



# MONTEREY NEWS

November 2020  
Est. 1970 Vol. L · Number 11



Pick up at: the library (in and outside), firehouse pavilion, & transfer station. Soon outside the town hall.



*The traditional Monterey summer softball season prevailed in 2020 thanks to resilient players practicing safe social distancing. This group photo from the final game of the season on October 11 was taken in remembrance of Don MacGillis, a Monterey softball player for many seasons. —Steve Graves*

—Photo by Steve Cowell

## Daylight Savings Time

"Falls Behind"

Sunday, November 1, at 2 a.m.

On the chilly, blustery, and gray afternoon on October 24, seventy-one Monterey citizens gathered to make decisions about matters that could not wait until the annual spring meeting.

Special Town Meeting page 2

It was democratic America at its best. The issues were important and the discussion, supervised fairly and firmly by Town Moderator Mark Makuc, was spirited and mutually respectful.

In My View-Don Coburn page 4

In my view, the select board in town is lost, dystopian, and feckless.

In My View-John Weingold page 5

Susan was offering her attitude that this is what she is doing for the community, and Kyp was urging others to take action.

Correction page 22

Just around midnight in mid-September there was a mighty explosion. Houses near the village shook. Shortly after that, there was another, equally loud explosion.

Nighttime Explosions page 12

We are very grateful for those who donated money or food to make the first two Pantry PickUps successful.

Pantry Pickup Success page 10

She can't be at the swap shop all the time watching items come and go. This is getting to be a real problem.

Transfer Station page 12

The Monterey Police Department would like to remind our residents of our mass notification system, Blackboard Connect.

Blackboard Connect page 11

What if we decide to dance to the music of our lives free of hatred?

Here's a Thought page 21

In the early 1930s there was another scare that the dam was liable to break .... In 1947 another scare on the lake took place..... The winter of 1968 left a heavy covering of snow on the hill.

Lake Garfield Dam page 14

The accompanying sensory symphony—air rushing past,... shifting patchwork of sun,... varied smellscape,... constant push or pull of gravity.

Why I Like to Ride My Bike page 26

Everyone felt comfortable with him, and though he was a busy and tireless worker in all areas of his life, he somehow never seemed to be in a rush.

Warren Thomson page 19

Chestnuts were sometimes called the "red-woods of the East."

Return of the Chestnuts? page 23

"A perfect floating gem." —H.D.Thoreau  
The Wood Duck page 20



Bruce Wilkens

## Special Town Meeting October 24, 2020

On the chilly, blustery, and gray afternoon on October 24, seventy-one Monterey citizens gathered to make decisions about matters that could not wait until the annual spring meeting. This special meeting took place in the firehouse pavilion following a last-minute decision by the select board to change the venue from the firehouse itself to the pavilion on the same property. This was in response to several citizens who expressed their discomfort with having an indoor meeting while Covid-19 is still a grave concern, especially to senior citizens who make up the majority of the population in Monterey. The pavilion provided an almost outdoor experience while still allowing everyone to be shielded from possible rain, as happened at the last annual town meeting. In addition to requiring everyone to wear masks and having the seats widely spaced apart, each seat had on it a small bag containing a pair of gloves and a microphone cover, in case people wanted to speak. As individuals checked in and were given their voting cards, temperatures were scanned as an extra precaution. Members of the gathering were vigilant, asking those who removed their masks to speak or who had them below their noses, to keep their masks on or pull them up so their faces were fully covered.

### Articles 1 and 2: Late Bills

The warrant was a short one, with only five articles, but it still took an hour and a half to get through it. Articles 1 and 2 were quickly passed without any discussion. The first one allowed for a transfer of \$3,305 from free cash to pay for FY19 bills that were submitted after the deadline. The second one allowed a transfer of \$550 from free cash to pay for insurance costs associated with borrowing for the library.

### Article 3: Trucks

Article 3 was not as easily settled and required quite a bit of discussion. It concerned

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the purchase of two new trucks for the highway department, and as originally written, asked for an appropriation of \$230,000 from the general stabilization fund and permission to borrow an additional \$230,000 for this purpose. It also included a provision to sell the current 2005 truck. Select board member Steve Weisz started off the discussion by asking to modify the article to omit the borrowing of \$230,000 and change it to appropriating this same amount from free cash. Select board member Don Coburn then took the floor to explain that Monterey is in excellent financial shape, with more than an adequate amount of money available in both the stabilization fund and in free cash. This would allow the town to purchase the trucks without having to borrow money, while still leaving more than enough funds available for possible emergencies. Director of operations, Shawn Tryon, then explained the rationale behind the request, saying that the current Oshkosh truck is aging out and is too big to fit on some of our narrower roads, so it spends much of the year in the garage. The replacement of this truck with two smaller ones would be more efficient and would enable some of the smaller side roads to be plowed much sooner.

Rebecca Wolin, from the finance committee, spoke next saying that in these uncertain times, the funds from free cash and the stabilization fund should not be spent willy-nilly. She indicated that the finance committee was not supporting this article and that it would be much cheaper to just pay for the approximately \$11,000 a year in repairs for the current truck. She also stated that the citizens of the town had

been overtaxed and that “by taking money from free cash, you are taking money from everyone in this room.” Wolin suggested that the funds should not be spent but rather saved for possible upcoming emergencies, such as a depletion of state funding due to Covid-19. However, she said that the finance committee would support the purchase of one new truck that would be paid for by appropriating \$230,000 from the stabilization account. This would enable the town to have four working trucks which the committee felt should be sufficient.

Steve Weisz spoke again saying, “This is all about efficiency.” He said that the select board had asked Tryon to make the highway department as efficient as possible, as it is the second biggest expense, after the school budget. He said that the amount of money in free cash is not due to over-taxation but to the highway department being more efficient. He also said that the purchase of the two trucks at one time made sense as the parts vary slightly from year to year but would be interchangeable if the same models were purchased together. Hillel Maximon raised his hand next, and declared, “I don’t like taxes,” a statement that no doubt many in the audience could agree with. However, he continued by saying that the people who do the work should be trusted to make the decisions about how they do their job. Don Coburn echoed this sentiment by saying that Tryon’s judgement on the timing of the purchase should be trusted, not that of the finance committee.

Michele Miller, a new member of the finance committee, countered by saying that in exercising their responsibilities as

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members of that committee they may be accused of not being straightforward or of having an ax to grind. She concluded by saying, “I urge all of us to work together to do what we think is right.” George Cain weighed in, suggesting that the purchase of the two trucks be staggered so that they both don’t need to be replaced at the same time. Tryon made a convincing argument by saying, “These two trucks will save you money.” It was also pointed out that these trucks, if ordered now, would be purchased through a state contract which saves \$35,000 per truck. (The contract ends on October 31.) After a few more comments, Steve Snyder made a motion to call the question. This required a two-thirds vote and with a show of cards, the motion to call the question passed with a vote of 71 to 4.

A vote was then taken on Article 3, which also needed a two-thirds majority, and it passed with 64 in favor and 5 against. (Note: there is a discrepancy between the number of people who received cards to vote—71—and the total number of people who voted to call the question—75. This mystery is still being investigated by the Town Clerk.)

#### Article 4: Rescue Boat

Discussion about Article 4 included a pleasant surprise. Steve Weisz explained that due to a successful grant application by Melissa Noe and Shawn Tryon, there was no need to transfer the sum of \$15,000 from free cash for the purchase of a rescue boat. He asked to have this phrase omitted from the article and the participants voted only to sell the 1999 Riverboat and trailer.

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#### Article 5: Recall By-law

Article 5, the final one on the warrant, proved to be more contentious. The very long and detailed article asked the citizens to approve a process for recalling and removing from office an elective town official for any reason. Don Coburn gave his reasoning for the article, saying that the town should rarely use this provision and only for unusual situations. He said, “Without it, it leaves people powerless.” He gave the example of being on the planning board and having a member who never showed up for meetings but who refused to resign. A man who had just moved here and was voting in Monterey for the first time, whose name was not stated, expressed concern that his vote would be overturned and said it was not the way to operate a government. Steve Weisz said, “This article makes my skin crawl. I hope we never have to use it.” However, he said that if someone is elected to fill a position but then doesn’t do the job, as things stand, the position can’t be filled. He also noted that many towns have similar provisions in their by-laws.

Justin Makuc brought up some interesting points, asking why a person who is recalled cannot hold another position in town for two years, especially since in a small town like Monterey, many people hold multiple positions. He also suggested that such an important decision should require a supermajority rather than simple majority. Joe Lyman, another first time voter in Monterey, explained that this provision can be misused and gave the example of someone being recalled in the eastern part of the state for posting something offensive on social media. He suggested that the town not be hasty and identified the “elephant in the room,” which was the current, well-known discord on the select board, specifically with regard to John Weingold. Lyman ended his comments with, “Something is rotten in Denmark.” It should be noted that Mr. Weingold had not signed the warrant and was conspicuously absent from the town meeting.

Mayra Rodrigues also spoke to the conflict on the select board and said that they were asking the voters for a re-do. She suggested that maybe they need a mediator. Steve Moore expressed surprise that a recall provision was not already in

place, stating, “Everybody has a boss and accountability for your job is important.” He agreed that while it should be rarely used, the provision is necessary to keep people doing the job they agreed to do. Don Coburn insisted that the recall article was not directed at Mr. Weingold, and that Coburn himself had instigated the idea of a recall in his first year in office. He then proceeded to say that it would be helpful if Mr. Weingold would read the select board meeting minutes and make amendments as needed, and if he would review and sign the weekly warrants, which he has not done to date.

Mari Enoch brought the whole issue to a head by saying, “This is not the day to vote on this,” concerned that the article was poorly written and that she questioned about having a town office holder recalled “for any reason,” as stated in section 1 of Article 5. She made a motion to table the article which was passed by a vote of 45 to 10.

Then a motion to adjourn was made and the meeting came to an end. Thus, the issue of a possible recall measure was put on hold for the foreseeable future, giving the select board members more time to work out their differences and come up with a recall article that is more palatable to the citizens of Monterey.

—Laurie Shaw

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## In My View Special Town Meeting

I want to offer my sincere thanks to everyone who participated in the recent special town meeting. It was democratic America at its best. The issues were important and the discussion, supervised fairly and firmly by Town Moderator Mark Makuc, was spirited and mutually respectful.



The two main issues were the purchase and financing of trucks for the highway department and the proposed recall election by-law. Accepting the advice of the majority of the select board and Shawn Tryon, highway department director, the town meeting overwhelmingly approved the trucks purchase from a combination of the stabilization fund and free cash.

The proposed by-law was vigorously debated with fair points made on both sides. It is a complex matter, and I believe the decision to table it for now was wise. However, I also firmly believe that it should be considered again at the annual town meeting. In the meantime, further public discussion on the issues raised during this initial debate would be helpful. With one exception, I plan to help start that discussion by a subsequent "In My View" column.

The exception concerns the suggestion made at the meeting that the by-law was solely directed at John Weingold, a member of the select board. Actually

I started pressing for a recall election by-law shortly after I was elected to the select board back in 2018. But I have to admit that John's performance on the select board so far might well be seen as demonstrating a need for this democratic device in Monterey.

The problem is that John is unwilling to perform his job in important respects.

One of the most egregious examples is his refusal to review and sign the bi-weekly warrants for payment of the town's bills and payroll. The warrants include the bills submitted and the supporting data for payroll. By statute, the select board is obliged to sign those warrants, and the residents of Monterey have a right to know that their accuracy has been confirmed by each member of the select board. John has neither reviewed nor signed a single warrant since he joined the board four months ago.

The accurate preparation of the select board minutes is important so that the public is kept informed of governmental operations. Although he keeps suggesting that the minutes are inaccurate, John has refused, with the exception of his first meeting, to offer any amendments. And he has also refused to vote to approve them. Instead, he abstains. The public has a right to know if minutes are inaccurate, and he has a duty to move to correct them if they contain any error.

John also refuses to enter town hall to sign contracts and correspondence.

And, if you will, consider this. John refused to sign the warrant calling voters to the special town meeting. His reasons

for not signing the warrant were that he opposed buying both trucks and disagreed with the recall election by-law. Of course, he is entitled to his views on the merits of those issues, but he was not entitled to refuse to sign the warrant. The warrant was needed to pay some bills, including one relating to the library loan, and it was needed to place the other issues before the town meeting. Had he prevailed on the question of whether the warrant should have been issued, the town would have failed to pay honest bills, failed to pay money needed to process the library loan, and failed to obtain two trucks necessary for our safety on our roads. The town meeting was entitled to hear from him on the issues posed. Nonetheless, he chose to stay away from the town meeting. All of this is simply not responsible behavior.

Steve Weisz and I have repeatedly tried to persuade John to engage fully in the tasks assigned to the select board. So far, we have not succeeded.

