“Distinctive Living,” Becketwood’s original tag line, captured the essence of the grand and brave cooperative housing model developed by the Founding Mothers and implemented by our first Members. These folks, and those who followed, were and are members of The Greatest Generation and The Silent Generation. They brought with them their generational values inspired by a shared national experience. Their optimism, work ethic, resilience, financial prudence and respect for tradition built the foundation on which Becketwood stands today.

In the last few years, a significant number of Baby Boomers have joined the generational mix. Boomers are known for rejecting and redefining traditional values, as well as for being self-assured and goal-centered. They frequently ask questions about why we do things the way we do, and they are comfortable offering suggestions to improve our practices. Like any living organism, Becketwood is both challenged and nourished by these new perspectives.

In the fall of 2014, “Becketwood — A Cooperative Community” replaced “Distinctive Living” as our tag line. In the legal sense, the word “community” describes our shared ownership of these magnificent grounds, this aging building and our responsibility to care for both. It is a concept of cooperative ownership that each Member accepts and to which each Member is asked to contribute.

Within this larger community, we have created and continue to create smaller communities — communities built on interests, friendships, communal tasks or satisfying committee work. Among these smaller communities within the Becketwood community are those that are working to bring about significant climate change measures. Others are paying attention to the challenges of diversity and equity or are working toward a more expansive celebration of spirituality. Nascent groups are busy incubating yet to be revealed possibilities. These communities within the Becketwood community will continue to educate us. Our challenge is to resist expectations that the total community shares each of our small community’s attitudes, interests, goals, norms or values as we move forward. We will evolve to meet these times; too quickly for some and too slowly for others, but recognizing that our pace is intrinsic to our governing structures.

Becketwood will be for all times influenced by those who live here and their sense of what is important. Some Generation Xers are now old enough to move to Becketwood. As we look forward to yet another set of generational values, our embodiment of a cooperative community will continue. We commit ourselves to preserving the best parts of Becketwood, but always with an eye to what the future will demand of us.

Pat Cummings, Silent Generation and Ann Lovrien, Baby Boom Generation
BECKETWOOD’S 35TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

October 1  Becketwood Members submitted original poems to “honor our past and embrace our future.” Selected poems are included in this Special Edition.

October 3  The Anniversary Celebrations began with an outdoor concert featuring the Southside Big Band. Our Waiting List friends and Longfellow neighbors were invited to join us as we tapped our toes to the music we grew up with.

October 15  Members received invitations in their mailboxes to contribute their thoughts for the “You Are Becketwood” storyboards to be displayed on the North bulletin board.

October 22  The Anniversary Art Exhibit opened in the East and West galleries and will be up until December 2. This eclectic exhibit features works in all genres from both Members and Staff that celebrate our 35th year.

November 1  On the 1K Neighborhood Celebration Walk, Members went on a scenic stroll through our neighborhood and along the Parkway.

November 3  This Special Edition of the TIMES is being distributed to Members’ mailboxes today.

November 5  On this Friday, the regular Cookie Cart will be enhanced with demonstrations on the patio of the cider press built by the Workshop — with free samples of this year’s Becketwood apple cider and free cookies!

November 6  A Variety Show at 7 pm will be held both in the Wellington Room for a limited number of Members and on Zoom. Featured performers will be Ann Lovrien as M.C. and storyteller, Joel Mortensen doing a “Becketwood Rap,” and Kathy Webster introducing the new Becketwood song and playing the autoharp. Other talented Becketwoodians will read their commemorative poems. The show will conclude with a farewell from Becky Wood before she returns to Episcopal Homes.

Three events originally planned by the Anniversary Planning Committee for the first week in November, have been postponed until COVID restrictions have been lifted. These events, to be held on three different days, will include a Celebration Dinner in the Wellington Room, a classical music program, and “Open Doors” in which Members volunteer to open their Units for visits from other Members.

Marriages may crumble and democracies stumble but life remains good In Becketwood

Life can’t harden in Marnie’s garden and I’m still alive in #155

Ingrid Stocking
ODE TO THE SIBYL OF CUMAE

O Serene Seer
Protector and prophet
You gaze into a future that only you can see
Garbed in renaissance finery, you hold
The mystery scroll and silent music
Your gifts freely given
You leave us with this message
Honor what has gone before
Embrace what is to come
We say goodbye with gratitude
We are ready.

