



# MONTEREY NEWS



April 2020  
Est. 1970 Vol. L · Number 4

Pick up locations for now: Firehouse Pavilion and the Transfer Station



Kyle Pierce

*A sign of the times.*

I ask him if his lunch is delicious, and whether he's having a nice day. This is done in a "who's a good boy?" voice, because that's what he is!

A Local Prince Charming page 15

If a resident is found to test positive for COVID-19 who is residing at one of your properties, there will be a mandatory isolation order.

To Rental Unit Owners page 4



If you want to help our seniors in some way, please call the CoA phone number at town hall with your name, phone number, and how you can help.

Personal Supports-Volunteering page 5

MBI will drop its conditions for returning the \$1.1 million of Monterey taxpayers' money to help fund the last third of the fiber optic broadband network in Monterey.

Broadband Funds page 11

The entire April 1988 Monterey News newspaper was an April Fool's joke. A fun read.

Monterey News 1985-1989 page 16

We'll get through this but it's going to take a level of change and sacrifice that is new territory for all of us.

Help us, and the officers involved, by obeying the speed limit. Every traffic stop puts an officer at risk which may remove him from more important work.

From the Select Board page 2

So it goes with people: one step forward, two back, persistent conflict—take one step forward, period.

House Afire page 10

Winterizing is a spectrum, not an absolute. I remember waking one morning to see that snow had drifted onto the bedroom floor through a small crack in the window. Ominously, it wasn't melting.

In The Woods page 23

Whether a person focuses chiefly on the past, the present, or the future, and whether that person does so with joy or with dread, is predictive of behavior.

From the Meetinghouse pages 12-13

The Monterey Fire Company has requested additional funding for fiscal 2021 to improve the delivery of the critical services it provides to our community. It is also seeking a continuation of funding for capital improvements at the fire house.

In My View page 7

It is key to remember that an important threat is virus on the surfaces of packaging.

Food Access pages 8-9



## From the Select Board COVID-19 Update

Residents and Friends,

We are waking up today to an entirely new normal, with schools closed, businesses closed, and most gatherings canceled. Governor Baker ordered that all public and private schools close through the first week in May, limited all restaurants to takeout and delivery, and prohibited gatherings of more than ten people, policies that are in effect today. That limit applies to all community, civic, public, leisure, and faith-based events, as well as sporting events with spectators, concerts, and conventions. It also covers fitness centers, private clubs, and theaters. In addition he ordered all non-essential businesses to close.

As we begin to shelter in place, let's not forget those who are alone, especially our seniors. Please reach out via email or phone to your neighbors and be creative about ways to stay in touch. We'll get through this but it's going to take a level of change and sacrifice that is new territory for all of us.

We will be updating the town website ([MontereyMa.gov](http://MontereyMa.gov)) on a daily basis with information from state and local officials. Please check it out.

Monterey is a strong, caring community and we will meet the challenge, together.

### Responding to COVID-19

**Town Hall:** To practice social distancing and help prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Town of Monterey and the Monterey Board of Health closed the town hall and the community center to the public. Staff will continue working their regular hours and residents needing assistance or services may call or email town departments. Staff will respond to emails and voicemails as soon as possible during their normal business hours. Individuals may also be able to conduct

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some transactions online. Payments and forms may be mailed or dropped in the drop box outside Town Hall. If you need forms that are not available online, call or email the appropriate department (phone number and email addresses available through the town website). The forms can be sent to you by mail or downloaded where possible.

**Library:** Following advice from local and state officials, the board of library trustees voted to close the library for the safety of all. Please see the Library News on page 6 for more information about library services.

**Transfer Station:** The recycling and transfer station will remain open under its normal business hours. Transfer station workers will not be helping you unless it is really necessary. The swap shop will be closed to protect our residents and staff from the possible transfer of the coronavirus.

**Public Safety:** Core public safety services like law enforcement and fire services will continue. You will see the best humans have to offer through the preparedness, professionalism, courage, and commitment of Monterey police officers and firefighters. They will don their gear while taking preventive measures and then go out and serve as well and safely as they can. While we are sheltering in place and practicing social distancing, our first responders are putting themselves at risk to make sure Monterey is safe and, if there is an emergency, it will be dealt with in the thoughtful, caring way we have come to expect. We, as residents, have to play a role in making sure our first responders are safe. It is important that our

first responders have as much information about what they face ahead of arriving at a call. If you call for emergency assistance, please be patient with the questions asked. The new protocol has been developed to keep everyone safe.

Please make sure your alarm system is in top working order. False alarms put everybody at risk and put an incredible drain on our limited resources.

Also, give a second thought to why you're calling. The 911 number is for emergency only. For those situations that are not emergencies, but you may need assistance or information, please call the Monterey Police at 528-3211.

If you are calling because of a medical problem, contact your primary care physician first. If you are experiencing severe symptoms call 911. The potential overuse of hospital emergency rooms is a serious problem.

Our police will be patrolling the town as usual and will continue to enforce the law. This includes traffic management. Help us and the officers involved by obeying the speed limit. Every traffic stop puts an officer at risk which may remove him from more important work.

**WiFi Locations:** We are committed to keeping the Town of Monterey operating at a level that protects our staff and our residents. There have been a few who have complained about the closing of the community center, library, and town hall because of the availability of high-speed internet there and not at their home. The decision to close these buildings was not done in a vacuum. It was done after much deliberation with state, county, and local officials along

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with recommendations from our health professionals. Please see the notice about WiFi availability at the fire house pavilion on page 5.

**Board of Health:** Anyone who isn't convinced of the need for restricting social interaction should look at the situation in New York, which faced a surging number of cases, mandated a shelter in place order, and is now seeing a leveling of new cases. Please see the COVID-19 order from the Monterey Board of Health on page 5.

**Town Meeting and Elections**

The Massachusetts Legislature voted on Monday, March 23 to allow towns to change the date for both the annual town meeting and annual local elections. The Monterey Select Board discussed moving the date for the May town meeting and the May local elections at their March 25 meeting. A new date for both events will be finalized as soon as the state legislature has a final vote and the legal requirement are clarified. Please check the town of Monterey website for updates.

**Absentee Ballots:** If we are still under the "limit to gatherings of ten or less," or worse, a state-mandated shelter in place

order, it would not be surprising to expect more delays. We encourage all residents to use the absentee ballot as a safe way to cast your vote. The state legislature voted to expand the absentee voting guidance to include any person taking precaution related to COVID-19 in response to a declared state of emergency, or from guidance from a medical professional, local or state health official, or any civil authority. Call the town clerk's office to have an absentee ballot sent to you. This is another area that depends on what happens over the next month and can change dramatically. As with everything else check the Town of Monterey website for daily updates.

Wishful thinking does not enter into the decision making. Your health and safety, along with the health and safety of our dedicated employees is first and foremost. Please, heed the warnings from the health professionals, practice social distancing, wash your hands, and we will all get through this.

— Kenn Basler  
 Chair, Monterey Select Board  
 Website: MontereyMA.gov  
 Town offices: 413-528-1443

**Town Elections**

The town Democratic and Republican caucuses have met and each have a slate of candidates for the upcoming elections. While the nominations from caucus results are fixed, there is still time for folks to mount write-in campaigns for any of these seats. Incumbents are indicated by asterisks.

Please also be aware that as of this writing, a new date for town elections, based on guidance from the state and recent legislation, is not yet set. It is likely that elections will be postponed into June.

Look for additional information in the May *Monterey News*.

**Uncontested Seats**

**Board of Appeals (Zoning) (5 years)**

Susan Cooper\* (R & D)

**Board of Appeals (Zoning) (1 year)**

Michael Banner (D)

**Board of Assessors (3 year)**

Gary Shaw (R & D)

**Board of Assessors (2 years)**

Scott Steibel (D & R)

**Board of Health (3 years)**

John Makuc\* (R & D)

**Cemetery Commission (3 years)**

David Brown\* (R & D)

**Finance Committee (3 years)**

Michele Miller (D & R)

**Library Trustee (3 years, vote for 2)**

John Higgins\* (D & R)

Shannon Amidon Castille\* (D)

**Moderator (1 year)**

Mark Makuc\* (D & R)

**Parks Commission (3 years)**

Wendy Benjamin\* (D)

**Planning Board (5 years, vote for 2)**

Laura Mensi (R)

No nominee

**Planning Board (3 years)**

Bill Johnson (R & D)

**Select Board (3 years)**

John Weingold (D & R)

**Tree Warden (1 year)**

Kevin Fitzpatrick\* (R & D)

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## Council on Aging

The Monterey Council on Aging, like everyone else, has had to cancel all upcoming events, programs, and meetings. We are in the process of contacting our seniors and checking up on how they're managing in this time of social distancing. If you are having difficulty, or if you know someone who should be checked on, please call the Council on Aging at 413-528-1443, ext. 247. Leave a message and we will get back to you.

The Southern Berkshire Elderly Transportation Co. (SBETC) van has been out of service for the last three weeks, much to our dismay, and we are applying pressure to get it back up and running.

Meals on Wheels is still functioning, and you can pick up a Meals on Wheels meal to go at Claire Teague Senior Center at 915 South Main Street in Great Barrington between 11 and 11:30 a.m. Just call 528-1881 to reserve the day before.

Elder Services is still functioning fully, accepting new referrals, providing Meals on Wheels, home care services, SHINE contacts by phone. Their phone number is 413-499-0524, or 800-544-5242.

Our foot nurse, Beverly Dunn, is unable to see clients at town hall because it's closed. For those whose feet need immediate attention, she will make a home visit. The CoA will still pay the \$10 of the \$35 charge. Her number is 413-446-2469.

We are not yet sure of what the needs are, transportation, shopping, home management, but if you would like to volunteer, please call our number, 413-528-1443, ext. 247, and leave a message, or email us at [MontereySeniors@gmail.com](mailto:MontereySeniors@gmail.com). Anyone should feel free to volunteer whatever service they have to offer.

No one knows how long we will be in this unfamiliar state, but stay safe!

— Kyle Pierce

### Arnold Hayes, 89

Arnie Hayes passed away on March 24 at the VA hospital in Brockton, MA. A remembrance will be published in the May issue.

## Board of Health Rental Unit Owners

As you know COVID-19 is *here* in the Berkshires. As all sectors are working in unison to combat this pandemic, we are issuing this important message to all of you. On March 24, 2020, the federal coronavirus task force issued a recommendation that anyone traveling from the New York City metropolitan area should self-quarantine for at least fourteen days. If you receive any bookings or inquiries from any person from this area (or any other area deemed as a COVID-19 hotspot) we are requesting that you postpone any bookings until COVID-19 is defeated. If people are coming into our towns that are traveling from certain areas, we will require a fourteen-day quarantine of those people.

