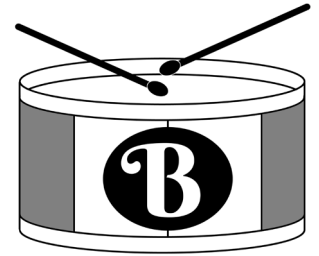


Becket Beat

Keeping neighbors connected Vol. 5, No. 6, July 2026



Jacob's Ladder Tavern: Come for the Popcorn, Stay for the Fun!

By Cathy Terwedow

Jacob's Ladder Tavern recently opened where Papa Bob's formerly stood. Under the leadership of new owners John Baldasaro and Don Ellershaw, Jacob's Ladder Tavern (JLT) will continue to be a true community hub for everyone to enjoy. Dubbed "The Last Roadhouse," the JLT logo harkens back to the time of country taverns and roadhouses, when people pulled off the road for food, drinks, music, and dancing. The new owners believe that's still what people want and they have big plans to build on the site's previous incarnations (The Riggs, Uncle Larry's, and Papa Bob's).



Jacob's Ladder Tavern, photo by Art Alpert

Before owning JLT, John Baldasaro served 30 years on the Chester Select Board. He was with the Chester Police Department even longer, which is where he met Don Ellershaw, who showed up one day in 1987 asking to see the police chief.

"Why do you want to see the chief?" asked Baldasaro. "Because I want a job," replied Ellershaw. "Well, you're looking at him," said John, and the rest is history, as they have been friends and co-workers ever since.



Tavern owners John Baldasaro and Don Ellershaw, photo by Art Alpert

According to John, "Perfecting the popcorn recipe was important. We made batch after batch, tweaking the recipe until it was just right. You literally can't get better popcorn outside of a movie theatre." Don agreed, "We have people who come in just for the popcorn!"

Knowing that their friends Bob and Tami Scott, the owners of Papa Bob's (who John credits with building up the restaurant side of the business), were looking to sell the pub, Don started pushing John to buy it.

It took years to convince him but, as John neared retirement and began thinking about things to keep himself busy, he finally agreed, believing that the conditions were too good to pass up and that buying Papa Bob's would help their friends. "I figured we had spent enough time on the other side of the bar that it was time for us to try running the place. Besides, as police officers we have plenty of experience dealing with people when they aren't on their best behavior!"

Once the papers were signed, the two owners began making changes, aiming to make JLT family-friendly and a place where different age groups could interact. "Darts, food, karaoke - that's the vibe we're going for," said John.

Key to that vibe are movie-theatre-style popcorn and a private label brew.

continued on page 2

Summer Activities for Kids and Families

Becket's "Summer Program" (fka Becket Day Camp) at the Becket Center Town Park runs from 10am to 3pm Mondays through Thursdays beginning Monday, July 6th and ending Thursday, August 13th for Becket and Washington kids aged six to 12. Activities include games, sports and crafts. Tuesdays will be spent at the North Becket Village Park with activities organized by the Becket Arts Center and Becket Athenaeum. Thursdays are beach day (weather permitting) at the Town Beach.

Anyone interested in registering their children for the Summer Program is asked to call the Town Secretary, Beverly Gilbert, at 623-8934. For questions, email Peggy at pegret23@gmail.com. Campers should plan on bringing a filling lunch, plenty of water, a sweatshirt and hat. On beach day, children must wear their swimsuit, bring a towel and sunscreen, and be dropped off at the beach. All drivers must have a current beach pass for access.

At the Town Beach, float and swim-area buoys are out and ready for swimmers. No lifeguards will be on duty. Beach passes for Becket and Washington residents can be purchased at their respective town halls and must be visible for entry. Non-motorized small boats may be launched at a designated special parking area. Motorized boats may be launched prior to 10am and after 7pm. Pets are not permitted and feeding wildlife is prohibited. Other rules for good beach behavior are posted.

Town Parks are open and are for everyone's enjoyment: The Becket Center Town Park has a ballfield, basketball half court, volleyball, tether ball, pickleball and a playground just for kids up to age 12. When not in use by the Summer Program, the pavilion is available for picnics and other get-togethers. North Becket Village Park has a small ballfield, soccer nets, fitness trail, a 1/7-mile track and picnic tables. Nearby on Prentice Place Street (across from the Athenaeum) is a tennis/pickleball court.