I urge citizens to use their constitutional right of petition to try and persuade John to do the job they're paying him over \$4,000 a year to perform.

— Don Coburn  
Chair, Select Board



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## In My View

In my view, the select board (SB) in town is lost, dystopian, and feckless. It has abandoned its direction and purpose, lost its legitimacy, and ignores its responsibility to properly supervise its one employee. Instead of following the will of the voters or taxpayers, or following state laws and town bylaws, and being the competent executive authority in town, they have abdicated all their power and authority to their employee. The SB is merely a puppet of the puppet master of the one person, actually attempting to be the new Town Administrator (TA). The SB allowed the employee to work well outside her job description, education, skill set, or authority for the last six years (as was mentioned in all three reports). This is all condoned by the SB. The SB has become the guardian angels and protectors of their employee at the cost of hiring an outside qualified competent TA. The lone TA that was hired quit his job in three months to protect his career against the lawless conduct of the SB. He went as far as to file a complaint with the Inspector General's Office over the procurement issues. Is it any wonder the fear of exposure of the truth of a professional TA and oversight plays into the SB's avoidance of hiring a TA? Does anyone not see the motivations behind a SB that will not adopt a Code of Ethics?



new trucks and a boat were so important to be purchased during a pandemic and economic downturn, why weren't they included on the annual town warrant? Did you know both members of the SB were against buying any trucks in March? The prior board finally decided unanimously to place the issue on the annual warrant (3/25/20 SB minutes). Oops again. Why make the voters attend a second town meeting in October, in the middle of a pandemic and risk their health because the select board is incompetent or deceptive or both? The SB knows they are spending too much money and hide big ticket items from the annual meetings. The SB was in such a hurry to get this meeting set; they failed to give fourteen-day notice of the meeting, the warrant was not dated when it was posted, it was posted at two locations that are closed, two locations closed indoors, and were mailed on October 15. The location was changed twice with very little notice. There was at least one typo on the warrant with the wrong fiscal year and the recall bylaw cites a statute MGL c. 43B which deals with towns changing their charters—Monterey does not have a charter. Oops. Haste makes waste. The SB directed by its employee does whatever they want. Good thing the \$32K firehouse hand railing was installed several days before the special meeting. No hand railing would have been awkward to explain to the voters. Maybe that new hand railing was why the special meeting was originally scheduled at the firehouse?

The yearly budgets in Monterey are bloated with high expense estimates. They know it will cost much less. Unspent money becomes "free cash." Free cash is a misnomer. Nothing is free. Free cash is unspent taxpayer dollars from the previous year's line-item price gouging. Free cash indicates the previous year's budget was bloated. Cherry sheet money that comes from the state is more state taxpayer dollars being spread to each town. We are spending \$1,500.00 per resident to run our town. We are paying \$1.6 million for the school and we have how many students? While property tax rates are low, but were lower before all this spending started, the property evaluations are way above surrounding towns.

Speaking of personal vendettas. Where was this recall bylaw when all the rancor was happening two years ago in the select board? Where was Steve Weisz and Kenn Basler's outrage and backbones then? When the citizens petitioned Don to resign, he didn't? The SB did nothing! Don's recall bylaw is an attack on the June 2020 election. The entire SB and their employee were not happy having someone new pushing to hire a TA. When the new guy presented to the SB a TA job description and job listing (both documents vetted, edited, and approved by the Collins Center) for the hiring of a TA, the SB nearly soiled themselves and went into full stall mode. Much to the delight of their employee. The SB and their employee did not like someone getting elected that supports hiring a TA. If merely >

A fool's errand. Recently the chairman has proposed changing state "at will" employment law here in sleepy Monterey. Suddenly, there is a great need to protect the SB employee from the state law that basically says an employer can terminate an employee at will. One last present from a departing SB member for the employee. While everyone else in town must be appointed yearly, the SB employee gave herself and enjoys an "unexpired" appointment term along with the entire fire department. Everyone else needs yearly appointments.

Has anyone else noticed that the SB calls these special town meetings months after the annual town meetings? If two new

An advertisement for Berkshire Greenscapes. The logo features the word "Berkshire" in a serif font with a leaf graphic above the 'i', and "Greenscapes" in a larger, stylized font with a leaf graphic above the 'e'. To the right is the NOFA Organic Land Care Accredited Professional logo, which includes the text "ORGANIC LAND CARE", "NOFA", "organiclandcare.net", and "ACCREDITED PROFESSIONAL". Below the logo, the text reads "Fine Garden Care | (413) 207-1281" and "Embracing the Native Beauty of the Berkshires". At the bottom, the website "WWW.BERKSHIREGREENSCAPES.COM" is displayed in all caps.

In My View, *cont. from page 5*  
 twenty-five people or 3.5% of the 756\* voters can take out a duly elected select board member or any official\*\*, who let's say got two hundred votes, we have become a totalitarian town? So if the fire department gets together and decides to take out a select board member or finance committee because they don't want to pay taxpayers dollars to install \$32K hand railings at a private fire company, or pay for three trucks in a year, or pay firefighters to be on call, or use Covid-19 money to pay firefighters, can that official make an unpressured decision in the best interest of the town? The bylaw also is an attack on every official that does not follow the highway and fire department's spending programs. Firefighters are being appointed in Monterey that live in other towns. It is hard to remember the last fire in town, but could it have anything to do with the generous \$25 an hour, \$50 minimum they will get?

The SB is so weak and spineless that they cannot and will not face reality. They will install their own employee into the TA position because they can't confront being exposed as a lap dog. This move will be done against the will of the voters, the will of other town employees, against the expert advice and findings over six years of three different committees and reports on the issue. The chairman said he ran on hiring a TA. Well what changed? Could it be that spending two years in the papers, screaming, not speaking for three months, and fighting with the SB employee and making our town government and himself the laughing stock of the state, has changed his convictions? Maybe it was after getting slapped with a criminal complaint, the chairman has finally got with the program, and finally realizes who really is in charge in Monterey?

Speaking of complaints, several human resource (HR) complaints have recently surfaced. Normally a TA would handle the issues. The Collins report suggested the town hire a HR consultant, which was never done. Actually none of the Collins Center report recommendations have been done. We have no TA. Mark Weber is a consultant and not the interim TA. So the HR complaints fall on the SB. Only problem is the HR complaints involve a SB member. Mr. Weber was hired at \$75 an hour to do exactly what the town paid the Collins Center \$6,000 to do. Mr. Weber was hired to tell the SB what they want to hear. They need cover so they say we are hiring our employee to be the TA. Problem solved. Next.

For years select board member Steve Weisz has always been his employee's guardian angel. Spending many days at town hall may lead someone losing any sense of proper supervision? Steve was the only vote not to release the Collins Center report to the public. Why? The third report that recommended the town hire an outside professional TA. Does anyone wonder why he didn't want to release the report? Steve also was on the 2014 Citizens Restructuring Committee, who had one member vote against the TA recommendation. One of Steve's election wins was rumored to be celebrated and the swearing in to have occurred at a local bar, with the SB employee and the then town clerk in attendance.

Powers: When the finance committee and a select board member can not individually communicate directly with the town accountant about financial matters, per the foolish "permission" policy adopted by the prior SB, maybe it is time to find a new accountant (\$24,000) and SB?

When the SB employee can communicate and get legal advice on behalf of the SB, and no one else in town can contact the town counsel without "permission," it seems time to find a more appropriate role for all players. By the way, the 2014 Citizens group demanded this practice should stop.

When the SB encourages their employee to seek grants, why is the town paying two grant writers? See the facade here is that the SB can then say, "see our employee is already a TA, we don't need to hire an outside TA." The path is being cleared by the weak and shameless SB.

When the town clerk, who is in charge of elections, can't change the election date on the town's website because the SB employee has the sole access to the site, we have a problem.

In the end nothing changes because people can't see the problem, don't realize they are the problem, and don't want to change their ways. They are not held accountable to the voters, only their egos and the puppet master wants get consideration. The SB does not even want to increase its size to five members for greater input on new ideas. They need to cling to power to make themselves feel important, in a world where they have no power, and becoming a legend in their own minds.

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A vast majority of people in Monterey don't know what is really going on inside town hall. Honestly I didn't know. If I had known the extent of the core issues, I would have never volunteered to run. Given the bucolic lifestyle here, who wants to sit through a SB meeting where your voice is shut off and disregarded? There is not much of importance that gets planned, gets discussed, or gets done. Unless it is spending of taxpayers dollars, then it gets done in very short order. Getting fiber, establishing financial policies, holding hearings on how someone stole \$60,000 from the town, following bylaws, updating bylaws, holding all department meetings, HR complaints, Code of Ethics, SB procedures, or hiring a TA, not so much. Sad but true.

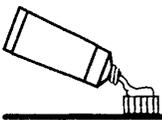
— John Weingold  
Select Board Member

*Editor's Notes: \* The current number of registered voters in Monterey, according to the town clerk on October 24, is 712. \*\*The proposed recall by-law called for signatures of twenty-five registered voters to initiate a recall petition, which would need to be signed by 10% of all registered voters for the select board to schedule a recall election sixty to ninety days from the receipt of the recall petition for a majority-vote election decision. The full text of the warrant is available on the town website.*

*Editor's Note: In My View is an opportunity for select board members to communicate their thoughts about town affairs—reflections, opinions, and updates on topics of their choice. The views expressed are solely those of the writer, and are not meant to reflect the views of the full select board.*

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## Housing Rehabilitation Project Update

The Resource, Inc. (TRI) has been working for the Town of Monterey to manage their fiscal year 2019 housing rehabilitation program funded with a grant award of Community Development Block Grant Funds. These funds are benefiting low- to moderate-income homeowners in the towns of Monterey, Egremont, and Sandisfield.

Monterey residents have and are benefiting significantly from the various repairs that our program offers, and there is lots of construction going on throughout town, despite the pandemic. We have utilized all our funds for FY19 and the best news is that many residents have had critical repairs to their home with the assistance of TRI. Over the past two years, approximately \$880,000 in funding has aided these homeowners and made it possible for them to stay in their homes.

TRI has successfully completed, or will soon complete the following number of projects:

- FY17: Eight projects
  - FY18: Three projects
  - FY19: Eleven projects—eight are still under construction but will be completed by December 31, 2020.
- (The fiscal years do not match the municipal calendar.)
- Total: Twenty-two projects

By December 31, 2020 the eleven projects for Monterey residents this year alone will have utilized approximately \$440,000 in funds for FY19.

Each income-eligible unit qualified for up to \$40,000 of moderate rehabilitation expenses. Moderate rehabilitation includes, but is not limited to: roofing, siding, heating system, hot water heater replacement, electrical and plumbing issues, doors, windows, and ingress and egress issues. While Monterey has not been included in the FY20 grant, we will hopefully be included in FY21.

— Dawn Odell Lemon  
The Resource Inc.

*Below: Two homes (before and after) at Gould Farm that have recently benefited from the housing rehabilitation project.*

— Photos by John Saari



Maureen Banner

*A turkey family at Nancy Kleban's.*

## Letters Special Town Meeting

It was with a degree of positive anticipation that I attended one of my first town meetings as a voting member of the community.

Surely, voting in a town the size of Monterey would at least statistically increase the numerical weight of my vote (compared to my previous voting district of Brooklyn).

Sadly, after reading the town warrant, my vote could possibly be erased by the action of the two select board members present at the meeting. The key phrase that caught my eye was “for any reason,” specifically, recalling the vote for John Weingold. What!!

It should be incumbent on the two select board members proposing this recall to at least delineate a reason or reasons other than “not doing one’s job” to recall a vote in an election.

Based on what evidence? Kind of reminds me of my elementary school days at P.S.190 in Brooklyn. On Friday afternoon Richard would yell out, “Mrs. Stein, you forgot to give us homework!” I think some genuine transparency from these two select board members is owed the voters of this town.

In stark contrast to the travesty above, was the democratic process to allocate precious town funds to the well-deserving Monterey Road Department. Both sides presented information vital to the decision-making process, and whether you agree or not, you can vote accordingly.

As it stands, in my view, the select board present at the meeting have lost all credibility.

—Marc Gordon



## Letters The Cart Before the Horse

The discussion at the recent Monterey Special Town Meeting regarding the purchase of two new town trucks brought out the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Initially, the discussion revolved around how the trucks were to be financed—either from free cash, the stabilization fund, or bank financing—rather than if we needed the trucks at all. Simply put, there is no point considering financing alternatives for a purchase that does not need to be made.

So the first question that needed to be addressed was, do we need new trucks or not? Other than Shawn Tryon, there were few, if any, people in attendance who were qualified and knowledgeable to speak professionally about the town’s equipment needs. So those who felt compelled to opine about financing put “the cart before the horse” by ignoring the real issue.