In addition, if a resident is found to test positive for COVID-19 who is residing at one of your properties, there will be a mandatory isolation order issued by the local board of health and occupants will be unable to leave until they are medically cleared (which could be longer than fourteen days) regardless of their commitment on your booking. More importantly, people traveling into the Berkshires from out of the area may be unaware and could further aid in the spread of the virus. In certain cases, the local board of health may require additional actions to prevent further spread that may include a comprehensive sanitizing and disinfection of the property at your expense.

We thank you for your cooperation during this trying time. We *will* defeat COVID-19 if we work in collaboration. Please visit the state website, [Mass.gov](http://Mass.gov),

and follow the COVID-19 Alert link at the top of the home page to access up to date information on COVID-19 as well as resources needed.

- PRACTICE social distancing,
- WASH hands with soap and water,
- FOLLOW all Commonwealth of Massachusetts Emergency orders,
- ISOLATE at home as much as possible, and
- STAY at home if you are sick.

Thank you for your timely and important cooperation on this matter.

Respectfully,

— James J. Wilusz, R.S.  
Monterey Sanitary Inspector  
Monterey Board of Health

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## Personal Supports Volunteering

The community spirit is alive and well in our beloved Monterey. Collectively we are being called forth to serve and support in so many different ways. Social distancing is number one.

A very active Monterey Council on Aging (COA) is making sure the most vulnerable are being checked on and cared for. Seniors' needs include transportation, shopping, home management, etc (see the Council on Aging article on page 4). If you want to help our seniors in some way, please call the CoA phone number at town hall and leave a short message with your name, phone number, and how you can help. 413-528-1443 ext. 247. I will be helping to manage the needs and the helpers.

As we all deal with this crisis, the needs of our seniors may grow and change so your help could fulfill a critical need. Also, stay tuned for other volunteer opportunities that could support other areas of our community.

I'm sure the articles published in this edition of the *Monterey News* will keep us informed of our community actions and needs and demonstrate the importance of this monthly publication.

We will get through this crisis in a good way and my hope is that Monterey will be stronger, more resilient, and united, allowing us all to move forward to have healthy, happy, and prosperous futures. Love and kindness is a medicine that we all can share.

Peace,

—Michael Johnson  
Bratt Road, Monterey

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## Fiber Connect Update: Operations Policy Change & New Hotspot

Due to COVID-19, Fiber Connect, out of an abundance of caution, is taking measures to insure the health and safety of customers, crew members and staff. With the growing number of restrictions around COVID-19 impacting how we learn, work, and socialize, we recognize your heightened dependence on internet access. Read on as to how we have changed our operations to protect everyone, help halt the spread of the virus, and assure the quality of service expected from Fiber Connect.

Fiber Connect has postponed all non-emergency operations until further notice. We will respond remotely to customers' non-emergency technical issues. Operations involving outside premise work and response to service outages will not change. Operations within premises will change as follows.

### In-Premises Distancing

When work inside a premise is required for either an install or repair, the premise owner or their representative must first prop open all necessary doors such as the entrance to the premise and doors to room(s) where work will be done. All persons inside the premise are asked to either remain 15 feet away from the crew member(s), or be in another room while work is being done. The crew member(s) may ask the premise owner or representative to move furniture or

other obstacles while still maintaining the required fifteen-foot distance. Any failure on the part of the premise owner or representative to respect this policy will result in immediate termination of the install or repair. Please understand this policy is for the safety of all.

### New Public WiFi Hotspot

For those without adequate broadband access on premise, Fiber Connect has installed a Wi-Fi hotspot at the pavilion behind the Monterey Fire Department, 411 Main Rd. To use the hotspot, choose "Fiber Connect Free." No password is required. Please park on the asphalt, not on the grass. Your connection speeds will vary depending, in part, on the distance and obstructions between you and the Wi-Fi antenna.

### Increasing Network Capacity

Finally, you may be reading about the resiliency and capability of network providers to absorb greater bandwidth usage. Fiber Connect's network is presently handling increased user traffic outside the normal peak utilization period of 6PM to 1AM. If it becomes necessary to increase our backhaul bandwidth at our Head End, we will send a notification prior to such an upgrade.

Even with our staff working from their homes, Fiber Connect's office is fully functioning. We are receiving a higher volume of calls and emails at this time. We ask you to be patient. We will respond. Be safe. Be well.

—Adam Chait  
CEO, Fiber Connect



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## Library News

This has become an exceedingly difficult column to write during the course of the events of the last few weeks. For years the library has expanded collection, programming, and services. Less than a year ago the facility was expanded. Just last month we were looking at programming, using our new space to capacities that were simply not possible before.

The director and the trustees have wrestled with the information that filtered in early on. As the path of the virus revealed itself, events were canceled. Though we have had a bottle of sanitizer at the desk for years, it became evident that was not enough. Wiping with disinfectants occasionally was clearly not enough. The amount of time it took the virus to die on different surfaces and how those timelines related to library operations was considered and the safety of all, staff and patrons, was considered. Adjustments in routine were made. The need for services increased with closings of schools and universities. We also listened to the guidelines of no gatherings which facilitate the spread of the virus. The staff was trained to assist the population of Monterey with the 2020 census. The library attended meetings with the board of health and the select board.

Over the last two weeks the governor has outlined a plan to deal with the virus and we have had to change how we operate to fall in line with that direction. The library community itself has been examining how it best could serve the needs of the population. In the middle of March several libraries began to close, and like a game of dominoes, more began to close. The effect this had on the delivery system was swift and unanticipated. Libraries refused deliveries, and the process became impossible to complete with bins of books waiting to be delivered clogging the production line. Over the course of one weekend the system had to suspend operations.

On March 19, the board of trustees met. Given the information presented and the course that the governor had outlined, it became clear that operations that had already been severely limited could not continue. The board voted to close the physical library indefinitely, but promised to meet again in April to review this decision. The American Library Association and the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners issued statements that public libraries would for the time being exist online. Unfortunately, not all our patrons have access to online library services because the fiber network has not been completed,

the one cell tower that has signal has only one network, and the other has yet to be turned on.

Work has begun to come up with policies and procedures to open libraries for business. It may not ever return to the way it was, but please know that we understand that the library is much more than an internet address where you can download items and research databases. This institution means much more to our town, and after conversations with the state library organizations that guide our library community today, it is clear they understand that as well. Though it was not easy to make the decision, it is easy to implement. The challenge now is to start rebuilding. What practices can we modify to make borrowing a book safe for all involved? We are working on that to the best of our ability.

Where does that leave us? For the latest information, please visit our website, [montereymasslibrary.org](http://montereymasslibrary.org). There are links to follow onsite to get downloads from the CWMARS digital catalog. If you don't have a library card, you'll need to first email [montereylibrary@gmail.com](mailto:montereylibrary@gmail.com), and we can assist in getting you a card. You are also eligible as a Massachusetts resident to get a Boston Public Library e-card, which gives you an additional collection to choose from.

Accessing these online resources isn't entirely simple, so I will be posting directions and tips for how to go about this on the library website.

Your connection to the internet at the library, for the moment, will need to be by the WiFi outside the building. There is no password. That will explain the vehicles in the parking lots at all hours. There are external electrical receptacles outside the main entrance for recharging. If you have any questions or ideas about how we can help you, please email them to [montereylibrary@gmail.com](mailto:montereylibrary@gmail.com).

Rest assured that the library community is working already to open the doors once again. We can't be certain, but likely it will be a step-by-step process and take some time. We thank you for your patience and hope that we will see you inside the library once again.

—Mark Makuc  
Library Director



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## In My View Fire Company Budget Request



The Monterey Fire Company has requested additional funding for fiscal 2021 to improve the delivery of the critical services it provides to our community. It is also seeking a continuation of funding for capital improvements at the fire house. Subject to possible developments in our confrontation with the impacts of the corona virus, the select board is inclined to agree with the requests. Of course, the final decisions on these matters will be made at town meeting. Those decisions should be informed by a clear understanding of the nature of the fire company and its legal relation to the town and its residents.

This part of the firefighting story began in 1980. Led by Ray Tryon, seven Monterey citizens decided to form the Monterey Fire Company, Ltd. The articles of organization were filed with secretary of the Commonwealth on June 25, 1980, and remain in effect. Article 2 provides:

“The purpose of the corporation is to provide fire protection and other emergency care for the lives and property of the citizens of the town of Monterey ...and the corporation is organized exclusively for charitable purposes ....”

Article 4 provides that “[n]o part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributed to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered” and to make payments in furtherance of its charitable purposes.

The deed to the building in which the fire trucks, equipment, and training facilities are housed is technically owned by the fire company. But the nature of that ownership is sharply curtailed by Article 4, which provides that “[u]pon dissolution of the corporation, the Board of Directors shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all liabilities of the corporation, dispose of all the assets of the corporation exclusively for the purposes of the corporation,

by transfer to the Town of Monterey ...to be applied to the achievement or continued achievement of the goal of the corporation—the safety of the general public.” In other words, although management of the fire house belongs to the fire company, the ultimate owner of the building and land is the town.

The town leases the fire company premises pursuant to a written lease, presently at \$17,000 per year, the amount necessary to meet the fire company’s costs of maintaining the building and paying for the utilities. And, of course, the town owns the fire trucks and equipment without which the fire company obviously could not function.

The town also funds maintenance of the trucks and equipment, and the payments to firefighters for answering calls and for training. The management of those activities belongs to the fire company, although payments are reviewed by our accountant, processed by our treasurer, and approved by the select board.

Although our volunteer firefighters receive some compensation, as is the case in all towns with such fire companies, the cost of a full-time paid company would far exceed our present costs. We are very fortunate to have their services.

And you should know that they have performed beyond the call of duty. Consider this. In the past few years, our firefighters have voluntarily contributed substantial sums of their own money and their own time to making the physical improvements to the fire house.

The select board works closely with our totally dedicated and highly proficient fire company chief, Shawn Tryon, who serves in that capacity without salary. Together we are committed to maintaining a well-trained and well-equipped force for our community’s safety.

—Don Coburn  
Select board member

*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.*

## Monterey News Change of Pick-up Locations

In our new world, with much of our town closed, where can folks go to pick up a copy of the *News*? If you’re reading this, there’s a chance you already know, but others might not.

A box of copies can be found inside the firehouse pavilion. They will be loosely piled so you can pick up just one without having to handle anything else. Copies will also be available at the transfer station.

(Our thanks to Ryan at LarkinLTD signmakers on Route 7 south of Great Barrington for quick service and donating the signs directing readers to the firehouse pavilion.)

