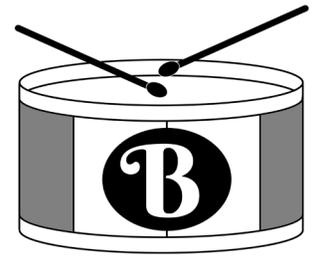


Becket Beat



Keeping neighbors connected Vol. 4, No. 10, November 2025

Fall Fowl Festival

by Susan Neul

There are so many turkeys congregating at road corners this month that it looks like they are waiting for the tour bus to the Tanglewood Fall Fowl Festival. Or are they headed to Canada since Canadian Thanksgiving has already come and gone? Why indeed are we seeing gaggles of gobblers right now?



Turkeys on a Becket road; photo by Art Alpert

Take a hard look at the posse that is wandering across the street in front of your car and you will see that it is most likely comprised of just females or just males but rarely a mixed group, except for an occasional momma's boy who wants to hang with his mom just a little while longer. Several hens and their female poults (turkeys under 4 weeks) will form flocks and will travel together from their summer feeding grounds of open fields full

of insects and fallen grain into more dense vegetation replete with fruits and seeds and eventually, as fall comes to a close, into the woods in hopes of finding acorns, beechnuts and other hard nuts. The males also form flocks but rather than dads and kids, the gobblers gather in a mixed age group, and there's a fair amount of in-fighting as a pecking order is arrived at. The males also choose different habitats than the hens for their fall foraging. Their larger size and strength enable them to have success in areas where the females might fail so the sexes split up and only come together in the spring for breeding.

So, the many turkeys that we are seeing along the roads right now have just left the open fields where the cooling weather means that insects are less plentiful. They are now harvesting the fruits and seeds available in the roadside scrub plants that grow in abundance on the edges of roads. As fall progresses, you will see fewer and fewer as the turkeys move deeper into the woods until spring brings them out and the male gobblers put on shows for the females with plumage and singing and it all starts over again.

Becket Washington Children's Holiday Party is Back

by Kimberly Allardyce

The Becket Washington community is coming together to revive a beloved tradition — a children's holiday party that welcomes families of all faiths, backgrounds and traditions.

This event was originally organized by Becket Police Officer Nicole Miller, whose warmth and dedication made it a much-anticipated annual gathering. After a year's absence, the community felt its loss. This year, the Becket Washington School PTO is taking the lead in bringing it back, ensuring that the spirit of togetherness, joy, and giving continues.

The celebration will take place on Saturday, December 13th from noon to 3 pm at Becket Chimney Corners YMCA (Main Hall). Hosted by the Becket Washington School PTO and supported by community volunteers, the afternoon will feature lunch for all attendees, along with music, arts and crafts and activities for children. Each registered child will also receive a special gift. Designed as an inclusive celebration, the event honors Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, the Winter Solstice, and other seasonal traditions that bring light and connection during the winter months.

Participation and Registration: Families must register by December 1st so organizers can plan appropriately. RSVP here: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/becket-washington-childrens-holiday-celebration>

continued on page 7

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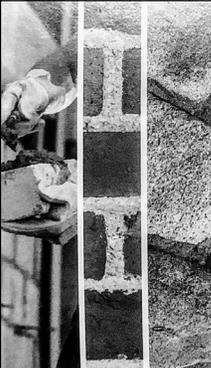


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Town of Becket Annual Town Report Calendar Year 2025 Cover Photo Contest

Submission Deadline:
January 31, 2026

Calling all photographers—of every age and skill level! Join us in celebrating Becket's natural beauty by submitting your favorite outdoor photo for a chance to be featured on the cover of the 2025 Annual Town Report.