—Hillel M. Maximon

## Letters Melissa Noe’s Competence

Recently, the select board has discussed replacing our town administrator position with a town manager—someone with a city-planning degree. I hope that won’t happen, because it would mean losing the services of Melissa Noe, who is a wizard at managing the heavy flow of town business.

I recently became chair of the Monterey Cultural Council, and it is largely thanks to Melissa Noe that I’ve been able to both learn and carry out my responsibilities. These include paying grantees, posting meetings and minutes to the town’s website, communicating with local officials, and accessing town records. Melissa anticipates so many needs that copies of reports often appear in the cultural council mailbox at town hall even before I’ve asked for them. And when I email her with questions, she responds the same day.

In addition, Melissa continues to take training in new aspects of the job. As one of our town officials rightly said of Melissa Noe, “She’s someone who’s in it for the long-haul.”

—Maggie Barkin

## Cultural Council Grants December 14 Extended Deadline

The Monterey Cultural Council is welcoming grant applications for 2021, anyone who would like to contribute to the cultural life of this community can apply. The deadline is now Monday, December 14.

Applications can only be completed online. Go to the Massachusetts Cultural Council’s website and follow the instructions on the home page, which includes a contact link for guidance from the State’s employees directly.

The town of Sheffield’s cultural council ran an article in *The Berkshire Edge* and it mirrors our suggestions to all applicants in this year of social distancing. “We encourage applicants to offer events and activities that can be presented safely, yet effectively. We also ask applicants to include alternative plans in their proposals, such as pivoting to virtual events, in case Covid-19 protocols prevent the original plans from being implemented.”

Questions can be directed to the Monterey Cultural Council members by emailing [culturalcouncil@montereyma.gov](mailto:culturalcouncil@montereyma.gov).

—Maggie Barkin, Dorene Beller,  
Carole Clarin, Wendy Germain,  
and Janet Jensen

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## Monterey Library News Additional Hours

Thank you to everyone who has been using the library during the pandemic. Everyone has been cooperative and understanding as we continue to puzzle our way through regulations and studies as to how best not to add to the problem. Research continues to show quarantining is the best disinfectant.

What we also are aware of is the need for Internet connection by everyone during this time. For evidence of this, all you have to do is see the vehicles parked in the library lot at all hours. Through October there have been many times when it has been nice enough for people to sit on a bench or chair outside while doing this. However, it's only a matter of time before the temperature drops and it isn't dry. You may prefer sitting in a car to being in the building, but we want to give you a few more hours to come in and not have to idle the car in the cold. For now, we are going to add hours on Wednesday mornings from 10 to 1. The library will be closed from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., to give Molly a chance to eat lunch before reopening for our regular 2 to 5 p.m. hours. On Fridays we will add 9 to 12 in the morning as well. This will also help spread out our patron visits, though we rarely have approached Covid-19 capacity. Our hope is to continue these hours through the winter. Cut out the library schedule on the back page for reference.

At any time, there could be a surge, and we will follow the governor's orders. WiFi has been available throughout this year, and will continue to be, regardless of whether the building is open. As long as we are open in this phase, you are allowed to come in so long as you have no symptoms and are not supposed to be quarantined for the reasons of exposure or traveling. Wear your mask and sanitize. If you're coming in for materials, browse, check out, and leave to allow for others to come in. If you need to use the computer and printer, we are here for you.

— Mark Makuc  
Library Director  
MontereyMassLibrary.org

## Electrical Aggregation Program

The Town of Monterey is pleased to announce that Dynegy Energy Services has been selected as the supplier for its Community Choice Power Supply Program. The town's new aggregation rate is fixed at \$0.09950 per kWh for all rate classes for thirty-six months (November 2020 to November 2023). 21% of the power supply will be offset with MA Class I Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) from New England renewable sources, which is 5% above the current state mandate of 16% for these renewables. National Grid's residential basic service rate is fixed at \$0.12388 per kWh from November 1, 2020 through April 30, 2021.

It is important to note that no action will be required by individual consumers. All accounts currently enrolled in the program will be switched to Dynegy Energy Services as of the November 2020 meter reads. This change will be noted on the November 2020 bills and will be seen on the December 2020 bills. Consumers with questions about the program should call Colonial Power Group, the Town's aggregation consultant, at 866-485-5858 ext. 1.

Residents participating in the town's program this winter will save an average of \$16 per month on their electric bills. The Town's new aggregation rate, which is decreasing from \$0.10708 to \$0.09950

## Veteran's Day Memorial Ceremony

This year's Veteran's Day memorial ceremony will be held on Wednesday, November 11, at 11 a.m., at the Monterey Veteran's Memorial on the corner of Blue Hill Road and Route 23. Due to Covid-19 concerns, participation will be limited to Reverend Liz Goodman saying a prayer, and Command Sergeant Major Julio Rodriguez saluting as the flag is lowered to honor and commemorate those who have lost their lives defending the United States.

Major Rodriguez is sorry to request that no one else attend.

per kWh in November, is 20% lower than National Grid's Residential Basic Service rate, which is increasing from \$0.09898 to \$0.12388 per kWh in November. Basic Service rates change twice a year or more, depending on rate class. As a result, the aggregation rate may not always be lower than the Basic Service rate. The goal of the aggregation is to deliver savings over the life of the program compared to National Grid basic service. However, such savings and future savings cannot be guaranteed.

For more detailed information about the town's program, including how to opt out or opt in, or to access National Grid's basic service rates, please visit [colonial-powergroup.com/monterey](http://colonial-powergroup.com/monterey).

— Town of Monterey



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## Pantry PickUp

We are very grateful for those who donated money or food to make the first two Pantry PickUps successful. We have already had fourteen families come by or had food delivered to them.

We are now adding canned goods to the grocery bags and welcome donations. No perishables unless you have some extra fruits or vegetables and you want to bring them down between 8:30 and 9:30 on Saturday mornings to the church basement. Cans may be dropped off any time, but the best time is between noon and 6 p.m. any day, or early on Saturday. Do not drop off boxed goods or bags of sugar or flour please. Mice cannot get into cans, but they can get into paper bags, boxes, and even plastic.

- canned goods that we need:
- hearty soups
- tuna or Chicken
- fruits
- vegetables
- beans

If you are dropping off donations of food early Saturdays, please just drop and go. Due to Covid-19 regulations we can only have a few people inside and we have to maintain social distances outside as well. From 8:30 to 11:30 on Saturday mornings, only volunteers will be inside.

If you would like to make a monetary contribution, checks can be made out to "Monterey Church" with a note in the memo line that the gift is for the Pantry or MCP. Checks should be mailed to PO Box 182, Monterey MA 01245.



You can also give online via the church website, [montereychurch.org](http://montereychurch.org), clicking on the "Donate" button at the top of the screen and making a note that the gift is intended for the Food Pantry or MCP.

Below are all the details about The Pantry, in case you missed the article in the October *Monterey News* or our posters around town.

**Who:** Pantry PickUp is open to all residents of South Berkshire County. There are no income guidelines and shoppers are welcome to visit every week all year. Food is distributed on a first come first served basis.

**When:** Pantry PickUps are on Saturdays from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

**Where:** Monterey United Church of Christ, 449 Main Road, Monterey, MA 01245.

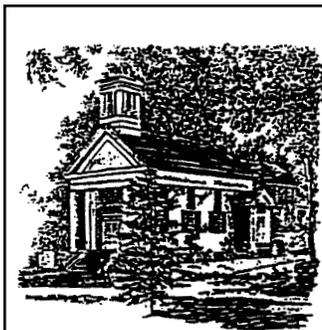
**What:** The Pantry offers a pre-packed bag of fresh fruit and vegetables as well as milk, eggs, and cheese.

Due to coronavirus, shoppers are asked to knock on the church basement door located at the corner of Tyringham and Main Road. Your bag will be brought to your car for contactless delivery.

Please wear a mask when you come to The Pantry. Thank you!

Those who need their food delivered can call the Council on Aging at 528-1443 ext. 247 to make arrangements.

—Andrea DuBrow



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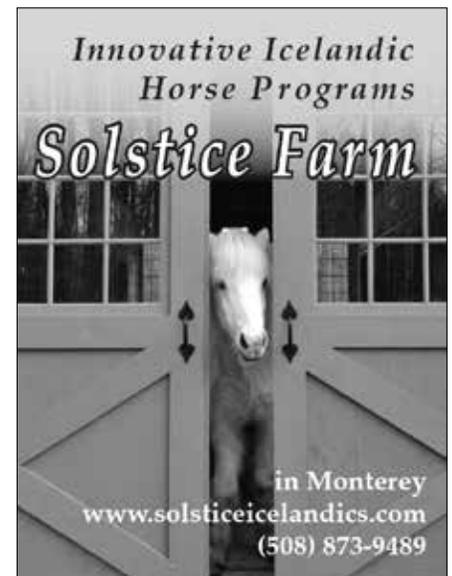
**Elizabeth Goodman, Pastor**

**For Information and Assistance:**

**413-528-5850**

**[www.montereychurch.org](http://www.montereychurch.org)**

**Find us on Facebook too.**



## Lake Garfield Working Group

The Lake Garfield Working Group (LGWG) met by remote call on October 15. Dennis Lynch reported that the fall Diver Assisted Suction Harvesting (DASH) program was very successful.

This fall's DASH program collected 30% more bags of Eurasian water milfoil (EWM) were collected during this fall compared to the fall 2019 program. New England Aquatics divers, under contract with the town, observed less EWM in the large, dense working area east of Point Road in 2020 than in 2019. Consequently, the removal operation was expanded into other high density areas not harvested as much during the Fall 2019, resulting in a more efficient weed removal operation that covered a greater area. The removed weeds were taken to Gould Farm for composting. New England Aquatics divers completed 78 hours of their contracted 107 hours. The remaining hours will be continued into the Spring of 2021.

Of additional importance, Vasey's Pondweed (*Potamogeton vaseyi*), which is protected under the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Act, was not observed at the collection sites.

Regarding the grants update, the town was selected to receive \$8,500 in funding under the Clean Water Act 604b grant program to develop a conceptual design of a "structural best management practice" to help to reduce phosphorus-loading into Lake Garfield. This 604b award will ultimately enable the town to apply for further funding under another program during 2021 to fund the permitting and construction of a containment structure to remove phosphorus from stormwater runoff flowing into Lake Garfield.

— Steve Snyder, Chair,  
and Dennis Lynch,  
Lake Garfield Working Group



*The New England Aquatics boat working on Lake Garfield this fall.*

## Blackboard Connect Mass Notification System

The Monterey Police Department would like to remind our residents of our mass notification system, Blackboard Connect. The Blackboard Connect system is paid for by an emergency management grant, and is available to all residents.

With this town-to-resident notification service, town leaders can send emergency phone calls, personalized voice messages, or texts to residents and businesses within minutes, with specific information about time-sensitive or common-interest issues such as emergencies and local community matters.

The Blackboard Connect service is used to supplement our current communication plans and enhance public safety and first responder services. Examples of this service include severe weather warnings and updates, hazardous traffic or road

conditions within the town or affected local routes, and any other situation that could impact the safety, property, or welfare of our citizens.

Please accept our invitation to participate in this great service. We know that your personal information is important, and rest assured that we will not share it with anyone. If you have not already received an emergency phone call from us, or you would like to provide additional contact information, go to the town website, [montereyma.gov](http://montereyma.gov), and navigate to Blackboard Connect (Emergency Notification Signup), located on the left column of the town website homepage, [montereyma.gov](http://montereyma.gov). If you have signed up and are not getting messages, or have any questions, please contact Chief Backhaus, or email [mpdchief@montereyma.gov](mailto:mpdchief@montereyma.gov). Thank you.

—Chief Gareth Backhaus  
Monterey Police Department



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## Nighttime Explosions in Monterey

Just around midnight in mid-September there was a mighty explosion. Houses near the village shook. Shortly after that, there was another, equally loud explosion. And then quiet. There was no information: no one seemed to know what had happened.

It happened again. Around 1:30 on Saturday morning, October 3, there was another very loud, house-shaking explosion. This time it was quickly followed by two or three other explosions. People who were asleep in bed took to their computers to find out what was going on, posting queries on the Monterey Community Google group to see who knew anything.

Answers began later that morning. A Monterey resident on a small street near Lake Buel had been arrested. There were explosive materials that were removed from his house: quite a few safety agencies were on the scene. The town issued a statement saying that the situation was under control and no residents were ever at any risk.

I had conversations with Monterey's Police Chief, Gareth Backhaus, along with some of the town's fire company members, but most of what I learned came from excellent coverage written by Heather Bellow of the *Berkshire Eagle* as well as press releases from District Attorney Andrea Harrington's office.