## Thai Yoga Bodywork

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## Food Access - Groceries

As the editor for the *Monterey News*, I thought I would post information I've collected to date on food access. I am posting this on the Monterey-Community Google group (see Chris Blair's article on page 15) as well.

### Restaurants

Some restaurants have closed, but many are offering takeout service. Consider the value of patronizing area restaurants so they will still be in business when this threat has passed. Contact them directly for their menus.

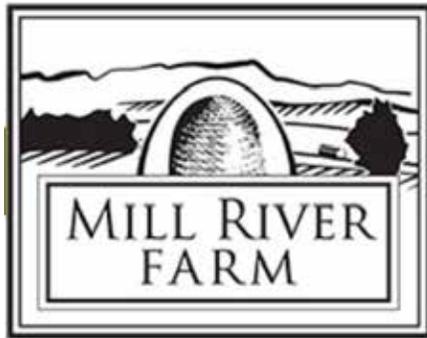


### Individual Vendors



**Farm New Marlborough:** Tom Brazie produces meats and some prepared foods. Their farm store is now closed but will deliver. "Please take advantage of our delivery service on Tuesdays and Thursdays. To place an order for delivery please go to our website [thefarmnm.com](http://thefarmnm.com). We have included a farm store collection to expand the goods we are able to provide to our community and will continue to

increase essential product availability through the farm." Phone: 413-229-2350



**Mill River Farm/Equinoxorganics:** From a reader: They have a variety of fresh organic greens (pea shoots, kale, spinach, arugula, mesclun), organic sweet carrots, dried beans, chickens, bacon, etc., organic honey, honey products and surprise items from time to time. They have a shed on their farm located on Hayes Hill Road in Mill River. It is the honor system and open 24/7. Their website is [millriverfarm.org](http://millriverfarm.org). Check or cash put into a locked metal box.



**Berkshire Grown:** Berkshire Grown is a association of small farms and food producers. They have a list of farms, their products, and contact information. Click on "How to Support Local Farms from a Distance." [berkshiregrown.org](http://berkshiregrown.org)

**Travis Brecher:** A baker in Mill River. His store is closed but will deliver weekly. Email contact: [travis.brecher@gmail.com](mailto:travis.brecher@gmail.com). Travis does not wish to publish his phone number. He also accepts Venmo for payment.

**Berkshire Organics:** They come through Monterey once a week with boxes of food that can be customized by pre-ordering. [Berkshireorganics.com/](http://Berkshireorganics.com/). No response to my request for a phone number.

**Rawson Brook Farm:** Susan Sellew has closed the self-serve store at the farm.



**North Plain Farm:** The farm produces a variety of meats and raw milk, and maintains a store featuring food from other producers. It is located at 342 North Plain Road (Route 41 north from Great Barrington). They advertise free delivery with a \$50 order. [northplainfarm.com](http://northplainfarm.com) 413-429-6598.

### Delivery Services

A note about delivery service: Order in advance of immediate needs as delivery may take several days depending on vendors.

**Instacart:** Instacart works with Price Chopper, Big Y, and CVS. Go to [instacart.com](http://instacart.com). Pick the store you wish to order from, and then build a cart by viewing specific items. The Big Y online store was extensive, with opportunities to choose replacement items if your preferred item is unavailable. There are some minimal service charges applied, as well as an option to add a gratuity for the driver (as you would do in a restaurant)

**The Berkshire Valet:** Offering grocery delivery from Guido's in Great Barrington. All ordering and payment, including gratuity, is done online. We do your shopping as if it were ours. If we have a question, we call or text. We are offering this service at special pricing—\$10 for delivery, plus 3% to cover credit card fees. We also offer add-on services such as going to the Co-op \$10, and Great Barrington Bagels, \$10 (just add to special notes). Soon we will be offering "Heat and Eat" deliveries through collaborations with Berkshire Mountain Bakery and Farm Stand Soups. If you have additional questions, please call Kim, at 917-242-9001.

## Grocery Store Services

It is advised to have only one family or household member shopping at a time to reduce the number of people in the stores, which allows for more social distancing.

**Price Chopper curbside service:** Curbside service is offered through Instacart (see above.) Go to [instacart.com](https://www.instacart.com) to place an order and arrange time for pickup. Price Chopper has dedicated parking spaces for curbside pickup and carts will be brought to your car. They have also opened the store from 6 a.m. to 7 a.m. exclusively for seniors and disabled. they close at 10 p.m. Price Chopper has an in-store pharmacy as well. 413-528-8415.

**Guido's Fresh Marketplace:** (Great Barrington) Beginning Monday, March 23, Guido's will reserve their first hour, 9 a.m. to 10 a.m., for seniors and immuno-compromised customers. They are working on establishing a curbside pickup service. They are monitoring numbers of people in the store to provide for social distancing, so some waiting outside may be necessary. Hours: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., closed Sundays. [guidosfreshmarketplace.com](https://www.guidosfreshmarketplace.com), GB phone number 413-528-9255

**Big Y (GB):** Big Y has Instacart service (see above). Not sure if this includes curbside delivery. Hours are 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., with exclusive shopping for seniors and immuno-compromised from 7 a.m. to 8 a.m. Big Y also has an in-store pharmacy. Big Y in GB, 413-528-1314.

**Berkshire Co-op:** The Berkshire Co-op hours: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. They offer curbside pickup by filling out an online order form for up to twenty items. Orders must be made by 10 a.m. for pickup no later than 4 p.m. They take credit card or owners tab number over the phone. [berkshire.coop](https://www.berkshirecoop.com), go to "Shop" for information and the order form. 413-528-9697.

## Reusable vs. Single-Use Bags

The Great Barrington select board, and the governor's office, has suspended the use of reusable shopping bags.

## Shopping Safety

**An excellent video** on bringing groceries and take-out food into your house: On YouTube, search for "Jeffrey VanWingen Safe Grocery Shopping." A family physician

in Michigan with twenty years of working with families. Thirteen minutes long.

**A podcast,** Splendid Table. Go to [splendidtable.org](https://www.splendidtable.org) and search for "Episode 704." This episode features a food safety writer and restaurateur, Kenji López-Alt, talking about the work he's been doing to research and compile real information with regards to the novel coronavirus. The interview directly addresses food shopping, transmissibility of the virus, and personal precautions.

In addition, on the podcast page for episode 704 there is a link to "Food Safety and Coronavirus: A Comprehensive Guide," which is being updated on a nearly daily basis as a result of ongoing research around the world.

In the podcast, López-Alt reports that as yet, there is no concrete evidence that viral transmission happens as a result of handling goods, however, that does not mean that one shouldn't be careful around foods selected, purchased, and brought home.

1. Shop efficiently and infrequently. Only one household person in a store at a time, and purchase enough for a week to two weeks.

2. Wear gloves. Gloves are a good way to provide a 100% barrier, and can be safely cleaned and quarantined. Have a few replacement pair in your car. When you exit the store, load your car and then remove your gloves and place them in the car.

3. When you are in your own car, and have taken precautions, you probably don't need to continue wearing gloves. However, do wear gloves at the gas pump!

4. Remember that the virus can remain active on softer surfaces (cardboard, paper) for a day, and on hard surfaces (metal, plastics, etc.) for up to three days.

5. Be careful to put incoming, potentially infected items in one spot, and thoroughly disinfected items in a clean and disinfected place. If possible, do this outside your living area for extra caution. (In a garage for example.)

6. Frozen foods: It has been determined that similar viruses can survive up to two years of freezing. Therefore, when purchasing frozen foods, disinfect the packaging, or discard the original packaging and place food into clean (uninfected) containers.

7. Pre-packaged items—quarantine them. Leave them for up to three days or longer if you can, in a place where they can sit without handling.

8. For packaged items you need to use soon, consider washing them with soap and water or disinfectant.

9. For produce, consider whether you can thoroughly wash in soap and water for twenty seconds.

10. Once you've stored your purchases, wash your hands. And either wash your gloves, or quarantine them along with your food. And wash every surface the packaging has touched.

13. The C.D.C. recommends twenty seconds of hand washing. Hot or cold water makes no difference—it is the exposure to soap. Don't wash your hands under continuously running water as you will be prematurely washing the soap away.

14. The virus is unstable in the presence of heat, so foods that are hot to eat are likely safe, including take-out. Foods heated to 150° for three minutes is a safe threshold for sterilizing the virus.

—Stephen Moore, with thanks to help from Peter Kleban





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## House Afire

In 1980 the town of Monterey mounted an invigorating, lights-out, thermostat-down community effort, and placed second overall in an international competition to reduce electricity use over a three-day period. A few years later Mickey Friedman and John MacGruer had completed their documentary, *Monterey Lights the Way: A Story of Community*.

The film's talking heads included volunteer firemen, and others at home in town for generations; the Iowa-born minister of Monterey United Church of Christ; hippies and urban lefties from away. Reticent folks noted, in muted tones, the cooperative spirit that inspired this diverse bunch to pull together. Religious folk waxed poetic, and the lefties hinted at revolution. Communal spirit just about trumped energy conservation.

But if the town lit the way, the light was intermittent, often dim. Some of the talking heads later proved less community-minded than the film made them out to be. Alliances shifted, individuals moved away.

In the mid-eighties, a small, dirt-road bridge in Monterey wore out. A group of

townspeople who crossed the bridge every day didn't like the concrete box culvert proposed by the state; they organized behind an alternative, which was to rebuild the dry-laid stone abutments and wood deck—engineered to spec. There was vigorous opposition, a packed town meeting, and a vote, which the can-do folks won. Some put up money; others offered uncounted hours of skilled, volunteer labor, and the bridge was built.

It wore out again a few years ago, and a resourceful Monterey Select Board managed to replace it at modest expense despite bureaucratic momentum to spend big. The handsome new bridge retains much of the original's rural character, including an updated version of the wooden deck.

Lately the Monterey Select Board has made more headlines by its argumentative conduct than its useful accomplishments. Meanwhile, next door, Otis is producing power with a state-of-the-art wind turbine. A special projects coordinator, right in town 24/7, keeps his experienced finger in the wind. He communicates with remote technicians who see a continual stream of data from turbine sensors. This ongoing team effort follows seven years of planning, millions in funds raised from a range of sources, all facing dedicated opposition. The clean, sustainable electricity now provides revenue for the town.

So it goes with people: one step forward, two back, persistent conflict. Since 1980, however, that little fire-drill of an energy competition has given way to global evidence of a warming climate.