Jacob's Ladder Tavern, continued from page 1

The owners are making changes to the building as well, enhancing the kitchen with new LED lighting, adding solar panels, better insulation and more. The entryway will be brighter and more welcoming, and the entire building will be painted light gray with blue trim.

In addition to serving great food in a warm and welcoming atmosphere, John stated "We want to be an integral part of the community. We see ourselves getting involved in lots of ways, including fundraising for local organizations like the police, the school, and the Arts Center."

Many of JLT's 12 employees worked at Papa Bob's and all are local to the Hilltowns. "We are delighted that so many of them wanted to stay. They're experienced and know the local culture," said Don. "Our hope is that each of them will feel they have a stake in the business and will be proud of their role in making JLT successful."

One thing that's not changing is the outdoor patio. With its bandstand, separate bar, fire pit, ample lawn and picnic tables, it will continue to be a cherished site for music, parties and just plain hanging out.

John closed by saying, "It's all about making people feel comfortable. We want Jacob's Ladder Tavern to be welcoming, a place where friends and neighbors gather for good food, good music, and good times. Come on down. Be yourself, relax, and have a good time."

Jacob's Ladder Tavern is open seven days a week: 3pm - midnight Monday - Friday; noon - midnight Saturday and Sunday, and even later if people are still having fun!



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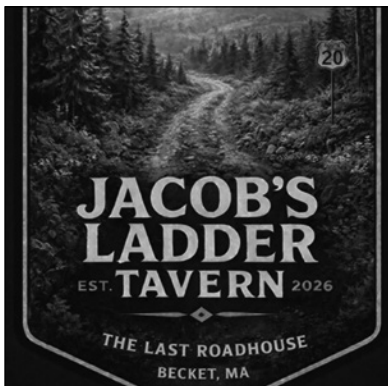
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Becket Stories Project: Oral Histories Capture Life in Becket Over the Years

By Marcia Parnell

Its origin dates back to the Covid pandemic, when as a way to safely socialize and engage with others in the community, the Becket Arts Center organized outdoor storytelling. Led by Paula Langton, an Arts Center trustee and theater artist, the sessions moved indoors when safety protocols allowed and have continued since.

Enthralled by so much of what they were hearing, the group agreed they should try to capture the stories because they represented a shared history of Becket that hadn't yet been documented or recorded anywhere. Putting the idea into action were Marianne Adams, a Becket resident and experienced teaching artist, and Arts Center Executive Director Jenn Beatty. With NPR's StoryCorps and the Moth Radio Hour in mind – both of which record everyday life stories of Americans – they designed “Becket Stories,” a program to interview and record the personal stories and histories of Becket residents. Adams, who'd also managed to pick up some grant-writing experience during the course of her career, submitted several grant applications on behalf of the Arts Center and two were awarded.



Becket Stories Project Manager Marianne Adams, photo by Marcia Parnell

To help participants zero in on potential story ideas, Adams crafted several prompts for potential interviewees to consider. For example, what makes Becket special for them – a memory or event from childhood, something in their present life, or perhaps a series of things that happened to them or at a familiar location. Each storyteller was allotted about 10 minutes and Adams and program editor Chris Gauthier, an experienced filmmaker and podcaster whose expertise was funded by the grants, recorded the sessions either at the Arts Center or the storyteller's home, whichever they preferred.

And to truly capture the spectrum of Becket life over the years, Adams developed a grid of potential demographics – for example young and old, full- and part-time homeowners or renters, students, those still working full or part-time and retirees. From that a list of potential interviewees was developed and each were contacted, which resulted in 16 interviews and 30 separate stories. In her Becket Story, lifelong resident Rita Furlong relates her life from her earliest memories to the present time. Asked what motivated her to participate, Furlong explained, “I love Becket. I was born here, educated here and raised my family here, and they've gone on to do great things. I wanted people to see that you can grow up in the country and have a wonderful life. My family came through Ellis Island. My grandfather was a quarrier and my father had only an 8th grade education and yet they were talented and accomplished so much.”