The state police detective unit assigned to the DA's office, state police from the state fire marshal's office, as well as the Monterey police executed a search warrant at the home of Gregory Murphy, 60, at West Road. The investigation focused on the illegal manufacturing and sale of homemade MClass explosive devices. The DA's office released the list of fourteen agencies involved in the investigation, which included multiple Massachusetts agencies, the FBI, Connecticut State Police, and the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

Murphy had been making large explosive fireworks that, "exceeded the US Product Safety Commission's explosive weight limits for consumer fireworks, and are therefore classified as illegal by the ATF and many other law enforcement agencies," from the ATF website. It was

reported that Murphy was very cooperative with police, sharing his records, including plans to sell the fireworks to a buyer in Waterbury, Connecticut. Murphy claimed that he liked the thrill of setting them off, and that he was unemployed and was making the fireworks to earn some money. He has been charged with seven counts of possession of explosives, one count of possession of a substance needed to make M-class explosives, and three other counts.

The early morning explosions on October 3 resulted from the agencies having removed the bomb-making materials and needing to dispose of them. Many of the state agency personnel came from eastern Massachusetts and wanted to get the situation resolved before returning home. The materials were loaded into an explosives-containment vessel and transported to an area gravel pit. Holes were dug with an excavator, the bomb squad placed the vessels in the holes, and the devices and explosive powders were safely countercharged.

Unanswered questions remain as to why this had to be done in the middle of the night frightening nearby residents, and why there hadn't been any notification of the explosions beforehand.

To read Heather Bellow's reporting for the *Berkshire Eagle*, go to the [berkshireeagle.com](http://berkshireeagle.com), and search for "Monterey Explosions."

— Stephen Moore

## Transfer Station Small Appliance Disposal Fees

This should not have to be written, but because people either don't read signs, don't care, or are trying to get out of paying fees, we have had several items each week being left at swap shop that are chargeable items to dispose of. This includes printers, microwaves, TV's, and the like. Each and every item costs the town money to dispose of, and everyone, by now, should know that the swap shop does not take these items. Beth has several large signs at the swap shop asking anyone who has items for the swap shop to see her or me first.

Beth's main job is the transfer station, helping folks, managing the traffic and parking, etc. She can't be at the swap shop all the time watching items come and go. This is getting to be a real problem.

Many folks aren't aware that Staples will take many computer items free of charge.

Small appliances like microwaves and computer gear can cost \$10 to \$20 to dispose of. A list of fees is available at the transfer station. We may be able to publish this list in next month's *Monterey News*.

— Dave Gilmore



# Camp Half Moon

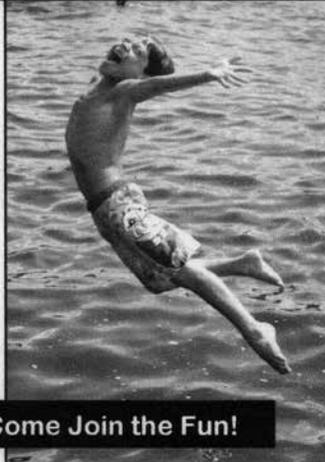
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## Update on Schoolhouse

### Local District Committee

Well, it has been another month...dragging along but into a totally magnificent foliage year. The select board approved creation of a local district committee at their September 2 meeting. It was necessary to allow one month for replies from two statewide organizations in order to have a legal committee, as you know. We passed that one-month time period on October 7, and despite two board meetings since, (on October 15 and 21), no appointments were made. However, the board will consider a slate of nominees on November 4.

The state has since offered matching-fund planning grants with a deadline for applications on November 16. At this point it seems unlikely we will be able to apply—lacking both a committee and matching funds to apply for the \$7,500 or \$12,500 planning grant. We have therefore not been able to craft a legal agreement concerning depositing and accounting for state and foundation funds. And the question remains: might we be able to retrieve the town's check for \$10,000 offered to the Monterey Select Board in January of 2016 for repairs to the school by then-superintendent Hastings (according to his letter cited in a contemporary *Berkshire Edge* article by Heather Bellow).

The money should have been sequestered in the Southern Regional School District's "Buildings, Grounds and Technology Committee," according to our Monterey representative at the time. If we could recover that offer, it would at least allow us to rid the school of vermin and give it—one hopes—a scraping, priming,

and painting. Further repairs would still be needed, at the foundation and for the roof, windows, and uninsulated second floor.

### Small Schools for Young Students

Alford sends its younger children to the Egremont School, knowing that smaller class size pays benefits for many years of a person's schooling. Egremont recently decided to repair its schoolhouse, and won its suit against the district for improper closure of their village school. We can follow in Egremont's footsteps and learn from their example.

The fact remains we need our small dedicated schoolhouse for the children of Monterey—especially the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten scholars. This project speaks to our commitment to them. Given the monetary support we have provided since the 1950s to the Southern Berkshire Regional School District, including contributions to repairs in the middle and high schools when asked, repairs to the smaller schools should be normative. A very large grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority for repairs was recently applied for, received, and spent without attention to the needs of Egremont and Monterey.

It is important to remember that maintenance for smaller schools was an important part of our acceptance of the original district agreement, just as we agreed to maintain schools in the other district towns. Monterey voted for the district largely because of that promise (according to talk around the dinner table by Wilbur and Elizabeth Thomas, my grandparents, in the summer after the vote). We had completely overhauled and repaired the schoolhouse in 1945, in

preparation for the national baby boom and our centennial. Only minor repairs were needed by 2007 according to an architectural review of all the district schools (by an engineering firm). Without attention to those repairs the building continued to be used but continued to deteriorate. Finally, between 2013 and 2017, repeated pressure from the district committee culminated in the district declaring our school "on hiatus" after pulling our popular teacher into another district school.

In 2017, there was an effort to explore a pre-kindergarten program for Monterey in consultation with the National Association for the Education of Young Children. By their guidelines, we would need to repair the building (foundation, windows, flooring) and put double fencing between the schoolhouse and the road, and other fencing along property lines. A child-appropriate bathroom and properly equipped small kitchen would be needed, with no lead paint inside or outside, allowing for a total of thirty-five square feet of internal and external activity space for each child in the program. This building would fit that set of requirements up to the maximum of ten students they suggest for a good pre-kindergarten and kindergarten program.

—Barbara Swann

*Editor's Note: For another opinion on small schoolhouses, read this article from National Public Radio, "The Return of the One Room Schoolhouse." Go to [npr.org](http://npr.org), and search for "One-Room Schoolhouse."*

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## Lake Garfield Dam Part 3 - Threatening Leaks

There had been leaks in the dam from the very earliest days. In the early 1930s there was another scare that the dam was liable to break, and the water level was ordered lowered. Dye was used to try and find the leak, but with no success. In 1934 a contract was let to drive sheet steel piling at the road edge twenty feet below the level of the road. This was done to all but two of the pilings which could not be lowered below the fifteen-foot road mark. These were cut level by a cutting torch.

When the gates were closed and the pressure of the water became greater, the leak appeared as much or even more.

In 1947 another scare on the lake took place. The lake was again lowered, and drill holes were bored ten feet in front of the old pilings and samples taken to find the consistency of the formation. Again, sheet pilings were driven in by a contractor from Williamstown named David Dean and a core of blue clay was drawn from the outlet of Fargo Pond and filled between the two sets of pilings at a cost of \$73,000. The dam was finished by Mr. Dean in 1949.

During the following few years many cottages were built on the shores of the lake. One, located on what was called "the Narrows," was built by Gordon Burhans from Harley, New York. Mr. Burhans was the uncle of the late Robert Brown, a native of Monterey, who will figure prominently in the future of a new dam in the 1960s.



**Pumping water out of Lake Garfield in 1969**

*In the left foreground can be seen a guardwall that ran along the west side of the existing dam in 1969. The view is south and a little west towards the area where the kayak racks are now.*

Every weekend when coming to his cottage in 1962, Mr. Burhans would find his boat on dry land where the water had lowered several inches leaving boats out of the water to dry out and leak. It would take a few days to swell back so that the boat could be used. Mr. Burhans wrote a letter to the selectmen complaining about how fast the water was receding and that he thought that there was a large leak in the spillway.

The selectmen's reply was that "God was the one who made it rain and the so-called leak at the spillway was a boil-

ing spring and had been there for many years." Mr. Burhans, not satisfied with the reply, sent a letter to the Berkshire County Engineers regarding the lowering of the water. Mr. Heaphy, the engineer in charge, stated that in the past years many pounds of dye had been used to try and locate the so-called leak but with no success. So, the leak was thought to be a boiling spring.

Mr. Burhans, still not convinced, took it up with the geological service, finding that with the amount of rain, and the numbers of days of sunshine, the evaporation would account for only about three-and-a-half to four inches per foot of lowering of the lake. In other words, four inches by evaporation and eight inches by leaking. Also, the temperature of the water was taken in the lake and compared with the temperature of the leaked water. Both registered the same. But at the spring house, where the water was used by the cottagers at the Schwab development, and an artesian well that was created by the test drilling of holes which were made in 1949 while repairing the old dam, a difference of two-and-a-half to three degrees colder were recorded. The water leak was twenty to thirty gallons per minute.

The winter of 1968 left a heavy covering of snow on the hill, and when the spring rains and fog came heavy in April 1969,



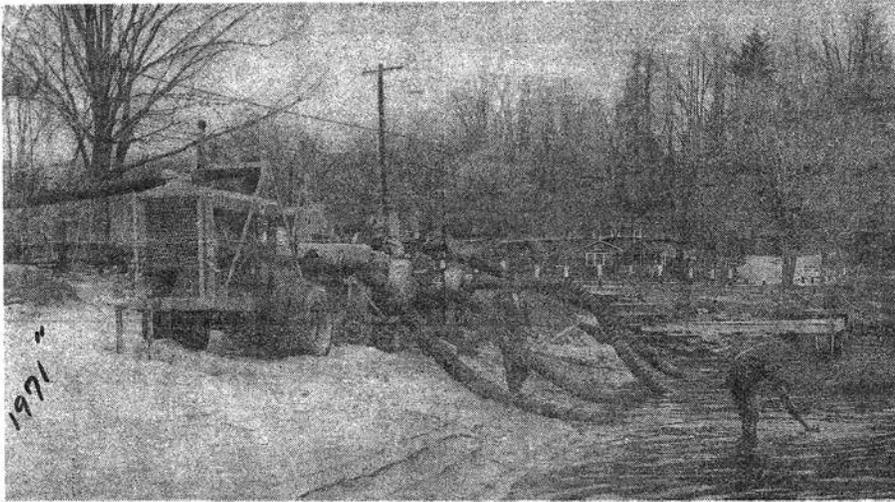
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**DIESEL-POWERED** suction pumps suck water from Lake Garfield and push it through pipes at left to downstream side of dam whose reliability has been questioned by county and local officials. The pumps are manned 24 hours per day by workers from the Perini Corp. of Framingham under contract with the Army Corps of Engineers. Deane Hulick

*In this view, looking generally north in the direction of the Tyringham Road, pumps are drawing water out of Lake Garfield along the east side of the existing dam in 1971.*

the run-off started, and the lake began to rise more rapidly than usual. Robert Brown, coming to the village, stopped at the dam to see if the leak or boiling spring had changed by the added weight of the water in the lake. To his surprise he saw where more sediment had accumulated on the basin of the leak and colored water was seeping through the foundation of the dam. The water in the spillway was rising quite rapidly as well.

With Brown stopping at the village and speaking with other men, word got around very quickly. Several men went to investigate. Raymond Tryon, living on the banks of the Konkapot, was alarmed enough to move much of his heavy equipment to higher ground.

The gatekeeper was notified, and he opened the gate to full capacity, but the lake kept on rising. The county engineer was called in to pass his judgement and, being alarmed by what he saw, had the US Army Corp of Engineers come and inspect the whole construction. They recommended the lowering of the lake at once.

The next day four large diesel driven pumps arrived and started pumping water from the lake into the brook across the road. This made a detour for traveling to and from Tyringham. Our Monterey Civil Service Director, Carl Champigny, gave his assistance by erecting a shelter where the men who were hired to keep a twenty-

four-hour watch could stay. Heat, lights, and a telephone were installed in the shelter and all the inhabitants along the Konkapot River were notified of what might take place and to be prepared to evacuate. The watch continued for approximately two weeks. Drawdown continued until the level was down three feet. The gates draining the lake remained open. The twenty-four-hour watch, which had been in effect for the previous two weeks, was lifted. The dam would continue to be inspected every four hours.

Part 4, to be published in December, is a history of the building of the current dam.

—Linda Thorpe

## Thai Yoga Bodywork

*Local*      *Sliding*  
*References*      *Scale*



*with*

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## October Contributors

Lonnie Solomon  
George & Jan Emmons  
Richard & Louise Skolnik  
Alyssa Gelbard  
Steven Cash  
Deborah Slater

Our thanks to everyone who has been so generous during this year. If you wish to contribute, mail your check to The Monterey News, P.O. Box 9, Monterey, MA 01245.