The condition was once described as *The End of Nature*, a thesis that human activity had so altered the natural world that nothing was natural any more. Hmm. All of creation divided between humanity, on the one hand, and nature, on the other? That sounds like more human hubris, a species version of American exceptionalism. Is not human life, however invasive and combative, also governed by natural law? Our warmed climate reflects not the end of nature, but its very persistence. Unlike the laws humans contrive to regulate competing interests, the laws of nature cannot be gamed: they are absolute, and they decree that changes in climate take centuries to play out. The

fires, floods, storms, and extinction of species (our own?) will not abruptly be called off if we decide it was a mistake to burn all that oil and coal. Amends will be subject to the same immutable laws of nature, and slow to take effect (by impatient human measure), regardless of what we do or intend.

Add pandemic calamity, for viruses also obey natural law, as we are seeing. Slow, long-term, hard-to-accept harm from a warming climate; sudden, personal harm from a rapacious, swift, invisible agent. This is now our lot.

What to do—that is, after the curve subsides?

The economic history of the Great Depression in the US suggests an answer (as outlined by Robert Kuttner in a recent *NYTimes* OpEd\*): WWII without the war, an all-out national program employing citizens to retool our stumbling country. Update and rebuild everyday infrastructure (bridges!); manufacture solar panels; make our own medical supplies, the nuts and bolts of our atomized, costly health care system; grow and produce good food locally everywhere. Even writers, historians, and artists were conscripted in the Great Depression, and produced lasting work.

So much work to do; so many citizen-workers newly available; so little time. If the industrial and military mobilization of WWII is the economic model, the question now is, can humans do this short of war? Work, unlike a check in the mail, or two weeks of social isolation, can have lasting benefits. A crisis-mobilized national workforce could educate hands and minds to a multitude of new tasks under an overarching purpose. It might even undermine reflexive identity hostilities, as workers learn on the job how indispensable their fellow workers are, if you really want to get the job done.

Take one step forward, period.

—Peter Murkett, Monterey

\* *Editor Note: You can find Kuttner's essay, "This Stimulus Bill Will Not Save the Economy from Collapse," through the New York Times, March 22, 2020. If you would like to read his essay, email MontereyNews9@gmail.com, and a copy will be sent.*



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Dorene Beller

*The coffee club, heeding the social distancing restrictions, met alfresco between the library and the store.*

## Contributions in March 2020

Our annual fund appeal has been sent out, and folks are again opening their wallets to keep the *Monterey News* going for another year. We sincerely appreciate the quick response of those below.

- Elizabeth Wool
- Arlene & Frank Tolopko
- Dennis Sears & Rene Wood
- Louis Rigali
- Kay Purcell
- Lauren Paul
- Peter & Susan LePrevost
- Stacy Wallach & Jennifer Kay
- Dorene Beller & Laurence Roth
- Darlene Balestro
- Karen & Mel Selsky
- Michelle Scott
- Mort & Teri Salomon
- Myrna & Hy Rosen
- Maureen Regan
- Rodney Palmer
- Richard & Pauline Nault
- Laura & Thomas Mensi
- Robert Kuhner
- Seth Kershner
- Nancy Kleban
- Johnny's Garage
- Suzanne Hoppenstedt
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- Carol & Jim Edelman
- Kathy & David Crowe
- Peter Brown
- Michael & Maureen Banner
- Gillian Wells
- Margery & Cos Spagnoletti
- Patricia Ryan
- Gary Rosenberg
- Bob Rausch
- Joseph Quagliata & Sheila D'Nodal
- Sally & Steve Pullen
- Karin Moskal
- Bonner McAllester & Joe Baker
- Ian & Christa Lindsay
- Al & Beth King
- Roger Kane
- Hume New England
- Maureen Haugh
- Roy Gottlieb & Laura Hays
- Carol Sue Donelan
- Osborne & Eтта Dugan
- Norma Champigny



## MBI to Release Broadband Funds

Peter Larkin of the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) announced that MBI will drop its conditions for returning the \$1.1 million of Monterey taxpayers' money to help fund the construction of the last third of the fiber optic broadband network in Monterey. He reported hearing so many complaints from residents throughout the small, unserved towns of western Massachusetts about the unavailability of broadband to support online learning at home, as well as other concerns around safety and staying informed, that MBI reconsidered their objections.

He pointed to one complaint from a mother who said to him, "My second-grade daughter looks so cute and happy running out to the bus in the morning with her little backpack swaying back and forth, and just as happy getting home. The picture now is very different, and by early afternoon things can get ugly with our homeschooling. We need faster online access to occupy her so we can catch a break."

Coincidentally, NASA reported what looked like a cow jumping over the moon, and the USGS said they were getting data indicating that hell might be freezing over.

### CHARLES J. FERRIS Attorney at Law



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## From the Meetinghouse

I write this housebound, joining the effort to “flatten the curve” and contemplating the story I just preached on, about a man born blind whom Jesus made to see. I “preached” it, which is to say I spoke into a mic and posted it on the internet.

It’s a weird time to be a preacher.

It’s a weird time to be alive.

An hour ago, I was folding laundry and listening to a podcast. The host of it, Brook Gladstone, made note that a person’s perception of time can be predictive of their behavior. This is based on a psychological study undergone a decade or so ago. It’s back in the news, though, because a psychologist writing from Italy, Massimo Agnoletti, said as much—that whether a person focuses chiefly on the past, the present, or the future, and whether that person does so with joy or with dread, is predictive of behavior.\*

Turns out where you place yourself in time is connected with how you behave.

Same with societies, Dr. Agnoletti supposed, using this as a way to grapple with how Italy addressed coronavirus compared to how South Korea did. Italy, he was implying, is caught in the same backward looking that has captured nearly all of the Modern West, while South Korea is much more forward-looking.

It was funny to hear as I folded laundry because this was the gist of the sermon I’d

just preached—that man born blind whom Jesus healed.

He healed him by taking mud and mixing it with his own saliva and then smearing it on the man’s unseeing eyes. By this, he was made to see. And it’s striking because this mud is the same stuff God used in the beginning to make the human. According to Genesis, God used adamah, which is to say mud or clay, and which came to seem a proper name, and then came to be a proper name, Adam. But what it first meant was simply clay or mud or dirt.

By this, too, Jesus is said to complete this now-seeing man, to perfect him who had once been not-quite-done.

This all ties into a larger theme in the Gospel of John, in which this story appears. In this gospel account, we begin at the beginning—not the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, as in Mark, or the beginning of Jesus’ life, as in Matthew and Luke, but at the beginning of time, at the beginning of everything. Exactly where we began with the book of Genesis just before the first of seven storied days, so we begin here, and with the exact same phrase: “In the beginning...”

Both books thus begin. But John’s narrative diverges here. Whereas the earlier creation story recounts all the work of creating, and counts the days to completion, and even imagines a well-deserved day of rest, the newer

creation story doesn’t get much past the beginning, doesn’t recount all the labor, and certainly never reaches completion and well-deserved rest. It’s as if, according to the Gospel of John, the work of creation is on-going.

It’s not done yet.

None of this is finished yet.

And this explains a lot, don’t you think? Because there’s a lot about this created order that seems partial, not quite done. There’s a lot about life that seems downright wrong. This virus is but one more piece of evidence of such, as if we needed one more piece. This virus, and its physical effects, and social effects, and economic effects: the ramifications are on a magnitude I’ve never seen in my lifetime, which might be the same for you. All it takes is a little imagination and a normal portion of empathy to figure that people are going to suffer this for a long time to come, and some more than others, and still others terribly, terribly.

And the typical way of imagining why so much of the world seems so very wrong involves a backward look. We’re “broken,” we suppose. We’ve “fallen,” say the faithful. And thus it’s commonly assumed that the task (at least for the faithful) is to get back to that once-perfect state. Even Joni Mitchell knows it, having insisted in her song, “Woodstock,” “We’ve got to get ourselves back to the garden.”

Well, I reject this as our task, and I reject it on good grounds.

First of all, it can’t be done. There is no going back. There never has been. No matter how hard we try (and these days we’ve been trying hard) we will never manage to get back to what once was. Surely, this is the implication of those strange details in the expulsion from the garden. Do you know this? A cherubim is told to be guarding the east gate, and a flaming sword forbids approach to the tree of life, which is the way back. Surely, these are to say (among many other things) that there is one direction you can travel in this life, and it isn’t back.

Second, there’s another way to imagine why what’s wrong is wrong and how best to make it right: go forward (for God is with you). Keep on keeping on (for God is with us). Just before Jesus healed that once-blind man, he explained

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to the disciples that this man was blind not because he had sinned or because his parents had sinned but so the works of God might be revealed in him. This is to suggest that the works of God are ongoing, that what presents itself in the present is partial, incomplete. This is to suggest that the perfect state which is our yearning hasn't already passed but is yet to be, isn't one from which we have fallen but one amidst which we are yet to arrive.

It's for this that Jesus says in this gospel, "We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day for night is coming when no one can work." It's for this, too, that Jesus says this in the gospel, "You will do the works that I do and even greater works than these." So is the task, not to get back but to go forth, to do the work of perfecting and creating, to face the future in courage and hope.

I've been thinking a lot lately about the future-shock we as a society seem to be suffering, about the nostalgia that has gripped our politics, nostalgia being a yearning for a past that never was. And I get it. I look back on my life and yearn for more than a few things, things that were good in the living of them and even better in the remembering of them. If I could hold one of my babies again. If I could live in my little starter-house again. If I could be a bride again, or a divinity school student again, or an eight-year-old again. (I had a really awesome bike. I loved that thing.) I get it. I do.

I've been thinking about all this lurching backward even more pressingly as I consider how the federal government seems to have ducked and weaved about what was coming and what is now here. And I don't know whether Dr. Agnoletti is right in his suppositions exactly, but it makes sense to me that how we imagine ourselves in time determines a lot about how we will behave in time. So how shall we imagine ourselves in time?

Because, as of now, we've got lots of time to imagine it—when we're not anxious, when we're not (some of us) sick or (many of us) suffering.

How shall we imagine ourselves in time?

I say we're not finished yet. I say we are far from perfect and complete. I say also this current crisis presses upon us a renewed chance to get to work—to

reimagine what life together should look like, to reconsider what the good life actually might be, to do even greater works than what has come before.

Once we've all worked to flatten the curve—which is strange work but is indeed work in that it is socially draining and economically costly—we will have the chance to build anew, and it could be something more human than the abstractions that have come before, and it could be more humane than the grind, as life once had been. It could be more real and less ideological. It could be more loving of the neighbor, at least as much as the self. It could be something that honors the truth of how very interrelated we all (so clearly now) are—all people, all creation. And this would thus make us more resilient when facing such imperfection as we now face.