Contest Guidelines:

1. Submit a photo showcasing your favorite outdoor view within the Town of Becket.
2. Each participant may submit up to three photographs.
3. All photos must be taken within Becket town limits.
4. Submissions must include:
 - JPEG format
 - Photographer's name and email address
 - Detailed location of the subject matter
 - A statement granting the Town of Becket a royalty-free, nonexclusive right to display the photo on the cover of the 2025 Annual Town Report and on the town website.
5. Email submissions to the Select Board, c/o Beverly Gilbert, at adminasst@townofbecket.org.
6. The Select Board will vote to select the winning photograph. The chosen photographer will be credited in the caption on the inside cover of the Town Report.
7. All photographs displayed on the town website will include photographer credit.

Winter Sock & Mitten Drive



Nov 1st till Jan 3rd
Mon through Fri, 8:30am till 4:30pm
Collection: Town Hall
557 Main Street, Becket, MA

Help make a difference by donating new socks and mittens for our neighbors in need. We welcome all sizes (Children's, Women's, Men's).

All donations will be given to
the Becket Food Pantry.

For immediate needs,
call Bill Mulholland at (413) 770-1897.



3RD ANNUAL BECKET DAY!

SATURDAY NOV 1 ALL DAY!

SUPPORT OUR BEAUTIFUL HILLTOWN BY
SEEING WHAT LOCAL BUSINESSES
THROUGHOUT BECKET HAVE TO OFFER!

- BOGO AT THE BECKET COUNTRY STORE!
- HOLIDAY ARTS & CRAFTS MARKETPLACE AT THE BECKET ARTS CENTER 10-3PM
- SLICE OF PIE W/PURCHASE & LIVE MUSIC WITH LADIES' DIANE @ 2:00 AT THE ROUTE 8 PUB
- MAMA FRASCA'S MEATBALLS & MOON HOLLOW BAND AT THE DREAMAWAY LODGE
- SPECIAL DEALS AT HIMALAYAN HIGH!
- GOOD EATS AT THE NEON NEWT!
- CRAFTS AT THE BECKET WASHINGTON ATHENAEUM 10% OFF SALE ITEMS (MENTION BECKET DAY)

A Winning Wind Down for Becket's FY 2025 Housing Rehabilitation Program

by Marcia Parnell

In September 2024, the Beat reported the good news that Becket's March 2024 \$1 million Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application for a Becket-Dalton Housing Rehabilitation Program (HRP) had been awarded. Fourteen months later the effort will wind down by year end with more good news.

Six homes in Becket, at an average cost of \$88,813, will have been rehabilitated, improving the safety and security of residents ranging in age from five to 71 years in households with from one to six residents. The type of work done includes new roofing, new windows, addressing failing wells and septic systems, lead paint testing and mitigation, new siding, electrical work and more. According to Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) Principal Planner for Housing, Brett Roberts, who administered the program, "it was probably one of the smoothest grants BRPC has run in a long time. There were very few issues and just two change orders (which can run up costs) throughout the process." When asked how he thought participants felt about their experience, Roberts said his sense was that they were "overwhelmingly happy."

The HRP has a total of \$809,327 in construction funds available of which about 65% or \$532,880 will go towards six Becket homes and \$276,447 will go to five Dalton homes. A total of \$670,771 has been paid out thus far with the remaining balance of \$138,556 expected to be disbursed in the coming months as the construction projects are finished. The previously noted average of \$88,813 for the six Becket rehabs is 61% greater than the Dalton average of \$55,289. Why so much higher? Roberts attributes Becket's heftier price tag to its reliance on individual wells and septic systems for homeowner water and sewage needs. As an example, he cited one home in need of both for which the total estimate came in at \$97,000. The HRP cap per household is \$70,000. Roberts explained that when projected costs exceed the cap a waiver is applied for and usually granted, however, that means the dollars can't cover as many households as anticipated. Adding that dynamic to higher material and contractor costs overall unfortunately meant that of the original 14 households approved for rehabilitation, funds could cover only 11.