## Council on Aging

The council (CoA) continues to work on elderly transportation in the wake of the closure of SBETC (Southern Berkshire Elderly Transportation Corp). Great Barrington is taking the lead, getting vans, training drivers, dispatchers, and insurance, etc. The plan right now is that they will be ready by January 1 to take riders from the outlying towns. In the meantime, the Sheffield CoA is providing transportation for our seniors and disabled. Their hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. The cost to riders is \$10 round-trip to Great Barrington, door-to-door, for medical appointments and shopping. Their phone number is 413-229-7037, and they request forty-eight hours' notice. If they are unable to accommodate you, please call us at the Monterey CoA, 413-528-1443, ext. 247. We do have volunteers available to help.

We had a very successful flu clinic with Nancy Slattery from the Berkshire Visiting Nurse on October 8. Twenty-four people were vaccinated. Nancy will be back on Thursday, November 12, from 2 to 3 p.m. with more flu shots if you missed it. The plan is to hold it at the Firehouse Pavilion, weather permitting. Please bring your Medicare or MassHealth card, otherwise it's \$30. **Please get your flu shots!**

The Monterey CoA has been a part of the new Pantry Pickup on Saturday mornings at the Meetinghouse. If you would like a box of supplies, but are unable to pick it up, we can deliver, so please call the CoA at 413-528-1443, ext 247.

Happy Thanksgiving everyone!

— Kyle Pierce  
Council on Aging, Chair

## Knox Gallery News

We hope that you've been able to see *Call and Response: Recent work by Julie Shapiro*, which is on view at the Knox Gallery through November 7. Thanks to our community of accomplished and generous artists, the gallery is once again filled with beautiful and engaging artwork, even in these trying times.

New Marlborough artist Ann Getsinger will be presenting *Trace Your Hand*, opening on November 10. The exhibit aims to offer a casual overview of drawing, including doodles, thumbnails, studies for paintings, and drawings from both life and the imagination. Tonal, line, and mixed-media drawings in Getsinger's signature "Stillscape" style (a blend of still life integrated in a specific place) are featured.

Many children start drawing by tracing their hand, the artist notes. She adds, "Drawing has been a constant companion throughout my life—a grand playground for my psyche, a note taker, a way to get through public school or doctors' waiting rooms, but best of all, drawing opens up another world within this one." Getsinger hopes that this exhibit will inspire someone to pick up a pencil, trace their hand, and keep on going!

Ann Getsinger grew up in a creative household in Watertown, Connecticut. She studied at Paier School of Art in New Haven and at the San Francisco Art Institute. She settled permanently in Berkshire County, where she studied privately with realist artist Sheldon Fink. She professes a lifelong connection to the mid-coast of Maine where she has spent part of her time since childhood, and to the Berkshire Hills.

All Knox Gallery events and openings are admission free. Exhibits can be viewed during library hours (see back page of this issue). Please visit the library website for current Covid-19 restrictions such as admission scheduling. Knox Gallery, Monterey Library, 452 Main Road, Monterey, MA, 528-3795; MontereyMasLibrary.org/Knox-Gallery; Facebook.com/KnoxGallery.

—MaryPaul Yates



Antler in Nature Space by Ann Getsinger

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## Eggplant

Later, you'll give up altogether,  
after it's clear the tomatoes  
need staking,  
after even the sturdy upright  
tomatillo, soaked and heavy  
after a long rain, splits in two  
and self-destructs,  
but now, sifting through grasses,  
you part some leaves  
and see them—  
purple and curved and fully  
there, growing all this time  
behind a curtain of weeds, growing  
in spite of you, surprising  
but inevitable  
like two people  
tendrilling towards each other  
through months of cool dark shade,  
so that when the door  
flings open  
they are ready,  
sun-starved,  
shining.

—Kateri Kosek

## Months Later

Months into the pandemic  
I've come to expect certain things  
Like the drawn shades of neighbors  
Today is different  
Not only are shades on my floor  
raised  
But so are those above and below  
While I am looking out  
Are they looking in?  
Will they notice that we are no longer  
two?  
I consider drawing my shades  
In an effort to protect them from  
knowing  
And me from sharing something so  
private  
With strangers

—Stephanie Sloane

*See the notice about Stephanie's Zoom  
program through the community center  
on page 22.*

## In Retirement

One day I'll lie in a box  
cradled by the earth and rocks  
a glacier on the march once shattered,  
the last time that they ever mattered.

—Don Barkin

## Grandma's Home

The jewel on top of the hill stands  
Configured by the working mind and hands  
Of our dearest gift of a man.  
The one true constant  
In each of our lives.  
No matter how long the drive  
For each it's a different distant,  
But once we arrive, we know  
we're home in an instant.

The home that stays  
No matter the endless waves  
Of sunny, snowy, and rainy days  
And smiling, crying, and thriving faces.

Watching us clean  
Our store bought beets,  
Watching us steam  
Our wrinkly sheets,  
Watching us stitch seams  
Of worn out jeans  
And our fondest dreams;  
You transcend the wooden beams,  
Above the kitchen sink,  
Looking down just to gleam  
At the home you built for us each to read  
Books that teach  
Us of love. So still,  
The real jewel on top of the hill,  
Beyond the gravel under the home you  
built,  
Beyond the asphalt shingles and porch  
stilts,  
You sit above  
Watching us teach each other love.

—Emilia Dahlman

“Grandma's Home” was written by my  
eighteen-year-old granddaughter about  
her grandfather, Jules, who died six years  
ago. She was inspired by the fall foliage  
photos I recently sent to her.

—Barbara Dahlman



Smoke Crow by Ann Getsinger



*Two large excavators working on rebuilding the Tyringham Road culvert. Director of operations Shawn Tryon was working the larger excavator with Tryon Construction assisting. The new heavy-gauge aluminum culvert is nine-and-a-half feet wide at the base, and seventy-three feet long.*  
*—Photos by Stephen Moore*

## Town Road Projects

### Sandisfield Road Paving

During October the town paved 2.2 miles of the Sandisfield Road, from Route 23 all the way to the New Marlborough town line. The paving work was done by LB Corporation for a bid cost of \$361,553.50.

Drive carefully on northern section near Route 23. Until the shoulder work is done, there are cones to alert drivers to a sharp drop along the edge of the new blacktop.

### Tyringham Culvert

Beginning on Monday, October 19, the town began the replacement of the culvert along Tyringham Road that has been covered for quite a while by a steel plate. The existing culvert was a corrugated steel

design that had rusted through in spots, allowing the backfill to erode underground and was leading to some collapse of the roadway.

The new culvert is made of heavy gauge corrugated aluminum. Shawn Tryon, Director of Operations, said that since the large culvert replacement at Route 23 and River Road, which is a precast construction, the cost of precast concrete had nearly doubled. The cost of the aluminum culvert was one-quarter what a precast design would cost. In addition, the town highway crew precast the concrete footings, also saving the town money. The estimated cost for the project is \$150,000.

The culvert should be completed for driving over by the end of October, with blacktop to follow not long after.

—Stephen Moore

## Hume on the Holidays

See you for pancakes and cookies, but not until next year!

On behalf of Hume New England, I want to express our best wishes to our neighbors and community for a wonderful fall and upcoming Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons.

Due to Covid-19 and its impact on our operations, I am disappointed to announce we will not be holding our annual pancake breakfast in late November here at camp, nor our annual Christmas cookie exchange in early December at the community center. We will miss the opportunity to welcome and visit with so many of you and look forward to hosting again in 2021. These events have become special highlights of each year for us and I hope for many of you too.

Sincerely,

—John Szablowski

Hume New England Camp Director



BonsaiCox

## Remembrance Warren Thomson

Warren Thomson of Sandisfield Road died in an accident October 14. He was fifty-nine years old, at work for the Housatonic Railroad laying track in Canaan, Connecticut. The details of the accident are under investigation.

Warren grew up in Monterey on the family farm, along with his brother Lyman. He attended local schools and married Suzanne (Parks) Thomson thirty-three years ago. Together they took care of the farm, with Sue selling eggs and raising vegetables and flowers. Cows graze now on those pastures where Thomsons have farmed for generations, and Warren had a special interest in the rare varieties of apple trees he kept pruned and productive. He was knowledgeable and generous with his expertise in all things.

In earlier years, Warren worked in construction. Then he got the railroad job and worked there ever since, about twenty years. He has been well-known and appreciated all his life in Monterey, though he was quiet. Warren joined the Monterey Fire Company as a teenager and was a reliable presence there always, known especially for his skills working with machinery. In the days when the firefighters visited everyone around town selling tickets to the annual steak roast, the folks on Warren's beat



welcomed his visits and got to know him easily. Everyone felt comfortable with him, and though he was a busy and tireless worker in all areas of his life, he somehow never seemed to be in a rush. He had a ready smile and did not hurry the conversation.

Warren leaves his beloved wife Sue and his brother Lyman, as well as many family members on the Parks side and the Thomsons. There will be a memorial at a future date.

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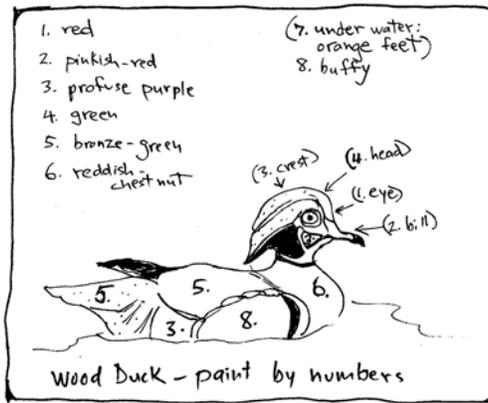
## The Wood Duck

“A perfect floating gem.” —H.D.Thoreau

The Assabet River joins the Sudbury River flowing north to form the Concord River, about twenty miles west of Boston. Early in November, 1855, Henry Thoreau went up the Assabet with his friend Harrison Blake. As they paddled, they came upon a male Wood Duck, known to many in those times as a “Summer Duck.”

Thoreau describes the duck with “a large, rich, flowing green burnished crest—a most ample head-dress,—two crescents of dazzling white on the side of the head and the black neck, a pinkish-red bill (with black tip)... but, above all, its breast, when it turns to the right light, all aglow with splendid purple and ruby reflections, like the throat of the hummingbird... As if the hummingbird should recline its ruby throat and breast on the water. Like dipping a glowing coal in water! It so affected me.”

There were once so many of these small ducks in North America that early writers felt them to be as common and familiar as robins or blackbirds. They nested in tree cavities, sometimes near farm buildings, mostly close to water. When they came in the spring they rolled in by the hundreds: “and when they come, like the rains of the tropics, they pour in until every pool in the woodlands is deluged with them.” This description comes from Dr. Hatch, writing



in 1887, and is quoted by Edward Howe Forbush in 1925 (*Birds of Massachusetts and Other New England States*).

Before long, “spring shooting” brought them nearly to extinction. By this time pigeon and poultry raisers in Belgium had noticed the Wood Ducks’ remarkable beauty and had imported them and raised them. It wasn’t long before Americans, wanting Wood Ducks once again, “were forced to buy them from the Belgians at exorbitant prices.” Soon state and federal protections were put in place, and by the time of Forbush’s writing they were on the increase again here.

These ducks are also called Wood Wid-geons, Acorn Ducks, and Tree Ducks. They are seventeen to twenty inches long with a wingspan of twenty-eight inches. They nest in a hollow trunk as much as fifty feet from the ground or water, and many people put out wooden boxes for them over water.

Wood Ducks come to Massachusetts in early March and can be seen here until

early November. A few even stay all winter. Forbush writes that the young ones hatch with sharp hooked claws on their feet, also a hooked “nail” at the end of the beak. They can climb up a perpendicular side of a wooden box “like flies walking on a wall,” he writes.

When they first hatch, the babies stay quiet for a day or two, until their mother leaves the hollow tree or box and lights down below on land or water. Then she calls them and they climb right up and flutter out and down. From here, if on land, the mother usually leads them to water and they are ready to swim. Some observers reported to Forbush that the mother may carry the hatchlings on her back, from the nest box or tree, right down to the water. Other folks saw the mother carry the youngsters in her bill, one at a time, as much as two miles to water. The ducklings are inclined to climb, and some that were hatched out under a bantam hen often climbed up to ride on her back.

Wood Ducks start migrating in Sep-tember, traveling in small flocks or family groups, and by late September and early October they are often in much larger groups on the swamps, ponds, and rivers in New England, and then gone for the winter. When the ice is out, in early March, they come back just as the Spring Peepers and Wood Frogs begin their chorusing.