The first group of recordings is largely of older people. While it does include three high school students, Adams hopes to get more students and young families to participate in the next round. The work is paused over the busy summer, but Adams plans to pick it up again in the fall with an additional grant.

Listen to all the stories, check out some early postcards and learn about the area's first inhabitants at <https://www.becketartscenter.org/becketstories>. And importantly, if you have a story you'd like to share be sure to click on “Share Your Story” and submit your idea. You'll be contacted.



Community Calendar July 2026

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)

Saturday, July 11: *Super-Stories* Art Exhibit Opening Reception / 2-4pm / Free (show dates: Jul 9-Aug 2)

Saturday, July 11: Music Brings Communities Together: Bobby Sweet / 5-7pm / Free - donations welcome (new location: North Becket Park)

Friday, July 17, 24, 31: Creative Modern Dance with Louise / 10:30am-11:30pm / \$15 per class (discount for members)

Wednesday, July 15: Plein Air in Becket / 10am-1pm / \$10 (free for members)

Wednesday, July 15: W.I.P. Wednesday - sharing of works in progress / 7-8:30pm / Free

Saturday, July 18: Murals and Community by Ramiro Davaro-Comas of *Super-Stories* / 12:30-2:30pm / Free

Saturday, July 25: *The Chromatic Countryside* Art Exhibit Opening Reception / 2-4pm / Free (show dates: Jul 23-Aug 16)

Saturday, July 25: Music Brings Communities Together: The O-Tones / 5-7pm / Free - donations welcome (new location: North Becket Park)

Friday, July 31: Channeling Rachel Carson—a Nature Love Story for Our Time with Diane Edgecomb / 6:30-8:00pm / \$25 (discount for members)

Saturday, August 1: Sashiko Mending Workshop / 12-4pm / \$80 (discount for members)

Up-to-date info at: becketartscenter.org/events

BECKET ATHENAEUM

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

Wednesdays, July 8-29: Mahjong Meetups / 1-2:30pm / Free

Wednesdays: One-on-One Tech Support / 2:30-4:30pm / By appointment: bwlibrary.org/techhelp/ / Free

Saturdays: Storytime with Stay & Play / 10:30am-12pm / Free / Stay after Storytime for snacks and a chance for kids to play and caregivers to connect with each other!

2nd & 4th Saturdays: One-on-One Tech Support / 1-3pm / By appointment: bwlibrary.org/techhelp/ / Free

Tuesday, June 23 to Saturday, August 22: Summer Reading: Plant a Seed, Read / Free

Saturday, July 4 & Sunday, July 5: Book & Bake Sale Fundraiser & Library Closed / 10am-4pm / By donation (cash or check)

Tuesday, July 7: Book Club: *James* by Percival Everett / 1:30pm / Free

Monday, July 13: Cookbook Club: *The Complete Salad Cookbook* by America's Test Kitchen / 6-7:30pm / Free

Thursday, July 16: Rx Drug Resources Online w/ Jimmy Hall / 4pm / Free

Thursday, July 16: Game Night / 6-8pm / Free

Wednesday, July 22: Good Golly...Missed Trolley: Local Author Talk with Steve Cormier / 6-7pm / Free

Tuesday, July 28: Botanical Decoupage with Marsha Edell / 3:30-5pm / Free / Ages 9+, registration required

Tuesday, July 28: Movie Night for Adults / 6:30-9:30pm, movie starts at 7pm / Free

Tuesday, August 4: Book Club: *An Unfinished Love Story* by Doris Kearns Goodwin / 1:30pm / Free

SAVE THE DATE - SAT. AUG. 15

Becket Volunteer Fire Department's Centennial Celebration

Becket Beer Garden

5:30-11pm / \$5/person (under 12 free)