Roberts and Town Administrator Kathe Warden will be meeting soon to discuss another possible CDBG grant submission in 2026 for potential approval and funding in FY 2027. If that moves forward, the three homeowners who were not able to be part of the current grant will be at the top of the list for the next one. Roberts said BRPC is also looking at diversifying some of its funding sources to address a single project such as roofs, which could help relieve some of the expense pressure on the HRP.

Should communities expect CDBG grants to be available in the future? CDBG is a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development given as a block grant to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, which then distributes funds throughout the state through the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities. Given current federal funding uncertainty, it's questionable, yet Roberts and Warden say they will press forward with a new grant application hoping to fund another program in 2027.

An additional note: The identities of HRP participants are confidential, however, we asked, and Brett Roberts agreed, to reach out to HRP homeowners to see if they would be willing to talk about their experience with the Beat and its readers. We hope to hear from some of them and share their stories in a future edition.

What's Your Becket Story?

Becket Stories is a public art project being developed at the Becket Arts Center that will create an interactive story archive in Becket. The project will use stories, songs, and artifacts (objects, photos, documents) to capture the experience of living, working, and visiting Becket – past and present.

The project started collecting stories in Fall of 2025 and plans to launch the archive in the Spring of 2026.

What makes Becket special to you? Whether you live here full-time, part-time, sometimes, or just keep coming here because you love it – the project wants to hear about the memories, events, locations, and people that make this place special to you.

Will you tell your story for the project? Project organizers will arrange a time to meet with you and record your story.
DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SHARE?

DON'T worry, one of the project team members will listen to your ideas, talk to you about your experience and see what stories are discovered.

If you want to share your story please email marianne@becketartscenter.org or stop by the Becket Arts Center during their regular business hours and let them know.

Community Calendar November 2025

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

see page 6
for more >>



BECKET ARTS CENTER

Thursdays: Yoga with Rima Sala / 9:30-10:30am / \$15 per class (discount for members) (no class on Nov. 27)

Sundays: Sean McCusker Live Painting Demo / 1-2pm / Free

Tuesdays: The Art of Voice - a weekly community sing-along led by Paula Langton / 6:30-8:30pm / Free

Saturday, November 1: Holiday Arts & Crafts Marketplace / 10am-3pm

Wednesdays, November 5-December 10:

The Fundamentals of Acting with Ken Cheeseman / 6:30-8:30pm / \$299 (discount for members)

Thursday, November 6: 'Battalion Scapes' photos by Christopher St. Clair Boswell / Opening Reception / 5-7pm / Free

Sunday, November 9: 'No Background Music' by Normi Noel - true story of a Vietnam War nurse / 2-4pm / 18+ / Free

Monday, November 10, 24: Drum with Rick Shrum / 5-6pm / \$15 (discount for members; ages 12-18 free)

Monday, November 10, 24: Maker Mondays / 6:30-8pm / Free

Friday, November 14: Talent No Talent Show - share YOUR unique talents / 5-8pm / Free

Saturday, November 15: Needle Felting Workshop with Tina Sweet / 1-3:30pm / \$80 (Tiered Pricing for members, free for grades 9-12)

Saturday, November 15: Beginning to See the Light: A Cabaret Evening with Lara Tupper and Ben Kohn (plus special guests) / 7-9pm / Free

BECKET ATHENAEUM

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!

Tuesdays (except Nov 11): Baby & Toddler Playgroup / 10-11am / Free

Tuesday, November 4: Book Club: *Memorial Days* by Geraldine Brooks / 1:30pm / Free

Wednesday, November 5: SHINE Medicare Information Session / 3-4pm / Free

Monday, November 10: Cookbook Club: *A Literary Holiday Cookbook* by Alison Walsh / 6-7:30pm / Free

Tuesday, November 11: Closed

Wednesday, November 19: Close at 6pm

Thursday, November 20: Game Night / 6-8pm / Free

Friday, November 21: SIMULCAST: We the People: Yo-Yo Ma plays Bach's Cello Suites / 6:30-10:30pm / Free