Wood Ducks eat all sorts of plants and seeds, like duckweed, grass and grass seeds, pondweeds and their seeds, acorns, smartweed seeds and many other varieties found in the wetlands. They also eat a few dragonflies and their nymphs, and some crickets and spiders. When the ducklings first hatch and hit the water, they love to eat up mosquito wigglers.

Edward Howe Forbush, Massachusetts State Ornithologist, lay “concealed beneath foliage” and watched a flock of Wood Ducks on a woodland pool. He wrote, “Such a picture no pen can adequately describe,” but he did his best for us. “Loveliest of all water-fowl, the Wood Duck stands supreme . . . she clothed in modest hues, he glowing and resplendent.” And these ducks inspired Thoreau to make a plea for the preservation of beauty for its own sake, as a public property for all “to enjoy freely.”

—Bonner McAllester

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*It's morning in America; no longer the dawning of, but already morning in, the Age of Aquarius. And even though there's no ice on the lakes around here yet, the sun is already rising on January 2021.*

## Here's a Thought Gabriel's Horn

In all three Abrahamic religions, Gabriel is traditionally known as the Messenger, the Archangel who brings word of momentous change. Gabriel is also traditionally considered as one of the three angels who visited Abram to declare Sara's pregnancy; the Presence who announced to Mary the conception of her child, who would be named Jesus; the angel who brought the message of Islam to Mohammed. Gabriel's still around, tradition says, ready with the sound of his horn to wake us up to a shift in the times we live in.

I'm writing this before November 3 and you're likely reading this after that date. No matter what news the election brings, the results will be momentous. Especially since we're in a change of the ages, a shift from one 13,000-year cycle to another. If you're old enough to remember the musical *Hair*, this is what "the Age of Aquarius" is all about.

Other folklore traditions tell us that it's the old creature, the one who's been around for a while, who knows that the most dangerous moments in a passage across a frozen lake come during the last few steps. Why? The ice near the far shore may have begun to melt before the thicker

## Gabriel's Horn

What if we knew what we were getting into?  
Agreed to be here now, before we were born?  
What if we promised to dance to this music  
but forgot the rhythms of Gabriel's horn?  
We forgot we're the rhythms of Gabriel's horn.

Ask Brother Martin. He still can tell you  
radical love was the heart of his plan.  
What if we promised we'd travel that highway  
but we forgot—decided not—to follow the man?  
We forgot—decided not—to follow. Tattered and torn  
we forgot we're the rhythms of Gabriel's horn.

Ask Sister Ruth. I'm sure she'll tell you  
mercy and justice were always her goal.  
What if we promised we'd carry her burden  
but forgot our own strength, deep in the soul?  
We forgot our own strength, tattered and torn.  
We forgot we're the rhythms of Gabriel's horn.

What if we knew what we were getting into?  
Agreed to be here now, before we were born?  
What if we promised to dance to this music  
but forgot the rhythms of Gabriel's horn?  
We forgot we're the rhythms of Gabriel's horn.

And if we had no clue of what we were in for,  
even if it's happenstance that we were born,  
well, here we are. Let's dance to the music.  
Dance to the rhythms of Gabriel's horn.  
Let's dance. We're the rhythms of Gabriel's horn.  
Let's dance. We're the rhythms of Gabriel's horn.

—Mary Kate Jordan

ice at the center. That's where the youngster—who arrogantly assumes that getting to the home stretch means the expected end is assured—is most likely to step through the ice.

It's when the far shore is near, when a new cycle is coming into being, that guidance is most needed. Enter Gabriel.

The words above are printed as a poem, but they're actually song lyrics I started working on in September. Feel free to read them in whatever rhythmic dance patterns appeal to you.

And read them with an open mind and heart. What if, no matter how the current news and the parallel news to come, strikes any of us, we decide to dance to the music of our lives free of hatred? What if the next steps in our cultural history depend on how we, yes, you and I, respond to the here and now?

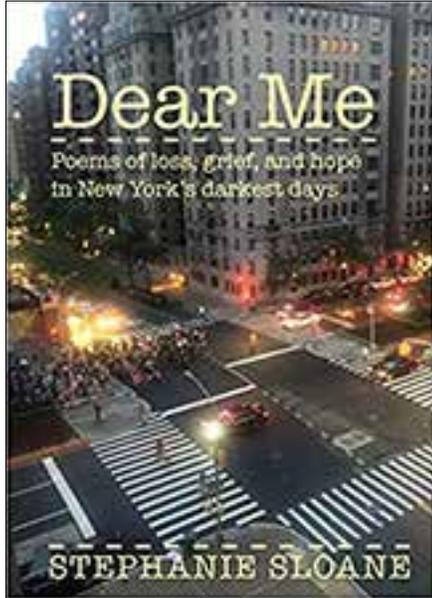
—Mary Kate Jordan

## Monterey Community Center Previous and Upcoming Programs

We were so grateful to have Elizabeth Maschmeyer (right) and Lyn Howitt present their “Pickin’ and Jammin’” workshop under the tent in September. They were very informative, and entertaining as we learned about canning and making jams with fruits and vegetables. The audience joined in and we all shared tips and even family secrets on how to preserve the garden bounty.



Mary Makuc



**Book Talk** with Stephanie Sloane, Tuesday, November 17, at 7 p.m., on Zoom.

Stephanie Sloane lost her husband of fifty-eight years just as New York City was going into the Covid-19 lockdown. One morning she took pen to paper to express her feelings, and then did so every day through June 8 when New York City started to open up to life again. This poignant collection of poems and photos expresses her personal loss and grief, and then her realization of the loss and grief of everyone during this time. And then finally...glimmers of hope.

A native New Yorker who now lives in Monterey, Stephanie Sloane has had an eclectic career encompassing many creative endeavors mostly in the art and theater worlds. *Dear Me: Poems of loss, grief, and hope in New York's darkest days*, is available at the Monterey Library and from booksellers. A few of her poems were published in the October issue of this paper.

Elizabeth Maschmeyer returns via Zoom to teach us about Dehydrating Fruits, Vegetables, and More on Saturday, January 30, 2021, at 11 a.m.

She is a pro at this and explains that it is an easy and economical way to keep your produce and take it out when you need it. More details coming in the December *Monterey News*.

If you have questions about programs or links or you want to lead a program online this winter, please call 413-528-3600 or email: [calendar@ccmonterey.org](mailto:calendar@ccmonterey.org)

— Mary Makuc

## Correction

In last month’s issue I quoted text posted by a number of people on the Monterey Community Google group concerning the goal of 51% registrations and deposits for Fiber Connect. Among those was this passage:

Susan Sellew commented, “I second Dennis’ suggestion. I recently got a refund from WiredWest and will be sending it on to Fiber Connect. Even though I live so far back in that I won’t be able to afford the service, sending a deposit to get the percent up is the least we can do for our neighbors. C’mon, people, let’s get this DONE! Time to enter the 21st century by taking control of what we can.”

The last two sentences, “C’mon, people ...” were posted by Kyp Wasiuk. Susan was offering her attitude that this is what she is doing for the community, and Kyp was urging others to take action.

— Stephen Moore, Editor



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## The Return of the Chestnuts?

Celebrate Native American Heritage Day (November 27) learning about and sampling local chestnuts.



Janet Jensen

On the grounds of the stately yellow home on Route 23 across from Sandisfield Road grow two young but apparently quite healthy chestnut trees (above). They are hybrids, carefully bred to be fifteen parts American Chestnut to one part blight-resistant Chinese Chestnut. They were planted some thirty years ago by Mark Makuc, who was then a recent Brown graduate. He was enthralled enough by the lure of the legendary species to send away to The American Chestnut Foundation for three saplings that he planted at what was then his family's home, and what had once been the John Brewer Tavern, in colonial times.

The allure of the American Chestnut continues, even for people like me, who have never seen a full-grown specimen, but who have heard about the amazing tree whose nutritious and delicious nuts nurtured families, forests and fauna. Its rot-resistant wood at one time made up about 80% of this country's commercial hardwood harvest. It lives on in the beams of the Monterey Community Center and many local houses and barns. I recently saw a photo of an ancient chestnut, its trunk capacious enough to hold several men inside a hollowed-out section.

When the colonists arrived in these parts, chestnuts, treasured by the Native Americans, comprised one in every four of

the local trees, according to The American Chestnut Foundation. Sometimes called the "redwoods of the East," they averaged five feet in diameter and grew a hundred feet tall. First they were harvested for their magnificent lumber, and then, when the woodlands began to regenerate in the early part of the twentieth century, they were devastated by the chestnut blight. Some four billion American Chestnut trees were destroyed over a period of some forty years, in what has been called "the greatest forest loss of history." If there were resistant individuals among them, we don't know, because virtually all were harvested.

But tree lovers have not given up on the species, and hybridization programs continue, including at the Chestnut Preserve, just south of Stockbridge off Route 7. But the brown-leafed and stunted trees on the Laurel Hill spot look nothing like the healthy specimens that Mark planted. They are also hybrids, but they have been intentionally inoculated with chestnut blight as part of a breeding program to identify the hardiest survivors and continue propagating trees from the most resilient stock.

It's a long-term project, as Craig Mof-fat, the steward of the local project told me. He works under the direction of The American Chestnut Foundation, which retains ownership of the tree's germ plasma. The ultimate goal of the foundation, as described on its website, is to "develop a blight-resistant American chestnut tree via scientific research and breeding, and to restore the tree to its native forests along the eastern United States."

How that venture is going is the subject of a Zoom talk scheduled for Friday,



Janet Jensen

November 27, at 2 p.m. (which also happens to be Native American Heritage Day). The program will address the past, present, and future of the American Chestnut, with information from experts in the field, including Woods Sinclair, who will speak about his breeding program in Norfolk, CT. Those who want a richer experience are invited to stop by Eaton Road after the talk to check out the young trees and to sample a local chestnut, roasted on an open fire by Kevin West, the current owner of the property at 471 Main Road.

Kindly email [janetjensen@verizon.net](mailto:janetjensen@verizon.net) to register for the presentation, which is co-sponsored by the Monterey Community Center and the local Cultural Council. Or you can just Zoom on in. The links will also be posted on the calendars for those organizations, and a reminder will be sent out through the Monterey Community Google group.

— Janet Jensen

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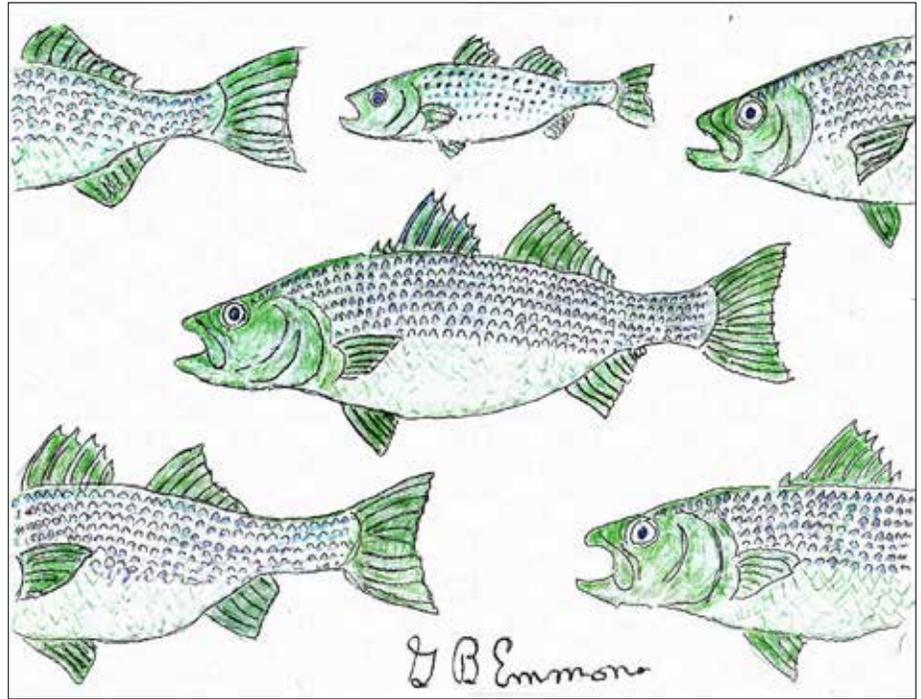
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## Autumn Striped Bass

When the local family of ospreys moved south in late September, leaving behind the empty nest on a tall pole just behind our seaside terrace on Little Bay in Fairhaven, my wife Jan and I thought our afternoon bird watching entertainment had come to a close until next spring. However, our panoramic view extends for several miles up and down the coastline for a diversity of wildlife observation. And as shorter days and longer nights soon brought a change of activity, the empty void around the shore was filled with clamoring flocks of diving gulls and terns to snatch up rising bait fish driven up to the surface of the water, escaping schooling striped bass, as illustrated in my drawing.