- Patricia Cummings

FAREWELL TO BECKY WOOD

For many years, the prophetess of Cumae, the Cumaen Sibyl, gazed out over Becketwood from her place on the wall overlooking the Grand Staircase. On loan from Episcopal Homes, the portrait of the young woman has been a part of our cooperative life from the beginning. Because her identity was unknown until recently, she has been fondly referred to as Becky Wood. For the past 35 years she sat holding a music scroll and a book in an outdoor Renaissance setting — apt symbols for the attractive attributes of Becketwood life. Looking to the future, Becketwood’s 35th anniversary celebration includes commissioning a replacement of Becky Wood with a more contemporary work. The Art Committee’s commission of a new painting will depict a nature scene, a fitting tribute to Becketwood’s beautiful outdoor surroundings and the larger natural world. While the commissioning process takes place, the Cumaen Sibyl will be returned to Episcopal Homes and replaced temporarily with a striking painting of birches. We appreciate the enrichment Becky Wood, the Cumaen Sibyl, has brought to our lives and bid her a fond farewell.

Phyllis Kromer

Dawn Haiku
Joys at Becketwood:
What will they be this morning?
Too many to count.
Carol Masters
FOUNDING MOTHER
GLORIA DELANO

In 1982, Episcopal Homes of St. Paul bought 12-1/2 acres of land on the banks of the Mississippi River, where Sheltering Arms Orphanage stood, for $96,000. Before that reality, Gloria Delano had long been a devoted advocate for Episcopal Church Homes. Since her early 30s, Gloria spent countless hours in discussions on several Episcopal boards about levels of skilled care and independent retirement living for a growing, diverse population. Sheltering Arms was torn down in 1984. With courage, faith, and resolve, the Founding Mothers saw the first shovelful of dirt dug for a senior cooperative of approximately 200 units, where buyers would own a share in the total value of the entire establishment.

Around this time, Gloria Delano, her husband Jim, and their two sons moved from St. Paul to south Minneapolis. From that home, Gloria led many Founding Mother committee meetings about the cooperative. They canvassed homes in the neighborhood, explaining the concept of cooperative living and what the structure would look like. People were initially skeptical about what such a place would do to neighborhood property values. The Founding Mothers emphatically promised it would enhance the beautiful area. In March of 1986, among building materials and some unfinished units, Becketwood’s first occupants moved in. As the concept of cooperative living advanced, the neighborhood grew more receptive. Gloria and her development team held meetings in Becketwood Chapel and later in the neighborhood, as more people came to buy into cooperative housing.

In 1993 when Episcopal Church Homes celebrated their 100th Anniversary, Gloria Delano was awarded a pin honoring her over 30 years of service to the organization. By 1997, Gloria served as chair of Episcopal Health and Housing Services Ethics Committee, which in November 1998 adopted a Code of Ethics. Also in 1998, as chair of Episcopal Management, Inc., Gloria served as chair of the six-member Executive Director Search Committee that hired Marvin Plakut, President and CEO of Episcopal Homes, effective January 1, 1999.

During Becketwood’s early years, Gloria also sat on the Becketwood board, not as a voting member, but as a bridge between Episcopal Homes and Becketwood.

In 2003, Gloria and her husband Jim moved into Becketwood. Jim loved working in the Wood Shop, always trying to carve the perfect bird. Gloria and Jim loved traveling, reading, and playing golf as well as enjoying time with family and friends. Jim died in 2016. Gloria has continued living at Becketwood among friends.

From 2008-2014 she served on the Becketwood Board of Directors as secretary (twice), on Marketing and Finance committees, and as chair of the Member Activities Council. As Marvin Plakut says, “Gloria is a lady with class, decorum, and humility. She is open-minded, knows her values, lives by them, listens, and learns.”

Gloria, our Founding Mother, in Becketwood’s 35th year of cooperative living, we salute you as a noble lady who has worked tirelessly over 50 years helping design and plan for those in Becketwood and Episcopal Homes to continue living fulfilling, creative lives in the 21st century.

Stephanie Gordon
Pioneer Nancy Schultz

Nancy is one of two remaining Becketwood “pioneers.” You can hear the excitement in her voice when she talks about her life at Becketwood. Her husband Al “found” the cooperative. An avid fisherman, he’d thought they would retire up north, but Nancy demurred: “No way!” She was a city girl, all her life living in south Minneapolis.

Then Al showed her an architectural rendering of Becketwood — “It was so beautiful, like a castle, with turrets!” -- and told her where it was on the River Road and she got even more excited. Her four adult daughters loved the place, as do today her six grandchildren and twelve great-grands.

Nancy had been teaching jazz exercise classes at Keewaydin Park before the move, so continued her active style at Becketwood, beginning exercises here, promoting a dance line (the Wenches of Windsor—Times 30th Anniversary Edition), and chair exercises. She even made a video, used for many years in the Windsor Room. These days find her closer to home in her unit on sixth floor, but she is no less excited about the beauties of Becketwood, seen in her sweeping views of the grounds. Her youngest daughter spent the summer with her, and she keeps in touch with many family members (28 immediate family by last count), often via Zoom.