For we long will face such grotesque imperfections. We will long be confronted with evidence that something here is very wrong. Really, every century or so something comes along to bring the world to its knees, so this will happen again. I saw *By the Skin of Our Teeth* last summer, a play by Thornton Wilder which the Berkshire Theater Group staged. It was weird and funny and upsetting and true: something comes along every millennium or so that calls into existential question all civilization. This work of perfecting: we're far from finished with it, or it is far from finished with us.

So, let's keep at it. Imagine that we're not at the end of all that's been great, or operating under the frustrating, impossible imperative to "get back to the garden."

## How are Monterey Business Planning for this Future?

This crisis is rippling out in so many ways, and the impacts are being felt at every level. So how are Monterey businesses working to avoid their own calamity from this?

If you have a business, and are building a strategy to keep going, send the *Monterey News* some information about your plans. Feel free to include a photo or two. Your ideas may spark ideas for others.

The continued success of our businesses, and really, our neighbors who benefit from these businesses, should be of interest to all of us. Dean Hutson, of Monterey T-shirts ([montereytshirts.com](http://montereytshirts.com)), has offered to help put the ideas together for some articles.

Let the *Monterey News* help get the word out, and perhaps give Monterey residents an incentive to help you out.

— Stephen Moore, Editor  
MontereyNews9@gmail.com  
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Imagine instead that we're in the middle of something amazing, moreover at the beginning of something beautiful.

Let's go, then.

I mean, I'll wait. We all should, so let's all sit right where we are for now.

But then let's go.

—Pastor Liz Goodman

\* *Editor's Note: To hear the podcast, go to "Bracing for Impact" from On the Media, with Brook Gladstone and Bob Garfield, from minutes 7:05 to 10:30.*

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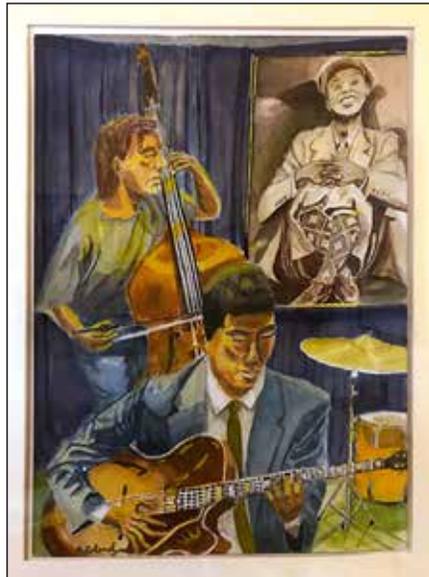
f p t i h

## The Best Little Job in Town

One summer afternoon about five years ago, I saw a notice at the Monterey General Store bulletin board advertising a free four-week poetry series starting that very evening. Though I could only make that first session, I was charmed to be able to walk next door and delve into some poems with the guidance of a Yale professor.

Another evening, after going out to dinner with an old friend who was in town for the weekend, we followed a sign directing us into the Monterey United Church of Christ for some traditional music. As I recall, it was a trio with accordion, fiddle, and bass. We strolled in feeling privileged at the serendipitous chance to enjoy beautiful music in the sacred, calm space.

And on a cold winter's night just last month, which now seems so long ago, Bradley and I strode up the hill for the first of the Monterey Community Center coffee house performances. He was not initially enthusiastic. "Will it be dorkey?" he asked. It most decidedly was not. Rather, it was an opportunity to hear two veteran musicians up close riffing off one another in a spirited assortment of southern blues. Pete Poirier, a local musician on guitar and vocals, was accompanied by Mike Law on a standup bass, which he sometimes plucked percussively, and on electric bass guitar. Their banter suggested they didn't often play together but were totally enjoying the experience of sparking off each other's talent.



*This isn't Peter Poirier or Mike Law at the community center, but rather a painting by Alan Roland, who will hopefully have a showing in the Knox Gallery later this year.*

The evening ended with two Freddie King compositions, "Hideaway," a cross-over hit you may recall from the early sixties, and "Sad Night Owl," a haunting instrumental that sounded somehow familiar, as if it could have been playing on the jukebox of the diner in Edward Hopper's famous painting, "Nighthawks." With the lights dimmed, and a few round tables near the makeshift stage, the community center felt warm—coffeehouse-ish even—and with quilts baffling the sound around the corners, the acoustics were excellent (as were the desserts and snacks).

All of these events I so enjoyed, and many more, were funded, at least in part, by the Monterey Cultural Council, which annually divvies up \$4,800 of state funds and, typically, \$3,000 from the town into a couple of dozen or more awards: It supports a ukulele band and a choral series, local history lectures and internships at the Bidwell House, arts and crafts fairs, and art talks at the Knox Gallery, as well as a myriad of offerings for children at the Monterey Library and local schools.

These happenings weave texture, music, knowledge, friendliness, inspiration, and imagination into the cultural and social fabric of this little town. Thanks to such events, without traveling far, we are offered ideas to ponder and opportunities to meet others. Or, we were, prior to this period of social distancing when we have to rely more on our own resources (and those, thankfully, of the now-only-online Monterey Library and the World Wide Web and Mother Nature).

After reading in this paper last fall that cultural council members were urgently needed, I signed on. New members are still needed—and I can hardly imagine a better civic position: as a member of the council, you'll have the chance, nay, the duty, to grant funds to worthy artists of many stripes, as well as writers, educators, craftspersons, and historians. Many of the pillars of this community have served on the council at one time or another, and they are certainly welcome back. We hope to energize the council with younger and more diverse voices.

We're also planning an event for later this summer (with luck, and smart collective action) where you can meet current and past members of the cultural council, as well as some of our grantees, and tell us about what kinds of cultural events you are most interested in. One of our members, Maggie Barkin, is planning to workshop a play on the history of the Bidwell family and Township #1 that she began researching but set aside years ago.

Maggie's work on the play—she started it after receiving a \$100 grant to do so—points to another function of the cultural council funds. The very act of applying for a grant, she pointed out,



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## A Local Prince Charming

Prince Charming has spectacular ears fringed in feathery white fur. His light brown eyes are wise and calming, surrounded by black patches of fur. Small tusks jut out from the corners of his mouth. His pink and black snout wriggles and flexes as he roots in the earth. He has a slight limp on his front leg, so his movement style is unique. He raises his back and shoulders as he hoists himself forward in a rhythmic shuffle. With each lift-hop, his ears flick and flap. He has sand-toned legs, a mostly white face, and a body of smoky black on white swirls. He is the star boar at Gould Farm. His mission is to join up with a mate or two and produce offspring. He's here for a visit from The Farm New Marlborough, owned by Tom Brazie. At The Farm, Princey, as Tom calls him, has five sow sweethearts: Aurora, Flora, Fauna, Marywether, and Malificent. Princey is now the papa of thirty-five piglets, just days old.

I've been visiting Prince Charming at Gould this winter with my husband Peter. Princey is special. And he's so adorable it's not even funny. He's only here briefly, so each visit is precious. I like to talk to him and tell him how cozy he looks. I ask him if his lunch is delicious,

and the thrill of receiving one, can bring creative projects into sharper focus.

A few weeks ago Maggie and I listened to a webinar from other councils statewide. Some of the ideas they have brought into fruition included public artworks—like colorful electrical boxes along the sidewalk decorated with haikus, an outdoor labyrinth, a musical fence, a drum circle, a virtual recreation of historical buildings. The creative possibilities are endless; come help us imagine and realize them all.

—Janet Jensen

If you are interested in learning more about—or would like to join the Monterey Cultural Council, contact us by writing to P.O. Box 282, Monterey, MA 01245. Or speak to one of us if you see us around town: Maggie Barkin, Wendy Germain, or me, Janet Jensen.



Anna Poirier

and whether he's having a nice day. This is done in a "who's a good boy?" voice, because that's what he is! I give him pets—his fur is wiry and coarse—and tell him how glad I am that he's here. As he sleeps, I watch his sides rise and fall. I listen to the meditative sound of his breathing, deep and slow. I inhale and exhale along with him.

In the wind and cold, Prince Charming is elusive. He may be out, lounging or milling. But often he's tucked in his hut with just one ear visible. He shares a hay-lined home with Charlotte and Mystery. A rubber curtain hangs in the opening, sliced into flaps for easy access. Sometimes Princey lies across the entryway. No one can get in or out unless he budes. On the ground outside are vegetable scraps and remnants of a pine tree. There's a big tire to lean against and scratch itchy parts. Meal time brings muted snuffs, grunts, and slurps as the pigs eat. Or there may be a cacophony of exasperated squeals as everyone pushes and nudges to get the best bits.

As the weather changes, Princey is out more, lolling on a thick bed of hay with Charlotte and Mystery. They nestle, sigh, and sleep together on the soft pile. Nearby, a calf moos loudly. This gets the other calves going in bursts of bass and baritone moos. The two alpacas, ever curious, look on with fascination. The pigs are deep in slumber. Watching the sun shining on them, their ears twitching occasionally, the scent of hay in the air, everything is all right.

—Anna Poirier

*Editor's Note: It should be noted that Gould Farm does not wish to have visitors at this time.*

## Monterey-Community Online Community Connections

A virus-free, social-distanced way to rub elbows with your neighbors: the Monterey-Community is an email-based group to post and read about what's going on in our town and nearby. The forum is on Google Groups. If you send me an email I will send you an invitation to join. Thereafter you can read and post with the other members of the group. Postings to the group are moderated for appropriateness.

There are currently about 145 members and growing. The Monterey town website has very good content but no chat and the *Monterey News* has its finger on the pulse of town. We are another thread in the weave of Monterey.

Join the conversations.

—Christopher Blair  
christopher.blair@gmail.com



Anna Poirier

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## Monterey News Fifty Years Celebration

The *Monterey News* is celebrating fifty years as a monthly town newspaper from its inception on March 24, 1970. For this milestone year, we will publish monthly articles looking back at the stories and highlights covered during the past fifty years. We hope you will enjoy the big stories, the small ones, and the personal vignettes.

## Monterey News, 1985-1989

In 1985 the Monterey Land Trust was organized under the leadership of Bob Thieriot, seeking information on tracts of land in the town and as a repository for the preservation of land. In the next few years the Land Trust was given two tracts of land on Barnum Flats (thirty acres along Route 23 and Fairview Road) and Gould Road (twenty four acres). The parcels would preserve Monterey's water quality and provide Gould Farm with open fields for harvesting crops. The land trust also received a woodland parcel at the south corner of New Marlborough Road and Wellman Road and another lot on Keyes corner near Chestnut Hill Road. Shel Fenn's two-hundred-acre Woodburn Farm on Corashire Road was accepted into the Massachusetts APR program (Agricultural Preservation and Restriction Program) in 1989. The land trust assisted Shel in the application process and raised the matching funds needed for the APR. Woodburn farm will be preserved from any future development.