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Community Calendar July 2026

see page 5
<< for more



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

TOWN GOVERNMENT

Wednesday, July 1, 15: Select Board / 6pm
Wednesday, July 8: Planning Board / 5pm
Thursday, July 9: Board of Health / 5pm
Tuesday, July 14: Historical Commission / 3pm
Tuesday, July 14: Finance Committee / 3pm
Wednesday, July 15: Bylaw Review Comm / 3pm
Tuesday, July 21: Municipal Buildings Advisory Committee / 9am
Tuesday, July 21: Energy Committee / 5pm
Tuesday, July 28: Conservation Commission / 6pm

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

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Mondays: Osteo Yoga for Seniors /
Washington Town Hall / 11am / Free
Tuesdays: Yoga for Seniors w/ Rima Sala /
Washington Town Hall / 9am / Free
Tuesdays: Chair Yoga / Becket Town Hall / 10:30am /
Free
Tuesdays & Thursdays: Becket Senior Group /
Becket Town Hall / 11am-2pm / Lunch and Bingo /
Lunch \$3
Wednesdays: Yoga / Becket Town Hall / 9am / \$3
Thursdays: Chair Yoga / Becket Town Hall / 10:45am /
Free
Fridays: Senior Fitness Class / Becket Town Hall
Community Room / 9-10am / Free
Saturdays, July 4, 18: Food Pantry /
Becket Federated Church / 9-11am

Live and local music events:

www.route8pub.com

www.thedreamawaylodge.com/events

www.facebook.com/PapaBobsentertainmenthall

**Washington Town Park's Free Music in the Park
returns on Sundays in August, 4-6pm - check the
online community calendar for details.**



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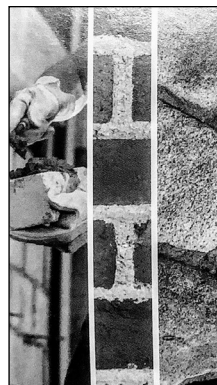
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Asian Jumping Worms: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

By Susan Neul

Many Becket gardeners are starting to discover the dreaded Asian Jumping Worm in their flower gardens and planters, but the reality is that these worms have been around for a quite a while. Before the recent publicity, gardeners probably thought they were seeing the common, and very beneficial earthworm.

The two worms do indeed look similar at first glance but one does far more dancing when disturbed than the other. The common earthworm does a languid waltz while the jumping worm channels John Travolta. The earthworm is bigger and its lighter-colored collar (clitellum) is raised while the jumping worm's collar is flush with its body. But the easiest way to decipher which is which is just to look at their movements. The jumping worm does indeed jump all over the place when exposed to light.



Image provided by Susan Neul

So why are these jumping worms considered to be troublemakers?

Aren't worm casings full of nutrients? The problem is that these worms are voracious eaters of the rich organic material on forest floors and unlike the earthworm who burrows and deposits its casings into the soil, the jumpers leave theirs on the surface where roots can't reach the nutrients. Forests with huge invasions no longer have understory plants as a result.

What are the implications for the home gardener? Having worms in a planter or bed will not affect the beauty of your carefully chosen flowers over the summer. The issue is that as the gardener cleans the bed in the fall and throws the dead plants onto the compost pile, the worms and their eggs (aka cocoons) migrate to the forest floors. Worms and eggs can also move from garden to garden as enthusiastic gardener friends and neighbors divide and share their plants. Adult worms cannot survive the cold but their eggs have no problem. And the eggs, which start hatching as soon as the soil hits 60°, can also survive for several years before they hatch.

If you don't already have jumping worms in your beds, then keep it that way by inspecting the soil of all purchased plants before planting. That being said, it can be hard to see the cocoons. The only way to be sure no eggs have hitched a ride is to rinse all the soil off the roots of purchased plants before planting. Alternatively, a gardener can sift through beds and planters and pick out all the worms before they start laying eggs in August, but few gardeners will want to do this. The best thing a gardener can do is to keep from spreading the worms. Throw dead plants and used soil into an enclosed compost bin and only use that compost after sterilization.