She wants Times readers to know that she continues to do her chair exercises--physical activity is important!

Carol Masters

Pioneer Vera Watson

In 1986, Vera Watson and her husband Chuck were among the first people to move into Becketwood. They had raised eight children and maintaining their large home while working full time had become more than they wanted to handle.

Vera has served on Becketwood’s Board of Directors, sometimes on, sometimes off, for a total of 15 years. The first three years were on food service and then 12 years on finance. She says that raising eight children gave her a lot of experience counting pennies.

She still keeps track of fiscal numbers at Becketwood, but not in an official position. Vera wants to be in the know about what is going on so she can make informed comments about current financial issues.

She is very grateful to be living at Becketwood. She loves going down to coffee hour and visiting with other Members. And her family is happy she is here. Vera has 17 grandchildren and 14 great grandchildren. Six of her eight children live in the area.

When Vera and Chuck were first considering moving to Becketwood, they weren’t able to look at any units because there was still construction going on — with gangplanks on the east side of the building. By chance, they ran into Margaret and Myron Meisenheimer out walking on the grounds. The couple took them into Becketwood and showed them their unit, which was #317.

Now in this 35th anniversary year for Becketwood, Vera’s son Mark and his Japanese wife Shirley will be closing on #317 in November. Welcome to Becketwood, Mark and Shirley.

Carol Mockovak
Barb Sundberg, Business Administrator Extraordinaire

Since 1985, the history of Becketwood has included the name of Barb Sundberg, the longest serving staff member. When the cooperative was in the early stages of design and construction, Barb began her job as an office assistant helping with marketing. Twelve years later she started doing the bookkeeping, a good fit complimenting her special interest in finance. That led to more responsibility for the business side of the cooperative; ultimately she was given the title of Business Administrator. Barb’s tenure has included Becketwood’s assumption of important loans, one that eventually completed the financing that originally helped establish Becketwood, and another for a major remodeling project that revamped the cooperative’s common areas in the early 2000s. Admired for her professional competence and friendliness, she continues to oversee day to day operations, including preparation of Members’ monthly billings. Kudos to Barb for her 36 years as Becketwood’s Business Administrator Extraordinaire.

Phyllis Kromer

A Becketwood Time Line

Predecessors

1805
Under a treaty negotiated by Zebulon Pike, Dakota leaders allowed the federal government to gain access to their historic lands. The treaty enabled the U.S. Army to build a fort at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers. Becketwood would later occupy these historic native lands.

1855
Real estate financier Richard Martin purchased property along the west bank of the Mississippi River that had been part of the Fort Snelling Military Reservation. The Fort Snelling land encompassed much of what would later become the City of Minneapolis.

1882
Sister Annette Relf, an Episcopal deaconess, established Sheltering Arms Orphanage in a downtown Minneapolis building. The orphanage was operated under the auspices of the Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota.

1890
Richard Martin died and bequeathed 130 acres of his river bank property to Sheltering Arms. The property was valued at between $130,000 and $200,000. Martin’s heirs disputed this bequest and sued to prevent the transfer of the Martin property to Sheltering Arms. The district court later rejected the suit.

Phyllis Kromer

Becketwood delights:
Laughter in the corridors,
Art in the stairwells.

Dee Schaefer

(Continued on page 8)
1902
Sheltering Arms sold 28 acres of its property to the City of Minneapolis for the construction of the roadway along the river bluffs. The roadway would later become the West River Parkway.

1910
A new facility for Sheltering Arms Orphanage was built on a 30 acre site included in the Martin bequest. The 2 1/2 story brick and stucco building was constructed at a cost of $60,000. During its first year, the orphanage housed 25 children. The orphanage closed in 1942, at a time when a growing foster care movement was reducing the need for custodial care for at-risk children.

1922
The historic chapel on the Sheltering Arms grounds was completed and remains in use in 2021. Becketwood is responsible for maintaining the chapel under the terms of an agreement with Sheltering Arms. Becketwood’s Spiritual Resources Committee oversees the operation of the chapel.

1923
Sheltering Arms sold its acreage north of 42nd Street to William Eustis. Eustis later donated this property to the Minneapolis School Board and the University of Minnesota. The School Board used its gift to build the Michael Dowling School for Crippled Children. The University land later became a residential development known as the Luella Anderson Addition.