Bob Ensign wrote about the history of Brookbend Inn (now a building of

condos in the center of Monterey). Bob wrote that his father, Ray Ensign, started the Berkshire Summer School of Art on Art School Road in 1915. In 1920 Ray purchased the Brookbend Inn to provide housing for the art school overflow. Bob recalled spending many weekends in the 1930s at Brookbend and skiing at the Great Barrington S Ranch (now Butternut Basin). In 1974, Bob returned to Monterey and purchased the badly decaying Brookbend Inn building, restored it, and converted it to an apartment building. Years later, Bill Brockman purchased the building and converted it to condos.

In 1985, Avalon School on Main Road closed due to financial issues and health and safety hazards. The school had operated since 1949. In March Roger Tryon began a maple sugar operation which continues to this day. Don Amstead became the new highway superintendent. Virgil Brallier retired as minister of the church. Lake Buel purchased a weed harvester in an effort to control weeds on the lake. Ellen Pearson resigned as editor of the *Monterey News* after eight years.

1986, David McAllester became the new editor of the *Monterey News*. Dick and Barbara Tryon sold their herd of cows through a federal buy-out program. They continued farming with production of hay for horses, maple syrup

and Christmas trees. In July, there was a birthday celebration for Wallace (age 92) and Nina Tryon (age 95) (Ray's father and aunt). Nina died a few weeks later after suffering a stroke. Nina and her cousin, Della Tryon, ran the Tryon's Tea Room (next to the church) for many years from the 1930s to the 1950s. It was a popular spot for summer campers and for anyone who enjoyed home made ice cream. The building was built in 1929 and torn down in 2019.

In February 1988 the second floor of the town hall (the Monterey school house) was closed due to sagging beams from the weight of the file cabinets and people attending meetings. The town arranged with the Grange to rent space in their building. The Grange offered to give the building to the town, which was accomplished by town meeting vote.

After several years of trying to meet the state's requirement for a public boat access to Lake Garfield and mulling different sites around the lake, the public boat ramp was installed in its present location adjacent to the beach.

The entire April 1988 *Monterey News* newspaper was an April Fool's joke. A fun read.

In the fall of 1988 volunteers created a skating rink inside the pavilion behind the firehouse for skating and hockey games.

—Cindy Hoogs



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The crisis of COVID-19 has, in a way, expanded the meaning of community as folks find ways to be hopeful, to understand how to think or feel, or just to share different sorts of joy. Below are samples that came to the Monterey News from Monterey folks. The Monterey-Community Google group, Facebook, or other feeds have provided these kernels of language and thought. The common message—“Hold on and we’ll get through this.”



*Even the cows are keeping safe social distances.*

The cows in their “(It’s a) Wonderful World”

I see fields of green, cows singing moo  
 They all act calm, for me and for you.  
 And I think to myself—what a wonderful world.  
 The colors of the rainbow, so pretty in the sky  
 Also on the faces of people going by  
 I see friends shaking hands, saying how do you do  
 They’re only saying, I love you”

We might not be able to hug or shake hands at the moment, but we are all in this together and are very loved and blessed to have one another!  
 “This too shall pass.”

Love, peace, and chicken grease,  
 —Farmer Tom Brazie  
 Farm New Marlborough

“There are decades where nothing happens;  
 and there are weeks where decades happen.”  
 —Vladimir Ilyich Lenin



Hope is a state of mind, not of the world.  
 Hope, in this deep and powerful sense,  
 is not the same as joy that things are going well, or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously heading for success, but rather an ability to work for something because it is good.

—Vaclav Havel



This is the time to be slow,  
 Lie low to the wall  
 Until the bitter weather passes.  
 Try, as best you can, not to let  
 The wire brush of doubt  
 Scrape from your heart  
 All sense of yourself  
 And your hesitant light.  
 If you remain generous,  
 Time will come good;  
 And you will find your feet  
 Again on fresh pastures of promise,  
 Where the air will be kind  
 And blushed with beginning.

—John O’Donohue

Excerpt from “To Bless the Space  
 Between Us: A Book of Blessings”

## Monterey Community Center Where We've Been

As you all know, the Monterey Community Center has been closed until at least mid-April to ensure the health and well-being of our townsmen. It is a popular gathering spot with activities taking place every day and has added a much needed boost to the social life in Monterey. As we approach the third anniversary of the opening of the community center this month, it's a good time to look back and re-visit some of the many wonderful activities that have taken place there.

Special events are always a highlight of the programming at the MCC. One of the most memorable and well attended was a screening of Karen Allen's adaptation of Carson McCuller's short story, *A Tree, A Rock, A Cloud*. The MCC was packed to capacity and many people had to be turned away. After showing the film, Karen, a Monterey resident, graciously answered questions about how and why it was made, to the delight of her fellow residents. It was such a popular event that another screening took place so that everyone who was turned away would have a chance to see the film. Another dramatic presentation was Amber Chand's one woman show, *Searching for the Moon*, where she beautifully portrayed her life growing up on three different continents.

Many educational presentations have taken place at the MCC, such as Joe Baker's painting classes (above right), food preservation with Kevin West, acupuncture with Kevin Goldberg, and Sue Young's workshops on the college admission process.



Let's not forget the gardening panel hosted by Steve Pullen (above), which was supposed to be replicated this year but was

postponed due to the closure of the MCC. Hopefully, it will be re-scheduled for next spring. Additional workshops included memoir writing with Sonia Pilcer, songwriting with Robin Oherin, and mindful art making with Kit Patten. Most recently, Molly Goodchild very patiently shared her experience in knitting with a small group including this author who now has a potholder to show for her efforts.



Of course, there are the many groups that have met at the MCC on a regular basis. Yoga with Connie Wilson has a nice core of regular attendees, and card playing (above and top right) has enthusiastically



been embraced by the Council on Aging.

Ping pong players have been meeting regularly and for awhile we had an enthusiastic group of board game and majong players.



The holiday makers fair (above) has taken place at the MCC with great success. The latest addition to the MCC lineup has been a coffeehouse with Peter Poirier and Mike Law which was well attended by an appreciative audience. More of these coffeehouses will take place when the MCC is once more opened.

All of the good times at the Monterey Community Center will happen again, but in the meantime, be well, be safe, and look out for one another.

—Laurie Shaw  
Chair, Monterey Community  
Center

Christopher Blair

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## Monterey News It's Been a Great Fifty Years

The *Monterey News* has achieved fifty years of continuous publication, but it has become significantly more costly to produce. Financial trouble has been brewing for a while. The *Monterey News* board is hereby announcing that due to rising expenses the directors have decided that a radical restructuring is required. During the morning session of the annual mid-January day-long retreat, held at the Red Lion Inn, many solutions were brainstormed. After the catered luncheon of surf-and-turf, discussion centered around how we could tighten our belts any further, if at all!

Since the retreat, a technology subcommittee, with members Bonner McAllester, Roz Halberstadter, and Steve Snyder, met several times to consider a whole new approach to producing the "paper." Snyder led the discussion by saying that the two principal expenses are the printing costs and the editor's salary, with mailing expenses as a third issue. The group looked into a variety of formats, and has recommended to the full board that the publication be put together using an open Google document, where all the writers, or anyone else for that matter, could help with making decisions, adding content, editing text, and doing page layouts. They even proposed a new name, the *Monterey WikiNews*. It was pointed out that this would be especially well suited for those people in town who actually had access to the internet via some version of "high-speed broadband."

As a totally electronic media, other sources of revenue could be generated by advertising links with click fees, paid listings in a personals column for local seniors wanting to hookup (once the coronavirus scare is over), and sponsoring an online betting portal.

Final decisions will be made at the summer retreat in late July, to be held at the Cranwell Resort in Lenox, if there's any contributors' money still left.

— Stephen Moore  
Editor (for a while still)



## Lake Garfield Working Group

While it has been several months since last reporting in the *Monterey News*, the Lake Garfield Working Group (LGWG) has continued to hold its monthly open meetings in the town hall. Among the issues that continue to be the focus of our work are: 1) keeping abreast of other lake management efforts in the Berkshires as well as partnering opportunities; 2) ongoing effort to develop mechanisms for monitoring and reporting toxic cyanobacteria; 3) reviewing grant funding opportunities; 4) reviewing water milfoil mitigation efforts and 5) funding for continued efforts of diver-assisted suction harvesting of these invasive weeds and evidence-based monitoring of the lake ecosystem.

Following the newly instated social distancing protocols for town meetings, the LGWG met on Monday, March 19, by conference call, including one member calling in from Florida. The focus of the meeting was the 2020-21 budget request of \$30,000 submitted to the combined select board/finance committee meeting of March 4. The purpose of these funds is to maintain an ongoing effort to mitigate the propagation of this invasive weed and insure continuity in the monitoring of the lake ecology crucial to effective management. While questions were raised from the finance committee about why such an expense would not best be covered by a lake tax district, it was noted that the formation of such a district could neither be insured nor instituted in less than three to five years. For this reason, the recognition of the importance of Lake Garfield to the whole town, the

recent experience of the Stockbridge Bowl (Lake Mahkeenac), as well as the longstanding efforts involving other Berkshire lakes, it was the general view stated by a member of the select board that in our facing this problem, "It is better to invest \$30,000 a year now than \$250,000 a year several years from now," and the select board voted to place the budget request on the warrant for the next annual town meeting.

The next meeting of the Lake Garfield Working Group is scheduled to take place by conference call at 7 p.m., on Monday, April 13. All interested parties are encouraged to attend subject to instructions from town hall concerning conference calls.

— Steve Snyder  
Chair, Lake Garfield Working Group

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## Beaked Hazelnuts Nuts Living on the Edge

We have some wild nuts in town, called beaked hazelnuts and the Latin name is *Corylus cornuta*. That second name, the “species name,” looks as if it might be about a crown as in our new Latin vocabulary word, *corona*. The first word, or genus name, tells us this plant is a “hazel,” and the species name is not about crowns, but about horns. We could call the nut a horned hazel in English, or “Hazel, horned.”

Hazels or hazel nuts are also known as filberts, and we have wild native filberts, loved by many a blue jay and squirrel, also by anyone interested in wild foraging. The plants are considered to be shrubs, since their woody above-ground gets about ten feet high. Their underground presence is a dense, shallow system of intertwined lateral roots and rhizomes down to about six inches, plus a taproot that goes down two feet or more. Where they grow along a roadside, or start to move into the edge of a field or lawn, they may get mowed from time to time. Not discouraged, they will spring up again soon, with long flexible shoots. The Indians used to burn back the beaked hazelnut shrubs in order to encourage new shoots. These sprouts were used for making fish traps, baskets, and baby carriers. Oregon Indians, the Coquille, promoted both sprout growth and nut production by burning the hazelnut fields every five years.