For more information: <https://www.umass.edu/agriculture-food-environment/landscape/fact-sheets/invasive-jumping-worm-frequently-asked-questions>



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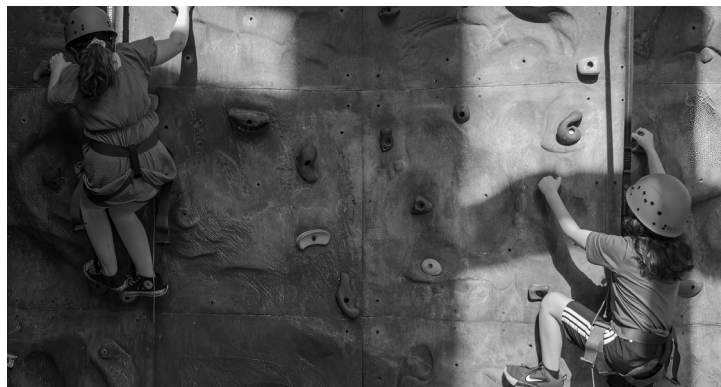
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Becket Washington School End-of-Year Picnic at Chimney Corners YMCA

Photos by Art Alpert



Becket Arts Center's Music Brings Communities Together

Every other Saturday, 5-7pm in the North Becket park through August: July 11 & 25; August 8 & 22

For the full schedule, visit: www.becketartscenter.org/music



Photo by Art Alpert



Wanda Houston Band, Photo by Art Alpert



Wanda Houston Band, Photo by Art Alpert



Photo by Aaron Beatty

The Becket Beat is Now in its Fifth Year!

We can hardly believe it! Since our inception in May 2022, we have published 47 issues, mentored ten student interns, welcomed new businesses to Becket, and tried our best to keep Becket residents and visitors informed and connected. We are so grateful for your support!

Please keep the Becket Beat going strong by donating to our 2026 Annual Fund.

Send a check to the Becket Beat (PO Box 762, Becket, MA 01223) or donate online. We can't do it without you!



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Remember to Purchase Your Transfer Station Permit(s)

Current permits expired June 30. You can purchase them
on-line or at Town Hall Mon.- Fri. 8:30am-4:30pm.

www.townofbecket.org/transfer-station/pages/transfer-station-vehicle-permits

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BECKET WASHINGTON COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP (BWCP) NEWS

Becket Arts Center Brings Exhibits, Music and Movement to July

The Becket Arts Center's July calendar puts community music front and center with its Music Brings Communities Together series at North Becket Park. On Saturday, July 11, Bobby Sweet brings an evening of country- and folk-inflected storytelling. On Saturday, July 25, The O-Tones Power Trio follows with swing, blues, soul and Motown favorites for all ages. Both concerts run from 5-7 pm., are free and open to the public, and guests are encouraged to bring lawn chairs, blankets, picnics and beverages; donations support Becket Arts Center programming.

July also includes gallery openings, classes and creative gatherings. Plus, exhibitions *Super-Stories*, featuring Grace Lang and Ramiro Davaro-Comas, opens with a reception July 11 from 2-4 pm., and *The Chromatic Countryside* opens July 25 from 2-4 pm. Other offerings include yoga, Plein Air in Becket, creative modern dance and other programs, making the month a lively mix of music, art and hands-on participation. Details and registration are available on the Becket Arts Center events calendar.

**BECKET
ARTS
CENTER**

Summer Reading, Semiquincentennial Crafts, Mahjong, and more at the Athenaeum

The Athenaeum kicks off the month of July with the first of our two Book & Bake Sale Fundraisers on July 4 & 5, 10am-4pm. By purchasing books, audiobooks, DVDs, baked goods, and more, you are helping the library continue to do what we do and we deeply appreciate it! July also marks the 250th anniversary of our nation's independence, which has inspired some colonial era crafts and book lists available throughout the summer that invite participants of all ages to think about our nation's history. Drop in during any open hours to make a whirligig toy, a hornbook, or to try your hand at needlework. In response to patron requests, we have a series of Mahjong Meetups with lessons for beginners and an option for experienced players on Wednesday afternoons in July starting on 7/8 from 1-2:30. And lastly, don't forget to come sign up for summer reading- we're tracking participation with a fun BINGO board and though it's geared towards kids, all ages are invited to sign up.



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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; Jacob's Ladder Tavern; Route 8 Pub; Sherwood Shoppe; Transfer Station