As a prized trophy game fish around Buzzards Bay, the striped bass has earned an abridged nickname of “striper” by devoted anglers, many of whom are dedicated men and women fly-fishers for this iconic example of sport fishing. The striper is named for the seven dark stripe markings that extend all along the upper body from head to tail. (Similarly, the popular brook trout has been dubbed a “brookie” by fresh water followers.) Because the striper is frequently taken close to shore along their preferred habitat of rocky jetties and breakwater peninsulas, it is often referred to as a “rock bass.” The stripers’ southward autumn migration follows below the Atlantic flyway of the ospreys.



There are three major New England striper areas that make up the migratory population, either coming or going in season: the Cape Ann Bay, Cape Cod Bay, and Nantucket Sound. Moving through a funnel of oceanic movement, the Cape Cod Canal serves as the landscape’s aorta of aquatic circulation for the stripers, often with bait, fly, and spin casting hopefuls lined up all along its reaches. Some are able to cast almost the full width to the other shore, and local fishing publications often outline accepted etiquette manners for participants to avoid tangling lines.

Sportsmanship is the byword of the striper world, as is conservation to allow the species to recover from commercial overfishing. There are strict regulations permitting sportsman to keep only one fish per day, less than 28 inches or more than 35 inches in length. This range of size gives smaller ones a chance to grow bigger, and larger ones, often females, the opportunity to annually lay a half-million eggs. In addition, beginning in 2021 throughout the region, circle hooks will be required which help to improve the survivability of fish that are released after capture. They are already required in Massachusetts.

State and federal tagging programs have revealed that after migrating south from here, they head for the mouth of the Hudson, Connecticut, or Delaware rivers, and as far as Chesapeake Bay. They are anadromous, meaning they are looking to return to their natal river source to spawn in fresh water. This phenomena is also practiced by herring, shad, and salmon. The question of how they are able to find the very ideal location, often where they themselves were spawned years before, is a matter we researched with Dartmouth College when I was active with the Berkshire Fish Hatchery for the Connecticut salmon restoration program. We began by imprinting the fingerlings to be stocked with fluids of



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## Bidwell House Museum

Despite some gusty autumn storms, the colorful fall foliage remained on display late into October this year. A much needed glimpse of beauty in nature as one drove through Monterey. Normally in November we would be planning to gather in the tightly packed spaces of the museum for a very un-socially distanced evening of food, music, and cheer. This fall we are throwing our normal schedule out the window and instead putting together a Zoom lecture series on the topic of Native Americans in New England.

The first lecture in that series is coming up on Wednesday, December 2, at 7 p.m., with Roy M. Paul to discuss his book *Jonathan Edwards and the Stockbridge Mohican Indians: His Mission and Sermons*. In his book Mr. Paul talks about the relationship between the Mohicans and Jonathan Edwards and how that relationship affected them both.

Mr. Paul, after a twenty-five-year career with Johnson & Johnson, attended Heritage Theological Seminary in Cambridge, Ontario, completing a Master of Theological Studies, *magna cum laude*. He subsequently went on to complete a Th.D. in Church History.

To attend this lecture you must register on the Bidwell House Museum's website at [bidwellhousemuseum.org/events](http://bidwellhousemuseum.org/events). All registrants will receive the Zoom details for the lecture a few days before the talk.

amino acids from the Connecticut River itself, so that when they later in life migrated down from Newfoundland past the river's outgoing current, they would recognize it as coming from their mother pools, and turn upstream to follow their lead to the source.

On Little Bay, as water temperatures dropped below sixty degrees, we marvel that cold nights also painted the deciduous forest with brilliant shades of autumn, and schools of striped bass are following the osprey in migration. They are moving by as falling leaves fly to our seaward windows, toward the spawning location of their own incarnation in accord with the seasons, orchestrated by the Earth's movement through the heavens.

— George Emmons



Rob Hoogs

Before we close out this article the museum needs to thank three fantastic young residents of Monterey: Joe Makuc, Nadia Makuc, and Marya Makuc. Each summer our gardener Ruth Green plants a small vegetable garden behind the museum that we use as a teaching space so visitors can see what types of food were grown in the eighteenth century. Back in the spring Joe had a great idea about expanding the number of plantings to increase the yield so that we would have vegetables to donate to local food pantries. As we mentioned last month, he worked with Ruth Green to add plants and then as the vegetables ripened, Nadia and Marya harvested the produce on a weekly basis to share with the Great Barrington Food Bank. We were so happy, in our own small way, to be able to help some of the people who were affected by the economic disasters of this pandemic and feel lucky that Monterey has such caring and thoughtful young adults in residence!

Finally, remember that the Bidwell House Museum grounds and gardens are still open all year, free of charge. There are over four miles of trails on the Bidwell House Museum grounds where you can take a brisk walk in the woods, exercise your dog, or learn about the Native American history of the area. Outside, the house tour materials, trail maps, and maps of the new Native American Interpretive Trail can be

found on the front porch of the house and at the kiosks on the property. You can also go to the museum website and under tabs for "Plan your visit" and "New Outdoor Tours" you can find maps to print out.

— Heather Kowalski  
Executive Director



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## Why I Like to Ride My Bike

“If one were to give a short prescription for dealing rationally with the world’s problems ... one could do worse than the simple formula: Cycle and recycle.”

—S. S. Wilson, *Scientific American*, March 1973

I very much like to ride my bike. I particularly like to ride my bike when I have somewhere to ride to.

One fine summer day, for instance, I pedaled through my morning rounds. After departing from Brookbend, my first stop was the community center to see how my garden was faring (not well). Paul was working in his yard across the way, so I stopped off to chat. Then it was on to the Bracken Brae Farm to check on their daily offerings. From there, I took Sandisfield Road to the steep and stunning Wallace Hall cutoff. I paused at the waterfall for short dazzle, before coasting, mostly, on down to Rawson Brook Farm for goat cheese, a cucumber and herbs. Then I headed to Lowland Farm where I bought a fresh pint of maple syrup and dropped off an empty before returning home.

I could have made the trip by car, of course, but it wouldn’t have been half so pleasurable.

When the weather is fine, and the trip not overly arduous, I know of no better way to travel than by bike. There’s the immediate uplift of being enveloped in the environment rather than encased in a ton of steel. And the accompanying sensory symphony: the quality of the air rushing past one’s face, the shifting patchwork of sun and shade, the high-pitched back-



Janet Jensen

ground whirring of crickets against bird songs and leaf rustling. There’s the varied smellscape of meadow, forest, hayfields, and wetlands. The constant push or pull of gravity gives one a visceral sense of the contours of the land. The pace is perfect for seeing the world: walking can be a bit slow; driving, one misses so much.

The rub, in these parts, is the terrain. But the solution is a pedal-assist bike: With the help of the electric battery, one can pedal up the most daunting of hills feeling like a professional biker. I bought my e-Raleigh three years ago at an end-of-the-season sale at Bike & Board in Great Barrington. Bradley, who once cycled all over the Berkshires with his super-athletic buddies, initially seemed loathe to wimp out with an assist. But as he soon discovered, one can get as much exercise as one desires, even interval training, just by shifting gears and adjusting the level of assistance. I usually pedal against significant resistance but turn

up the power whenever my legs or will begin to flag. It’s clearly a lot less strenuous than regular biking, but I ride so much farther and far more often than before.

As soon as Bradley bought a scooter-like e-bike from a friend, he was totally on board. With his long torso perched on the raised seat of the small-framed, fat-wheeled, all-terrain bike, Bradley looks like a goofy youth. And, with his break-neck downhill speeds and detours into rough paths and over small logs, he often acts like one too. “This makes me feel like a kid,” he has said on more than one occasion, flashing a broad grin.

Lately, we’ve been exploring the back roads south of Monterey. With the narrow country lanes aflame in fall colors, we’re practically overcome by the beauty. One of our favorite rides is heading down New Marlborough Road to Cantina 229, or the Southfield Store, or the Farm New Marlborough for their Friday night cookout. Dense dark woods open up to moody marshes, wide open emerald meadows, and delicious sky-scapes, with undulating hills in the distance. We seldom see more than two or three cars.

Biking in the Berkshires is a great way to have fun while getting one’s cardiovascular system tuned up. But when I lived in New York City, it was a very practical transportation alternative. After 2013, when the city placed docking stations and bright blue bikes all over town, cycling became the best way for me to get around, given the scale of Manhattan, the lack of hills, the price of cabs, and my unreliable hip. Also, I lived in a corner of the Lower East Side that was not well served by public transportation but was close to the bike corridor that essentially encircles the island. My work commutes took me either up the East River for a half hour to midtown, or later, down along the river to the financial district.

When the Citibike program was launched with an inaugural annual fee of just over \$100, I became one of the earliest members. It was usually the fastest and most predictable way to get from point A to point B. When Citibike sent me my statistics after two years as a regular, I was flabbergasted to learn I had pedaled some 2700 miles, more or less the equivalent of riding coast-to-coast at a cost less than a penny per mile. The real savings were all the cab and subway fares I avoided.



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It was a decent amount of exercise—not too strenuous, certainly easier than walking. What I especially loved was the transitional space/time it offered. Almost every day the weather permitted a ride, I felt grateful for the virtually free and extremely pleasant commute along the bikepath, taking in views of boats plying the river and the wide skies to the east above the skyscape of Long Island City. After work, the flat, half-hour pedal home eased the accumulated stress of the day.



Recalling how liberated I felt as a kid in the suburbs once I could ride by myself to my friends' houses, I was not altogether surprised to learn that the bicycle had powerfully accelerated the first wave of feminism. "Women rode to freedom on the bicycle" is how Sue Macy puts it in the subhead of her 2011 book *Wheels of Change*. In the late nineteenth century, bike riding advanced women's mobility, autonomy, rights, and even fashion. Suffrage leaders Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony were big fans. "I think [bicycling] has done more to emancipate women than anything else in the world," said Anthony.

The bicycle also encouraged more practical and less restrictive clothing. As the influential nineteenth century reformer Frances Willard predicted, "the comfortable, sensible, and artistic wardrobe of the rider will make the conventional style of woman's dress absurd to the eye and unenduring to the understanding." We can now see that her prediction was realized, possibly reaching its apotheosis during the pandemic with yoga wear donned for almost any occasion.

Bikes are perhaps the most efficient form of locomotion. Nearly all (98.1%



Bruce Wilkens

*Oyster Mushroom. There are a lot of different Oyster's, not all are safe to eat.*

## Woods Walking With Tom Ryan

Have you ever seen *Pleurotus ostreatus* (Oyster mushroom) or *Formesfomentarius* (True Tinder Conk) on your nature walks? These mushrooms and others like them are not very hard to find if you are walking in the woods with state forester Tom Ryan. A Monterey resident with the Department of Conservation & Recreation, Tom will tell you that he is not a mushroom expert and prefers the common names rather than the scientific names of the class of organisms collectively called Macrofungi; however, he is very knowledgeable about the forest

according to a couple of sources) of one's pedaling energy is converted to forward motion. Sometimes I fantasize about an alternative universe, much like ours, but in which we prioritized and subsidized transportation on two wheels instead of four, thus avoiding so much of what plagues our current environment: vast suburbs, carbon emissions, pollution, and massive traffic jams, as a start.

Last weekend, Bradley and I ventured a little farther afield. On a fine mid-September Saturday afternoon, we had a spectacular ride over back roads of New Marlborough and Sheffield to the Race Brook Lodge for dinner and an overnight stay, before returning after breakfast. Partly we wanted a getaway after staying close to home for six months. Partly we wanted to test the range of our batteries and endurance before taking our bikes up to Vermont. It proved to be a breeze, especially getting there, with a six-hundred-foot drop in elevation.

ecosystem in the Berkshires and spends his working days doing everything he can to protect and maintain healthy forests for all of us to enjoy year round.

After an informative talk with hand-outs and numerous mushrooms spread across several tables on the grounds of the Bidwell House Museum property during a recent Friday in October, twenty-three attendees accompanied him on his walk in the woods for an approximately half-mile loop around the property looking for mushrooms in their natural habitat. Of course, Tom would point out the various types of mushrooms growing on trees, or nestled under the falling leaves as we rallied along. For the avid mushroom enthusiast, he further suggested they pursue additional readings such as the *USDA Field Guide to Common Macrofungi in Eastern Forests and Their Ecosystem Functions* for more scientific detail.

All and all, the walk in the woods with Tom on a crisp fall day at the Bidwell House Museum property was ideal, and one of the many enjoyable educational programs offered by the Monterey Community Center.

Keep looking and keep learning,  
—Dennis Lynch

Our sense of having gotten far away was reinforced by the eclectic, funky, casual, comfy establishment. The somewhat random assortment of cabins, lodge, brookside cabanas, outdoor tables, fire pits, vegetable garden, goats, hammocks, sauna, strands of white lights, and rustic charm gave us a feeling of having pedaled back in time, to sometime perhaps in the early seventies.