Saturday, November 22: D&D One Shot Adventure / 12:30-4pm / Free / Ages 9+, registration required

Saturday, November 22: Movie Night for Adults / 6:30-9:30pm, movie starts at 7pm / Free

Wednesday, November 26: Close at 4pm

Thursday, November 27: Closed

Tuesday, December 2: Book Club: *The Man Who Loved China* by Simon Winchester / 1:30pm / Free



Community Calendar November 2025

see page 5
 << for more



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

TOWN GOVERNMENT

- Tuesday, November 4:** Finance Committee / 3pm
- Wednesday, November 5:** Board of Health / 5pm
- Wednesday November 5:** Select Board Public Hearing / 6pm
- Wednesday, November 12:** Bylaw Review Comm. / 10am
- Tuesday, November 11:** Historical Commission / 2pm
- Wednesday, November 12:** Planning Board / 6pm
- Tuesday, November 18:** Energy Comm. / 5pm
- Tuesday, November 18, 25:** Conservation Comm. / 6pm
- Wednesday November 19:** Select Board / 6pm

Up-to-date info: www.townofbecket.org/calendar

Live and local music events:

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

Family Fun Day Photos by Art Alpert



COMMUNITY EVENTS

- Mondays:** Chair Yoga for Seniors / Washington Town Hall / 11am / Free
- Tuesdays:** Yoga for Seniors w/ Rima Sala / Washington Town Hall / 9am / Free
- Tuesdays & Thursdays:** Becket Senior Group / Becket Town Hall / 10am-2pm / free Chair Yoga 10:30-11:00am followed by Lunch and Bingo / Becket Town Hall / Lunch \$3
- Wednesdays:** Yoga / Becket Town Hall / 9am / \$3
- Saturdays, November 1, 15:** Food Pantry / Becket Federated Church / 9-11am
- Saturday, November 15:** Holiday Pie & Craft Sale / 9am-3pm / Congregational Church Guild Hall
- Saturday, November 29:** Breakfast with Santa / Becket Federated Church / 8-10:30am / Free
- Monday, December 1:** Deadline to register for Becket-Washington Children's Holiday Celebration



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 Berkshire Regional Planning Commission at:
HMLP@berkshireplanning.org

Made in the Shade

by Kathy Archer Baugh

If you've stopped by the Becket Country Store, the Sherwood Shoppe, or the Mobile Farmer's Market lately, you may have noticed something new among the local offerings – beautifully cultivated mushrooms grown right here in town. Behind these earthy treasures is Shane Johnson, a familiar name in Becket for his carpentry business, Shane's Replace and Remodel. Now, Shane has launched a new venture that reflects another of his long-held passions: foraging for and cultivating mushrooms under the name Made in the Shade.



Shane Johnson; photo by Gabby Johnson

Shane's love of the natural world runs deep. Growing up in Connecticut, he spent his childhood exploring the woods, always collecting interesting finds. One formative adventure came while hiking with a friend in Torrington, when the two stumbled upon a rock glimmering with perfectly formed garnets. That discovery sparked a lifelong fascination with what nature has to offer, from minerals to mushrooms.

Years later, during the COVID pandemic, Shane began reading about survivalism and self-sufficiency. One of the books, gifted to him by his sister-in-law, had a chapter on mushroom cultivation. At the same time, his mother was searching for chaga mushrooms to brew into medicinal tea. Those two coincidental events were enough to set Shane on a new path. What began as a backyard experiment is quickly evolving into a thriving small business.

He started modestly, inoculating about 100 logs gathered from downed trees near power lines. "It's best to use logs with no leaves or bugs," he explains, "because the sugars go back into the wood, creating the perfect habitat for fungi." Today, his operation has expanded to roughly 500 logs, all nestled beneath a stand of hemlock trees. The steady year-round shade inspired the name of his business – Made in the Shade.