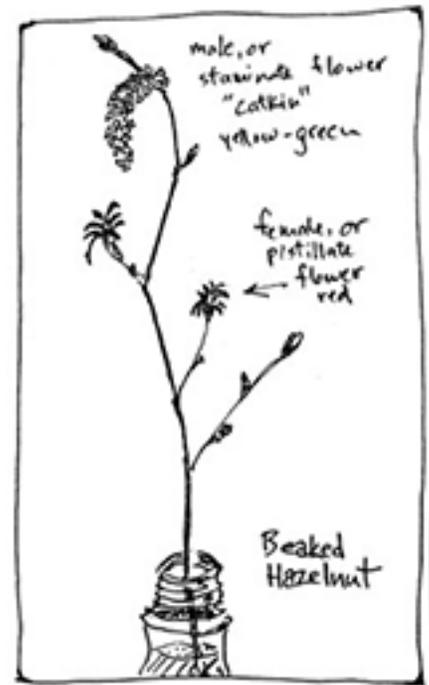
Without human interference or management, flooding and fires help maintain the beaked hazelnut population. Even if some of us are not interested in

nuts, the beaked hazelnuts are our pals in the bioregion as their leaves decompose fast and put nutrients into the ground. Their leaf litter is full of nitrogen, calcium, and magnesium.



Some of us are interested in nuts. The Coquille Indians picked them in early fall and stored them until they were fully ripe. From my own experience, I bet the early picking was a way to get some before the squirrels and jays made their own harvest. These wild neighbors are early harvesters themselves, and store the nuts while they are still green. Once they had ripened, the Indians would eat them roasted or raw, also pound them into cakes, adding berries, meat, and animal fat. They found that milk made from the meat of the nuts could cure coughs and colds, and could heal cuts. Besides making woven fishtraps and baskets the Indians somehow twisted the long flexible shoots to make rope. This I will have to try.

Meanwhile, it is spring, and we can take a close look at all sorts of new flowers. Hazelnuts have separate male and female blossoms, occurring on the same plant. For this reason they are classified as “monoecious,” or having one household with both males and females in residence. Some plants and many animals are “dioecious,” having separate individuals for male and female equipment, and identity.



Looking quickly at a hazelnut plant, the flowers that stand out are the big boys. These look at first like little pinecones, but then they grow longer and more delicate-looking and become covered with pollen. They are known as catkins. Meanwhile, the females are exploding from small buds along the same twigs, with bright red fingers bursting from the pointed end, looking like the top of a jester’s cap. They are small, they are lively and brilliant. The busy wind takes pollen the short distance to a female flower and over the next three months you can see a genuine beaked hazel nut forming! It is fatter and fatter, has a sort of fuzzy hull, and a long “beak” off the end. Each nut is one seed and they often come in clusters of two to six.

Every two to three years brings a bumper crop. Someone in Alberta did a study and found in one year, 1968, a crop of 13,000 nuts per acre. The next year, in the same place, only 44 nuts. This was not

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## Bidwell Museum Uncertain Spring Schedule

In 2020 the Bidwell House Museum celebrates its thirtieth anniversary—traditionally, the “Pearl” anniversary—which seems a fitting symbol to celebrate the thirtieth year of this “hidden gem” in the Monterey woods. The museum opened its doors in May 1990 to share the story of Rev. Adonijah Bidwell and his family and through them, the story of life in the eighteenth century Berkshire Hills. Since its opening, the museum has welcomed thousands of people, young and old, to the bucolic property and restored home, its remote forested setting a perfect backdrop to imagine life three hundred years ago. In planning the upcoming season, we were excited about the prospect of presenting a mix of much-loved recurring programs like the History Talk series and the Bidwell Country Fair, along with new initiatives like a Revolutionary War Era Reenactment Weekend and free Friday tours for Berkshire residents.

Our typical April article would contain information about summer programs that have been confirmed, but the Bidwell House Museum, along with everyone else, has to adapt to the ever-changing situation with COVID-19. Protecting the health and safety of our members, guests, and staff is our top priority. We recognize that to avoid the spread of the COVID-19 virus we all

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a “poor year” for rainfall or sunlight, just part of the normal life of the plant. It could have made for a poor year for squirrels or jays, but the wild folks have a varied diet and move over to another source. Maybe they stored up tons in 1968 so they stayed fed by nuts until 1971. Maybe the Alberta nut-counting scientists have some ideas about this.

Like so much in the natural world, the more you know, the more you find you don’t know. You get to choose whether to stake out the nut-hoarders over the next three years, or just embrace this particular mystery and work on basket weaving and rope twining instead, for right now. The beaked hazelnuts make us rich in so many ways, including how to make some choices for later and others for right now.

—Bonner McAllester

need to practice social distancing and this means the postponement or cancellation of group events.

As of mid-March the museum’s 2020 schedule is in flux and there is no way to guess where we will be when you read this in April. The museum had to postpone the Knox Trail Lecture that was scheduled for April 4, and plans to remain closed until Memorial Day weekend, our traditional opening. We are still hopeful that we will be able to present the opening concert and Thirtieth Anniversary Celebration Kickoff on May 24, though it seems unlikely that the situation will be resolved by then and that event may have to be rescheduled. We hope to be able to hold events like July’s Bidwell Country Fair or the History Talk lecture series but without knowing how the summer will play out, we are discussing digital options, online tours, and other creative ways to allow you to experience the museum even if the cultural distancing protocols extend into the summer.

Don’t forget that the museum’s four miles of trails are open every day from dawn until dusk, free of charge. With so many confined to their homes, a walk outside is one of the best healthy activities you can engage in right now. Take care of your mind and body by spending time in the natural world to alleviate stress and anxiety. We hope you can find time to get outside, take deep breaths, and feel rejuvenated. The staff only ask that you follow CDC guidelines and maintain a healthy distance

from anyone else you encounter on the trail. Our trail map can be viewed and printed from our website at [bidwellhousemuseum.org](http://bidwellhousemuseum.org) by going to “The Museum,” then click on “Garden and Trails.”

We will also post updates on other activities on the museum’s website, our Facebook and Instagram pages, as well as via our email newsletter. If you do not get our newsletter, you can sign up at the bottom of the museum’s website home page, [bidwellhousemuseum.org](http://bidwellhousemuseum.org). Our staff will be working from home during this time; email is the best way to reach us at [bidwellhouse@gmail.com](mailto:bidwellhouse@gmail.com).

We would also like to express our appreciation to all of the museum’s members and supporters. The museum’s trustees, other volunteers, and staff have worked very hard over the past thirty years to preserve, sustain, and improve this historic “pearl” of a property. While we recognize that economic conditions right now are uncertain, the museum relies each year on the generosity of our members to provide this vibrant resource to the community. We hope you will consider renewing your membership, which you can do through our website. Or, if you’re not already a member, please join. Thank you!

We look forward to reopening the museum and welcoming you to our thirtieth year of celebrating history.

—Heather Kowalski  
Executive Director



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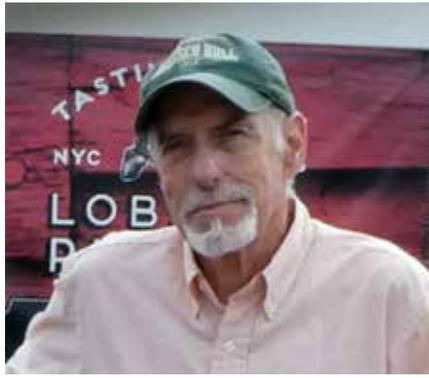
## Remembrance Robert McMahon

Robert James McMahon died at home in West Otis on February 17 after a six-month struggle with acute leukemia. He was born in Winthrop, Massachusetts on December 12, 1943, son of James F. McMahon and Rita (Marcoullier) McMahon. The family later settled in Westfield and built a cabin in Monterey on Lake Garfield in 1958 where they summered for many years.

As a high school senior, Bob entered an architectural design competition and won a full scholarship to Pratt Institute's School of Architecture in Brooklyn, NY. After practicing his profession in NYC for a few years, he and his wife, Jeanne Randorf, moved to the family cabin in Monterey.



They were married there under a huge pine tree. In 1980, Bob realized his dream of buying an old farmhouse (in West Otis) to renovate as a home for their family. In



1991, he moved his practice from Great Barrington to a studio in a new barn at his home, which also included a wood shop, as Bob was not just a creative architect and designer, but a skilled builder and problem-solver. His many clients appreciated his talent for spatial organization as well as his respect for setting and history.

Bob had a deep connection with the natural world. He loved managing the fields and woods at his home. In 2010, he read that Eastern songbird species had declined 67%. So he created a massive garden to encourage bees, birds, butterflies, and native plants. He not only had a deep sense of idealism but took concrete steps to make the world around him a better place. As part of this commitment to bettering his community, he took on the role of chairman of the committee to build a new school; he worked with the recycling effort to bring money back to Otis; maintained flower barrels at the transfer station; and lately was elected to the planning board. After retiring in 2017, Bob devoted himself to artistic pursuits, especially drawing. His last project was to save an old chicken house/sugar house structure on his

property. He worked on it for his last three years, mostly alone, turning that wreck of a building into a jewel of a space. He was strong, hard-working and courageous—the latter quality served him well during his grueling struggle with cancer.

Bob will be sorely missed by his wife, Jeanne Randorf; his children Emma McMahon (Dan MacLeod) and Alex McMahon (Olivia); and his two baby granddaughters Thomasina McMahon and Rose MacLeod. He leaves his siblings, Nancy McMahon of Middleboro, Ron McMahon (Jackie Smith) of Monterey, Wayne McMahon of Butler, KY, and Jeffrey McMahon of Canaan, CT. He is also mourned by many dear friends and family members who enjoyed his kindness, his quiet unassuming nature and playful sense of humor.

A memorial service will take place at the cabin Bob renovated on April 25.

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## In the Woods Monterey, 1977 to 1981

As I understand the history, in 1958 the land on the north side of the Little Lake part of Lake Garfield was subdivided and sold off as building lots. My husband Bob's parents, Jim and Rita McMahon, bought one and his dad built a simple two-room structure. The main part housed a galley kitchen and living space. Smaller areas were walled off for a bathroom and three bedrooms—two tiny ones for the parents and the only girl, Nancy, and a small bunkroom for the four boys—Bob, Wayne, Ron, and Jeffrey. They lived in Westfield and summered at the lake, along with uncles, aunts, and cousins who also had built cabins on the Brewer Circle hill, just off Sylvan Road.