And the very sensation of being on a bike ride has the effect of transporting one to a simpler era. We returned home from Race Brook to confront a week of terrible and worse news: firestorms, hurricanes, Covid-19 upticks, political chicanery, shootings, and the death of RBG. It made me all the more grateful for our time travel back to the seventies, our too-brief respite from all we are confronting a half century later, after so many wrong turns.

—Janet Jensen

*Editor's Note: Janet's essay was submitted for the October issue but had to be held due to space constraints.*

## November 2020 Wildlife

The Wild Turkeys are out and about, including some youngsters. Nancy Kleban had seventeen in her yard, including four small ones, and the Banners sent in a family photo of their turkey visitors. (See page 7.) Cheryl Zellman, too, has been happy to see turkeys at her place, also a large bear and a beautiful Red Fox that came every evening at 6:30. She also has seen a Bobcat passing through, carrying some prey.

On Fairview Road, Suzy Leon had a Bobcat visitor and took some photographs.



The Banners have had Wood Ducks (above and top of page 29) visiting their pond, maybe on their way to someplace farther south. In early October there were six Wood Ducks, then ten, and by the middle of the month twenty-nine of them stopping by the Banners' place on Griswold Road.

Also in mid-October, Allan Dean was walking along Hupi Road and heard remarkable vocalizations in the vicinity of Bonner and Joe's sugarhouse. As far as we know, that building is not currently inhabited, but we, too, have heard the Barred Owls chortling and whooping away in the big trees near there.

The Banners still have the lovely singing of the Carolina Wren in their yard. Wendy Jensen and Steve Moore enjoyed watching six flickers "working the lawn," drilling away for worms or anything else good to eat. Though they are woodpeckers, flickers act more like robins when they are foraging.

Julie Johnston sent a photograph last month of a Hemlock Varnish Shelf mushroom, and thanks to Mary Makuc I now know what it is. I have seen one recently



myself over in Otis along the Farmington River Walk behind the library. Another name for this mushroom is "Reishi" and it is said to have healthful properties for folks who eat it. It is also a pleasure just to look at.



Delight Dodyk spotted some Shaggy Mane mushrooms (*Coprinus comatus*) in early October (above), and these are good to eat. You have to catch them before they turn black and melt into the ground. They are like their relatives the Inky Caps in that this is what their deliquescence looks like: inky.

We saw a splendid Red Fox recently, not much afraid and with quite a bushy tail with its pure white tip. Grey Foxes have a black-tipped tail, and do not have the classy-looking black stockings of the Red Fox. But Grey Foxes can climb trees, just like any cat!

Kit Patten just called to report on a big population of adult salamanders in the water at Lower Spectacle Pond. These are the greenish (but spotted) adult form of our familiar Red Efts, or Eastern Newts, which are terrestrial in our woods, but only in their adolescent form. Then they head for the water to be reproductive adults. Their color changes and blends in with their aquatic surroundings.



Thanks to the Banners for their photograph of a black squirrel. These striking characters are a color variation of the standard grey species and in some places are even more numerous than the grey ones. On the campus at Princeton University in New Jersey, the black ones greatly outnumber the grey ones. As we recall biology class we might think this is a matter of the black color being dominant, or something like that. Then we think, if that were so, how are there still so many grey ones? This thinking is not so common



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among blue-eyed humans but our curiosity will lead to a study of genetic code and an allele that may have cropped up first in different squirrels altogether, Fox Squirrels (not found around here). How did the grey ones get it? It may have introgressed to the other species. Now you need your science dictionary. I looked in mine.

Thanks, everyone, for your sightings and your interest.

—Bonner McAllester

528-9385 bonnermca@gmail.com



## Berkshire Earth Expo 2020 Two-week Virtual Extravaganza

Exhibits, podcasts, projects, webinars, workshops, environmental music and poetry, and community conversations are all part of the 2020 Berkshire Earth Expo, which will span the first two weeks of November. This year, because of Covid-19, Living the Change Berkshires is collaborating with the Berkshire Museum to make the Fifth Annual Berkshire Earth Expo an expanded, virtual event. For detailed information and a full listing of events, go to [livingthechangeberkshires.com](http://livingthechangeberkshires.com), and scroll down under “Our Projects.”

The fortnight of activities will include some special events (see listing below) as well as ongoing exhibits, including a juried show of Berkshire youth artists’ “climate visions” entitled “How Shall We

*Left: Giant Leopard Moth caterpillar*

—Julie Johnston

Live?” A soundcloud by the amazing Fiora Laina, a young, classically trained singer/songwriter is another of the offerings. The entire program aims to encourage learning about climate, energy, and conservation, as well as to celebrate the wonder of nature and spur action to protect our planet and the ecosystems we depend on.

One important element is something that has been a part of past Berkshire Earth Expos: the Cooler Communities Action Platform—an opportunity for visitors to take action, no matter their age, background, or pocketbook. During the two-week event, participants will have the opportunity to channel their inspiration and concern for the Earth and their communities into measurable actions. They will be able to browse and learn about many possible actions, create a profile, and pledge one or more actions that are a good fit for them. The platform will compile all of the individual pledges to allow the whole community to see its collective impact.

Other offerings include:

- Podcasts: Six Berkshire students present their work on protecting the Earth.
- Workshops on weatherproofing your home and using reclaimed materials for building and remodeling.
- A series of short films presented daily on Facebook.

Live online events are also scheduled, including:

- November 1, 6:30 p.m.: A Community Conversation on Environmental Justice
- November 8, 4 p.m.: An interactive webinar on climate solutions
- November 9, 8 p.m.: Poetry and spoken word, recorded and live event “Rising Tides in a World On Fire”
- November 10, 6 p.m.: A webinar and action opportunity presented by Berkshire Environmental Action Team
- November 11, 6 p.m.: “Energy Efficiency in your Home and Business”—A webinar and action opportunity presented by Berkshire Environmental Action Team’s Energy Efficiency Program

For questions or to participate, contact Uli Nagel at [uli@livingthechangeberkshires.com](mailto:uli@livingthechangeberkshires.com), or telephone 413-329-3514.

—Janet Jensen

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## Select Board Corner

The select board did not prepare any information to inform the town for this month.

## MontereyMA.gov

Our town website is a great way to access information about the town.

— Don Coburn, Chair  
Steve Weisz and John Weingold  
Monterey Select Board  
(don@montereyma.gov)  
(steve@montereyma.gov)  
(weinjohnsb@gmail.com)

For general inquiries, please click “Contact Us” at [www.montereyma.gov](http://www.montereyma.gov).



## Police Emergency Contacts

- For real emergencies, call **911**.
- The email address for the dispatch service is:

**dispatch@sdb.state.ma.us.**

- Police dispatch service number:  
**413-236-0925.**

- For non-emergencies to contact the Monterey Police Department, call:  
**528-3211**

## Parks Commission

Among the many moving parts of Monterey, the parks commission, comprised of elected volunteers, sponsors various activities and oversees the operation and maintenance of town parks: Green Park behind the town hall, the Lake Garfield town beach, and the little known gem of Bidwell Park along the Konkapot River below the post office.

This summer, due to the retirement of Julio Rodriguez who admirably served as chair of the parks commission for the past several years, and the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, things got off to a rough start. Issues needing extra attention were the town beach and boat storage, including questions of whether or not the beach would remain open for the season and how to better meet the demand for more boat storage racks.

Once the decision was made to keep the beach open, even without the floating rafts, it became apparent early in the season that use was heavier than normal, including frequent overcrowding. Life guards, whose only responsibility was to monitor the swimming area and not the beach, were hired and the portable toilet normally open to the public was closed in keeping with state guidelines, and signs were posted requesting proper social distancing.

To help meet the demand for boat storage two racks providing twelve additional berths were ordered but placed on back order because of unavailability. As the parks commission moves forward in anticipation of addressing these and other issues that have come to our attention, we welcome the public’s input. New business currently under consideration includes an outdoor ping pong table, pickle ball, and the pavilion ice rink. Join us by watching for the next meeting to be posted on the town website.

—Steve Snyder  
Parks Commission, chair



*A late-season dandelion seed head.*

— Bonsai Cox

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## Fiber Connect Update

### Route 23 East Make Ready

Pole owners National Grid and Verizon have adjusted the cost of make-ready for the vital stretch of Route 23 necessary to connect premises west of Fairview Road. With our payment of make-ready, the utilities will begin preparing the poles for our fiber attachments. In anticipation of the settlement, this summer our crew began deploying fiber on Route 57 and the connecting roads. We are as eager as anyone to LIGHT you but, with the utilities deciding and acting independently on their make-ready schedules, we cannot, at this time be more specific as to when your service will begin. We will keep the Monterey community posted as to the make-ready progress. And, if you have yet to register, our \$500 pre-construction discount for standard install (aerial and conduit) is available until December 31, 2020.

### Required Public Contracts

Fiber Connect is negotiating concurrently with Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI), and the towns of Monterey and Egremont. MBI requires both towns to sign an agreement with Fiber Connect before they begin the phased release of each town's grant allocation. Currently Monterey's select board is working collaboratively with Egremont's Tech Committee to finalize these parallel agreements.

### Registrations

We thank everyone who has sent in their \$50 deposits to help Monterey toward the 51% subscriber take-rate required by MBI. Monterey is currently at 44%\*. We

need deposits from more residents to meet the goal. To clarify, Fiber Connect does not require a deposit; it is MBI's required means to validate intent prior to releasing any funds. The deposits are not a contractual commitment, and may be refunded. To help Monterey achieve town-wide fiber optic broadband, see details on how to make a deposit at the end of this article.

### Increased Bandwidth

In other news, we've increased the bandwidth between our network and our upstream providers. We continuously monitor bandwidth utilization across our network. On Oct. 1, we noticed growing consistency in increased utilization resulting in minor capacity issues at our upstream aggregation peering point. This is the point where our network pairs with upstream providers. The reconfiguration was completed successfully.

### 5G Service

5G—Fifth Generation Cellular Network Technology—is making headlines. We created an explainer video on 5G (<http://bit.ly/FCAnswers5GQuestions>) that asked and answered three questions: what is it, what will it do, and can I use it now? Though the technology, once realized, will change our lives, the bottom line is that ultra wideband 5G is far off for rural areas. The new mmWave of the radio spectrum needed for true 5G is just being built. For cellular companies to provide ultra wideband 5G to customers, their radio nodes must be deployed nearly block-by-block and on multiple structures making the densest city neighborhoods the logical choice. For Monterey and other Berkshire towns, it remains that hardline fiber to the

## Monterey News

The *Monterey News* editorial address is PO Box 9, Monterey, MA, 01245. We invite signed letters, articles, drawings, poetry, and photographs. Submissions or inquiries may also be emailed to [montereynews9@gmail.com](mailto:montereynews9@gmail.com) or telephone us at 413-528-4007.

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Please send your check made out to Fiber Connect LLC for \$50 to Fiber Connect, PO Box 764, Monterey, MA 01245. Remember to include your phone number and email on your check. Thank you.

—Mary McGurn  
Fiber Connect LLC

## Town Contact Information

### Emergency! 911

#### Administrative Assistant:

528-1443 x111

[admin@montereyma.gov](mailto:admin@montereyma.gov)

(for town boards and misc. questions)

#### Assessor: 528-1443 x115

[assessors@montereyma.gov](mailto:assessors@montereyma.gov)

#### Building Department: 528-1443

x118 [buildingsafety@montereyma.gov](mailto:buildingsafety@montereyma.gov)

#### Community Center: 528-3600

[calendar@ccmonterey.org](mailto:calendar@ccmonterey.org)

#### Fire Department: (non-emergency):

528-3136

[chief@montereyma.gov](mailto:chief@montereyma.gov)

#### Highway Department: 528-1734

[dpw1@montereyma.gov](mailto:dpw1@montereyma.gov)

#### Library: 528-3795

[montereylibrary@gmail.com](mailto:montereylibrary@gmail.com)

#### Police Department: (non-emergency)

528-3211, Alt./Emergency 528-3211

[mpdchief@montereyma.gov](mailto:mpdchief@montereyma.gov)

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**SBRSD:** (Schools) 413-229-877

#### Tax Collector: 528-1443 x117

[montereytax@yahoo.com](mailto:montereytax@yahoo.com)

(for questions about your tax bill)

#### Town Clerk: 528-1443 x113

[clerk@montereyma.gov](mailto:clerk@montereyma.gov)

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*Contributions from local artists this month:  
Pat Arnow, p. 11; Maureen Banner, p. 22, 30;  
George Emmons, p. 24; Bonner McAllester, p. 20.*

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