: Historical Commission / 1pm
Tuesday, April 8: Finance Committee / 3pm
Wednesday, April 9: Bylaw Review Comm. / 10am
Wednesday, April 9: Planning Board / 6pm
Tuesday, April 22: Conservation Comm. / 6pm
Wednesday, April 30: Deadline to register to vote in annual town election

For more on live and local music events, visit:
www.route8pub.com
www.thedreamawaylodge.com/events

COMMUNITY EVENTS

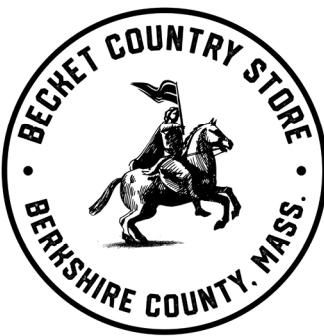
Saturdays, April 5, 19: Food Pantry / Becket Federated Church / 9-11am
Saturday, April 5: Turkey Dinner / 4:30-6:30 p.m. / adults, \$15; kids under 12, \$5 / Congregational Church
Tuesdays & Thursdays in April: Council on Aging Lunch & Bingo / Becket Town Hall / 11am-2pm / \$3 for lunch
Mondays in April: Osteo Class w/ Rima Sala / Washington Town Hall / 11am / Free
Tuesdays in April: Yoga for Seniors w/ Rima Sala / Washington Town Hall / 9am / Free
Wednesdays in April: Yoga / Becket Town Hall / 9am / \$3
Wednesday, April 16: CET - Unlocking Savings with the Energy Saver Home Loan Program / Virtual / 7pm

Route 8 Pub Sunday Music Series 5-8pm

4/6: The Ladies Diane
4/13: Bobby Sweet and Lara Tupper
4/20: Happy Easter Party
4/27: Jack Waldheim



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Community Day 2025: The Hardy and the Brave

Hardy souls turned out for Community Day on March 8th. Thank you Canterbury Farm for hosting us as well as to our local businesses for participating and the Neon Newt for the lovely cookies. *Photos courtesy of Art Alpert*



Can you hear me now? Cellphones at Wahconah Regional High School

by Jack Walton and Lola Mancari, 10th Grade

Smart phones have become an essential part of our everyday lives. They are needed for emergencies, but they are also useful for shopping, paying bills, scheduling events, photography, setting alarms, and playing games. They have become integral to everything we do, so it is not surprising that many families feel it is a good idea for the kids to have phones as well. While availability of these new tools seems to be an obvious advancement, there are growing concerns that phones may actually interfere with a child's education.

As powerful a tool as it is, a smart phone can be quite a distraction. Despite being a resource, anything that compromises a student's attention is not helpful. In fact, one study conducted by The London School of Economics reported that some kids without cell phones performed better on exams. At the extreme end, addiction to social media and cyberbullying have become real and unacceptable issues to contend with. Schools are now challenged with finding a fair and balanced approach to controlling phones in class. Current rules at WRHS are strict: if a student is found to have a phone in their possession, whether or not in use, they may be reprimanded. Fortunately, a product called a Yondr Pouch has been introduced which can be used to "lock up" a phone during school hours ("bell-to-bell"). What troubles some students is that, in contrast, their teachers do not seem to operate under the same restrictions because teachers may have their phones on and handy throughout the day.

Both Dean of Students Jared Shannon, and Vice Principal Stephen Messina, feel the current rules are absolutely necessary. They believe phones pose a distraction for students from lessons, just as they pose a distraction for adults during meetings. Having banned phones, they each have observed what they feel to be significantly increased interest on the part of students in school, and in communication with fellow students. In addition, Mr. Messina shared that "students have said that they feel they can focus better without having access to [them]." When asked if a student can communicate with a family member during an emergency, Mr. Shannon confirmed that students always have the ability to contact their parents through the school, facilitating access to first responders if ever needed.