1942
The Sheltering Arms orphanage was converted to a polio treatment and rehabilitation center.

1955
With the introduction of the Salk vaccine, the need for polio rehabilitation services declined. Sheltering Arms responded to these changing conditions by converting its facility to a day school and research center for young people with developmental disabilities.

1956
Sheltering Arms sold 13 acres of its property to the Breck School. Breck later sold its land and buildings to Minnehaha Academy which now occupies the site.

A new approach to senior housing

1980
The Episcopal Church Home (ECH) Board began work on a long-range plan for the organization. This process led to a decision by ECH to develop housing for older adults using a cooperative form of ownership.

1982
As the movement for mainstreaming children with special needs gained momentum, Sheltering Arms decided to close its day school and research center. The ECH Board began negotiations with the Sheltering Arms Board for the purchase of the historic orphanage property. In September, Sheltering Arms agreed to sell its property to ECH for $1 million.

ECH’s Development Committee selected the architectural firm of Hammel, Green and Abrahamson to design the new senior housing development. The all-women committee told its architects: “We do not want a brick box.”
The Development Committee adopted a logo for the senior development which evoked its wooded site and its Tudor-style architecture. The committee selected the name "Becketwood," with its reference to St. Thomas à Becket as a way of reflecting ECH's Anglican heritage.

1983
Mortgage financing for Becketwood, guaranteed by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development stipulated that 50 percent of the units must be sold before construction could begin. ECH agreed to cover all operating and financing costs for the new development until 234 units at Becketwood were sold.

1984
December 10, the newly formed Becketwood Cooperative broke ground for its new senior development.

1986
Construction was completed in October, six months after the first resident moved into the partially-completed building.

1988
Becketwood elected its own board of directors.

The cooperative’s board established a Capital Long Range Planning Committee. The committee was charged with developing a timetable for the life expectancy of building equipment and materials needing replacement.

1990
Becketwood retained its ties to the Episcopal Church Home, but became financially independent by paying off its credit guarantee from ECH.

**Becketwood in the 21st Century**

2001
By a vote of 103 to 87, Members approved a recommendation from the Becketwood Implementation Team (BRIT) for a major remodeling project financed through a $750,000 loan from Associated Bank. The project relocated the hair salon to its current location on the second floor and moved the library to the first floor space vacated by the salon. BRIT funds were also used to renovate an apartment and convert it to a new Craft Center. Members were assessed to cover the annual financing costs for the project.

2005
The woodland garden known as Fernwood Glen was dedicated. The Glen occupied a site at the northeast corner of the campus that had been used as a dumping ground for building debris. Volunteers built Fernwood’s ornamental bridge in the Becketwood workshop.

2006
Becketwood used its reserve fund to prepay the remaining balance of $45,000 on its BRIT remodeling loan from Associated Bank. Following the 2006 prepayment, Members make their assessment payments directly to Becketwood.

2009
A new Strategic Imperatives Committee was charged with developing strategies that could help guide Becketwood over the next five years. The committee proposed the following five strategies: maintaining strong financial management, preserving and improving Becketwood property, promoting a green environmental ethic, enhancing a strong cooperative culture, and encouraging Member participation in the broader community. These Strategic Imperatives were adopted in 2010 and renewed in 2016.

(Continued on page 10)
2010
A new Kawai grand piano was installed in the Wellington Room. The piano was funded through private contributions from Becketwood Members. Those funds are still being used to maintain the piano in 2021.

2013
Becketwood’s waiting list topped 200 for the first time.

2017
An anonymous Member donated a new bus to Becketwood.

2018
The Board established a six-member Think Tank. This advisory group was charged with considering and reporting on complex issues that would affect Becketwood’s long-term success. In 2020 the group completed its report, which focused on Becketwood’s need to address the challenge of climate change. The Board accepted the Think Tank report and incorporated the report in the Becketwood Policy Manual.

2020
In response to the Covid 19 pandemic, Becketwood suspended most indoor programs and activities. Zoom became a new form of digital communication for Members and staff.

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35th Year Limerick

We’re so glad we are here
During this thirty-fifth year
No need to roam
From our river bluff home
And friends nearby bring us lots of cheer

- Iric Nathanson
Becketwood Song - 1986

The stately trees sway overhead
in autumn hues of gold and red;
The English garden's fragrance fills the air.
The river's seen from paths above
as we peek down thru trees and shrub;
There're winding paths that beckon everywhere.

Refrain:
Becketwood, Becketwood;
No matter where I roam,
I'll always call you home.
Becketwood, Becketwood;
You are my Home Sweet Home.

From East and West we're gathered here,
in search of things we all hold dear,
Security and love without a doubt.
Our time of loneliness now ends,
as faces soon become old friends;
Yes, that's what Becketwood is all about.