Shane now grows a remarkable variety of mushrooms, including shiitake, lion's mane, comb tooth, maitake, and reishi. Each has its own unique flavor and health benefits. Shiitakes, with their hearty, meaty texture, make an excellent base for gravies and soups and are prized for their immune-boosting and vitamin D-rich properties. Lion's mane, often compared to crab or lobster, is celebrated for its potential to support brain health and help treat degenerative diseases like dementia and Alzheimer's. Comb tooth share many of the same benefits and can be used interchangeably with lion's mane. Maitake, known for its chicken-like flavor, is often used to help with sinus issues, while reishi, commonly steeped into tea, has long been valued in Asian cultures as an immune regulator and a tonic for longevity.

Shane is quick to point out that not all mushrooms are safe to harvest. Two that can be found in abundance around Becket are turkey tail and its look-alike, ochre tail, both used in cancer treatment. But he cautions: "If you're going to forage, make sure you go with someone who really knows what they're doing." Many of the most dangerous mushrooms look deceptively ordinary – destroying angels resemble white button mushrooms, and death caps look like portobellos. Both are deadly.

With Made in the Shade, Shane Johnson brings together his love of craftsmanship, innate curiosity and respect for nature. His mushrooms are not only a delicious addition to the local food scene but are also a reminder of what patience, experimentation, and a little shade can yield.

To learn more about Made in the Shade, or to purchase locally grown mushrooms, contact Shane at ShaneJohnson@yahoo.com.

Children's Holiday Party, continued from page 1

This event is made possible through the generous support of the Towns of Becket and Washington, the Becket-Washington School PTO, and community sponsors and donors. Tax-deductible contributions may be made through the Becket Washington School PTO, a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit. All funds directly support gifts, meals, and activities for local children.

To donate or volunteer: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/becket-washington-childrens-holiday-celebration>

Have questions or want to volunteer? Email hello@bwspto.com.

First Congregational Church of Becket
Holiday Pie Sale & Craft Sale

Saturday, November 15

9am-3pm

at the Congregational Church Guild Hall,
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*Proceeds to benefit the
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Crafts from local artisans.

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All you can eat!
Please come & bring your friends!

Becket Arts Center - Thankful for the Arts & You this November

Our cornucopia is full this November, starting with our Holiday Arts & Crafts Marketplace on November 1. Then, there is no shortage of things to see, do, and participate in – community sing-alongs with Paula Langton continue on Tuesdays, Ken Cheeseman teaches the Fundamentals of Acting on Wednesdays (six-course series), and Maker Mondays and Drum with Rick Shrum happen on the 2nd and 4th Mondays. Plus, we have a photo exhibit opening on November 6, Normi Noel brings the true story of an Army nurse's time in the Vietnam war to life on November 9, and all can share their talents on November 14 at our Talent No Talent Show.

Yoga continues on Thursdays and Sean McCusker hosts Live Painting Demos on Sundays. Tina Sweet offers a felting workshop and we host a cabaret evening with Lara Tupper and Ben Kohn on November 15. All this and more at becketartscenter.org/events.

**BECKET
ARTS
CENTER**

Yo-Yo Ma SIMULCAST, Medicare Seminar, and Support the Becket Athenaeum while Holiday Shopping

November offers several opportunities to come together at the Athenaeum as well as a way to support us while bidding in our silent auction (keep an eye on our website for details). On 11/5 at 3pm, we welcome Becket local and SHINE representative, Steve Rosenthal, for an info session on all things Medicare.

On Friday, 11/21, the Athenaeum and Becket Arts Center team up to offer a one-night-only livestream of *We the People: Yo-Yo Ma plays Bach's Cello Suites*. Program presenters state, "This is . . . an invitation to listen to each other and the world around us, to celebrate our community." We will start the evening with a local performance (TBD—looking at you Blood Type: Blue!) at the BAC at 6:30pm. Then come over to the Athenaeum at 7:30 for wine & dessert and to get settled for the livestream which starts at 8pm.



Becket Beat

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