Affordable Homeownership Opportunity for Qualified Becket Applicants

by Marcia Parnell

Construct Center for Affordable Housing and the Town of Becket have partnered to offer the sale of a two-bedroom modular home on 0.28 acres in Becket for \$230,000. This opportunity is exclusively available to first-time homebuyers earning up to \$61,350 for a family of one and up to \$101,650 for a family of six. The house will be awarded through a lottery system.

"It has always been difficult for essential workers in the southern Berkshires to afford a home, but rising prices, cash-only purchases, and limited inventory have made it nearly impossible." said Jane Ralph, Executive Director of Construct. Becket's Community Preservation Committee provided \$25,000 and the state's Rural and Small Town Grant Program awarded another \$145,000. Construct provides the up-front funding and is reimbursed for its work. Added Ralph, "We are thrilled to offer this home at an affordable price, making homeownership accessible for a local family." According to Berkshire Realtors Market Watch (2024), the median home sale price in Becket has risen to over \$350,000, making homeownership increasingly out of reach for essential workers and first-time buyers.

The newly set modular home is located at 60 Dawn Drive and comes with lake rights to Shaw Pond. It includes two bedrooms and one full bathroom on the main floor, an unfinished upper level designed to accommodate an additional bedroom and bathroom, a fully updated kitchen with new cabinets and countertops, and a new septic system.

Applications must be submitted by April 25th and the lottery drawing will take place on April 28, 2025 via Zoom. Applicants must be *Continued on page 8*



Photo by Jack Walton

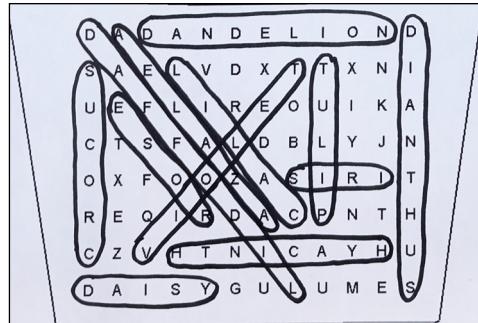


Photo courtesy of Construct

pre-approved for a mortgage and an FHL Bank Equity Builder Program Loan before submitting their application.

For full details on the property, application process, eligibility requirements, and future sale restrictions, visit www.constructberkshires.org.

April word search answer



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Turkey Dinner

Saturday April 5th; 4:30-6:30pm / Adults, \$15; Children under 12, \$5

Congregational Church Guild Hall / Eat in or get to-go meals by calling
623-8300 or 623-6455

*Dinner includes roast turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, butternut squash
and homemade pineapple upside down cake with real whipped cream for dessert.*

BECKET WASHINGTON COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP (BWCP) NEWS

Becket Arts Center - Creative Teens Free Workshops, Music, Speakers, Whiskey, Comedy & More!

Spring is in full swing. In April we offer our first Creative Teens free workshops during the school break (April 21-25) including: dance fusion, printmaking, smartphone cinema, visible mending, drumming, comic book illustration, comedy, and paper-making – and it's all FREE for teens in grades 6-12.

On Sundays in April (except Easter) we welcome Dave Brown who will be leading Intro to Guitar, a six-week course for adults and students in grades 9-12. We are so excited to host Kilashandra on April 26 for the release of their new LIVE album that was recorded here! Allen Williams from Chester Granite will speak on April 10; Colin Goundrey continues his Whiskey Tasting series on April 15; and Drum with Rick Shrum! wraps up on April 30. Yoga with Rima continues on Thursday mornings other than school vacation week.

Becket Athenaeum Big Read Wraps up in April

Our first community read wraps up this month in partnership with some local businesses and residents! The book is *The Bear* by Andrew Krivak and copies are available at the library and digitally on Libby. On April 10, come to Route 8 Pub at 6pm to join Ed Paquette, member of the Washington Conservation Commission, for the book discussion. Tarcisio "Taz" Ramos Dos Santos will teach attendees how to build a shelter using natural debris on April 21. Registration required. And finally, we welcome author Andrew Krivak to the Becket Arts Center at 7pm on April 30! Having knowledge of *The Bear* is not required for the final two events. More information and to register: becketathenaeum.org/bigread

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