Refrain

Words and Music by Carol Jean Craig

20th Anniversary Song

Yes! Becketwood

You might live in a palace, a yurt or a yacht,
A cabin, an RV, whatever you've got.
But if Adam and Eve had behaved as they should,
they could be our neighbors in fair Becketwood!

Refrain:
The garden of Eden address that was good,
but hard to compare, yes, hard to compare, Very hard to compare with our own Becketwood!

We live by the river, well shaded by trees, with flowers for color, they blow in the breeze.
We all work together to make the place run,
But there's plenty of time for Cooperative fun!

Refrain

Our neighbors are friendly, and caring and giving,
They make the fine difference in Becketwood living.
And so should you travel to Tucson or Rome,
It's a heartwarming thing to call Becketwood home.

Text: Marnie Ruch
Music: Paul Manz

Becketwood Song - 1986

The stately trees sway overhead
in autumn hues of gold and red;
The English garden's fragrance fills the air.
The river's seen from paths above
as we peek down thru trees and shrub;
There're winding paths that beckon everywhere.

Refrain:
Becketwood, Becketwood;
No matter where I roam,
I'll always call you home.
Becketwood, Becketwood;
You are my Home Sweet Home.

From East and West we're gathered here,
in search of things we all hold dear,
Security and love without a doubt.
Our time of loneliness now ends,
as faces soon become old friends;
Yes, that's what Becketwood is all about.

Refrain

Words and Music by Carol Jean Craig
30th Anniversary Song

Becketwood
To the tune of Camelot

A plan was set some 30 years ago, here;
A vision that was for the common good;
The living of that dream is what we know here
At Becketwood

Where weeds are not allowed among the flowers;
Where veggies all grow to the perfect size;
The turkeys, dogs, and cats and birds are loved here
At Becketwood

Becketwood -- Becketwood
I know it sounds a bit bizarre…
But at Becketwood -- Becketwood
That's how conditions are…

We all enrich the lives of one another,
There's lots of time for just playing having fun.
In short, there's simply not
A more congenial spot
For happy-ever-after-ing
Than here at Becketwood!

Music: Frederick Loewe
Text: Ruth Gaylord, Bob Flink

35th Anniversary Song

Becketwood 35th Anniversary Song,
November, 2021
(tune: “Shall We Gather By the River”)

Here we're gathered by the River, the beautiful, the beautiful river
Here's where Becketwood began thirty-five years ago.

Chorus: Yes, we’re gathered here together, to celebrate community
Together
Becketwood began here by the river, thirty-five years ago.

On the margin of the river, a group of gifted women had a vision
Let’s create a place where altogether, we can live the rest of our lives.

Chorus

Men and women all together, compromise and listen to each other
Work, eat, pray and sing together, creating harmony.

Chorus

The epidemic COVID and the Delta kept us isolated and masked up.
By the grace of God we survived it, we’re stronger altogether than alone!

Chorus

Honoring the past years of our co-op, and how our community has thrived
We move ahead to embrace the future of our beloved Becketwood!

Text: Ruth Gaylord
Through the Years

Once upon a time the Ojibwe roamed the land where the rivers meet.
They had no shelter from guns, broken treaties and deceit.
Later when children lost their parents or their parents couldn’t cope
Sheltering Arms was built and for years it provided hope.
Then when orphanages went out of style, it became a hospital, then a school.
Then came Becketwood and sheltering and caring remained the rule.
    A co-op for seniors — a rarity! It was #3 in the state.
    With its gorgeous trees, living on the river was clearly great.
    Only women on the planning board — they didn’t want a box.
    So the result is as far from one as a rabbit is from an ox.
The halls branch out, the numbering’s odd, so new residents get lost.
    Women often chaired the Board and they would not be bossed.
They watched their pennies and planned ahead. New roof? Carpet? Paint?
    No debt, no petty assessments and consequently, no complaint.
There were committees for everyone so volunteers were in demand.
It’s the way to get acquainted and get things done — you understand.
    Together we survived recession and are all aging in place.
    We’re battling Covid-19 and doing it with amazing grace.
    After 35 years the building is aging, but then, so are we.
What happens in the next 10 years will be interesting to see.

- Wayne Tellekson
Thirty-five

For a human it’s the start of middle age, the onset of a lingering decline; for a building it is pretty much the same though if the structure’s properly constructed the decline will be slow and may include occasional fits and spurts of growth. But Becketwood is a community and communities will often grow decrepit by the time they’re thirty-five. However some just keep on getting better as they roll into the future, adding new component-members as the old move on or fade away, strong, and growing stronger by the day.

- Arnie Johanson