When I met Bob in New York City in 1974, I had spent my life as a city girl, born and raised in Chicago, studied abroad in Strasbourg and Paris, and had lived in New York City for nine years. And like many urbanites, I had a romantic view of country living. Bob introduced me to the Berkshires where we visited the cabin, which was not being used very much in those days. We were getting serious about each other and about moving out of the city to a more rural place. Bingo! Brainstorm! We offered to winterize the cabin in return for the privilege of living in it until we could find a way to support ourselves in our new lives. The deal was made. After our wedding at the cabin, under a huge pine tree, on June 25, 1977, Bob and I moved in with our blended family of five cats and an Irish setter.

So here's what I learned about winterizing:

1: Bob had the skills. He was an architect and had experience working on brownstone renovations in New York.

Thank goodness or we might have frozen to death the first winter.

2: This winterizing project was going to be very low-tech; shovels and a pick, not a backhoe; boulder removal by muscle, not dynamite; concrete mixed in a bucket, not brought in by a truck. My Bob was never afraid of hard work.

3 - Winterizing is a spectrum, not an absolute. I remember waking one morning to see that snow had drifted onto the bedroom floor through a small crack in the window. Ominously, it wasn't melting. So, somewhat winterized that year.

The first project was to dig a room under the bathroom (the cabin was on piers) to house the water tank and pump in a heated space. Bob did the digging, and passed rocks out to me standing next to the house. Then came a really huge boulder. It was quite a struggle and I don't remember how we finally did it. But we did. And I made an important decision. I would quit construction work, find a job, and make us some money. I traded my work gloves and overalls for a sales clerk's red gingham smock at Jennifer House, the Great Barrington version of Vermont Country Store. And Bob got more efficient help from his brother Ron.

There was a lot of snow that first winter. I don't know if we were the first people to live year-round on Sylvan Road, but we were the only ones there during those three winters. Christmas Day, 1977, we were snowed in. Sylvan Road was/is a private road and only plowed occasionally on weekends for folks to come skiing. But there was a family gathering at his parents' home in Westfield, so we shoveled a half-mile of road so the VW Beetle (tomato-soup red with black convertible top) could make it out. I believe I fell asleep at dinner.

Lots of crazy things happened as this city girl figured out life in the country. One was that you had to remember to put gas in the car if you want to make it to work. Another is that all trails in the Berkshires go uphill. Even on the return journey. One of Bob's crazier ideas was that in order to hike somewhere that we couldn't bring Louie the dog, we had to take her (yes, her) for a hike the day before in order to "tire her out." It amused me that he thought that could work—that it wouldn't be more likely me to tire out than the dog.

One of those years was the first "Monterey Lights the Way" day. I enjoyed sewing and had made connections with a group of women who gathered regularly to make a quilt for a raffle on that day. The leader, a woman named Leslie, gave us cardboard patterns to make the squares. We provided fabric and sewed at home as well as together. Delightful Mille Walsh from the gas station was part of our group. Then came the moment to put all of the squares together; the unsettling discovery was that each of us used a slightly different seam allowance so the squares were not all exactly the same size. It took a lot of stretching and bunching and creative edgings by people more clever than me to get it all together. But we did, and out there somewhere is the lucky winner of our communal effort, perhaps still being kept warm by that quilt.



I didn't last long at Jennifer House. By a rather convoluted route, I wound up with a small screen printing operation in one of the Housatonic Mill buildings. So I wound up printing t-shirts for Monterey Day as well. One day, Bob found us our new home in a real estate flyer at the laundromat. It was every architect's dream—an old farmhouse in desperate need of saving. Once again he dived into an enormous, and decades long, project, gutting and then rebuilding our home in West Otis. Our focus moved from an idyllic life as a couple in Monterey to a new life in our own home and a baby on the way. But to this day, seeing golden sunlight coming through pines takes me back to that sweet time at the cabin in a pine grove on beautiful Lake Garfield. And to being young, and in love, and ready to take on the world.

—Jeanne Randorf

## The Mystical Mute Swan

When we moved from Monterey to Buzzards Bay, we were within walking distance of a lighthouse that is obsolete and is now a public park called Ned's Point. We were thrilled in the morning when Mute Swans went winging past our windows at dawn, to land and glide gracefully in the waters around the historic seaside landmark. Now that spring along the coastline has brought open waters, they will once again appear around the park as a symbol of the mystical aura of an old world species from "across the pond." They were brought to this country at the beginning of the nineteenth century to decorate our parks, estates, and wildlife reservations, recalling royal courtyard images, floating on the moats around Windsor Castle owned by the monarch of England. Yet they are not entirely mute, having a variety of quieter vocal expressions, much quieter than their native cousins, the bugling Trumpeter Swan.

By the turn of the twentieth century, they were doubling their population every ten years, and were being considered as an invasive species. They would tip up along the shore to reach under water three feet down, wiping out underwater plants essential to lesser waterfowl. In addition, they can become very ornery and territorial around their nests and young. After a hissing warning alarm, called a basking, they would attack dogs or children with injuring wing beats. In 2003, US Fish and Wildlife service proposed to reduce their numbers. However, animal rights countered that Mute Swan fossils here go back thousands of years and are proven to be indigenous and thus could not be reduced as an invasive species. They are now protected under both state and federal laws.

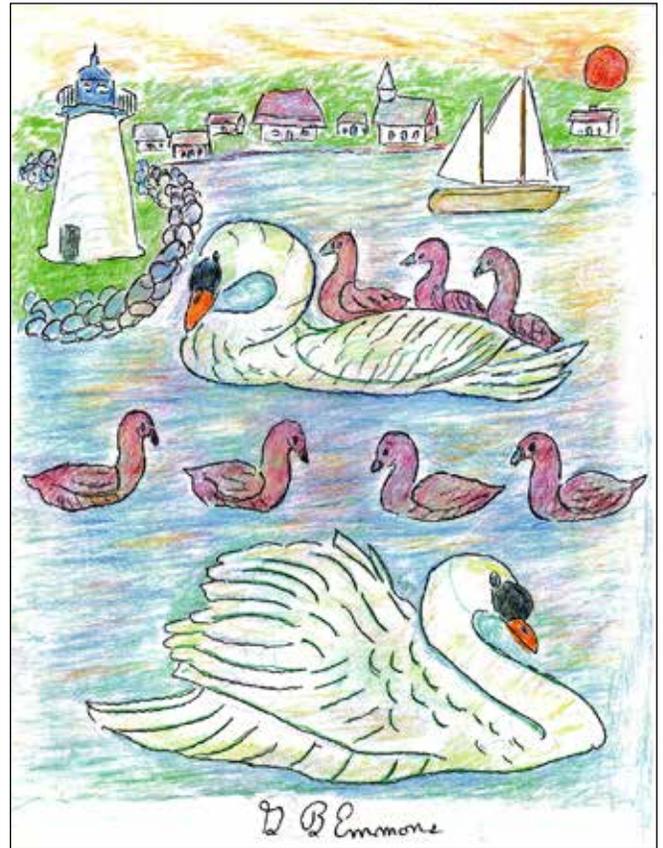
They also have some very admiral and exemplary, well known behaviors. According to Norse mythology, they originally established their white "purity" reputation by drinking from the mythically "pristine" waters of the historical well of Urd. This cleansed their plumage and also the perception of their character. They are said to mate for life, unless one of the pair dies, or is somehow lost. Both male (cob) and female (pen) are also known to

faithfully look after the young cygnets until they are ready to choose mates themselves.

Mute Swans make frequent appearances in literature, such as *The Ugly Duckling* by Hans Christian Anderson. Shakespeare wrote more about love, jealousy, and revenge in swan behavior than any other poet. Tennyson wrote a ballad of a dying swan singing its own death song. And even today, Mute Swans are known to vocally mourn for others in death. The director of the Millicent Library here is an avid and accurate bird watcher and reports, "A dead cygnet was seen floating on a nearby pond, and two adults and

others came over to form a circle around the dead bird. Then they all started making a mourning conversation and all pointed their heads up into the heavens."

At our new location, when the chilled stillness of a pale blue sky of a spring dawn is broken by the shrill clarion of a skein of Snow Geese, winging high overhead towards the Arctic Circle, it is an annual Sun sign that a renewing season is just



over the horizon. Soon, Mute Swans who have nested in the marshes around Eel Pond across the bay, will bring their young on their backs or in tow, creating a show, which is enjoyed by the Ned Point Park visitors. And the south coast harbors will unfurl white sails on Buzzards Bay and launch their recreational flagships of spring.

—George B. Emmons

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Even the surveyors had to keep their distances.

## Climate Change Impacts Town Mitigation Activities

Last month, it was announced that Massachusetts had awarded the Town of Monterey with a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant to perform preliminary engineering, early design recommendations, and public outreach for the Route 23 culvert at the center of town. That work is now underway and it is anticipated to help handle increased stormwater flows and reduce the risk of flooding along the Konkapot River near town hall and surrounding properties.

Unfortunately, the coronavirus has added a twist to the process such as the need to ensure social distancing of workers and stakeholders, but the town is finding pathways forward to continue the project work. During the second-to-last weekend of March 2020, the engineering firm under contract to the town, GZA GeoEnvironmental Inc., surveyed the Konkapot and identified the location of wetlands on the neighboring properties, including the post office, general store, and three adjacent private properties. The next step in the preliminary engineering will be subsurface borings to show a profile of underlying ground conditions.

Please stay tuned for further monthly updates by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, the public outreach and education contractor for the town, during the upcoming spring and summer months.

—Caroline Massa,  
Berkshire Regional Planning  
Commission, Senior Planner



Pat Amow

## Monterey School House Deciding Its Future

The select board meeting regarding Monterey's 1845 Center Schoolhouse, which was scheduled for March 11, was canceled. Hopefully, Monterey will not vote to dispose of our landmark building, important to the history of Monterey. A vote may well be scheduled for any upcoming town meeting since an article to dispose of the building was tabled this past winter. Hopefully, the town will support various approaches to both retaining and repairing it under municipal ownership at the next Annual Town Meeting, whenever that may occur.

In the meantime, please stay well.  
— Barbara Swann

## Verizon to Begin Dismantling Copper Land Lines

In mid-March Verizon announced that due to the completion of the new tower in Monterey, which they claim will be operational "soon," they intend to begin this summer taking down the land lines throughout the town. A spokesman for the utility said that this action was inevitable with the buildout of ubiquitous cellphone access in all the important areas in western Massachusetts. He also commented that the commodity value of the copper in the lines is worth more than the expense to maintain the system.

When asked if this would lower the cost of cellphone plans, he said, "Not likely."



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## Don't Let the Cat out of the Bag

The following experience was related to me by my wife's cousin, Marjorie Brett Day. Marjorie, or Marge as many called her, grew up on the family farm in Monterey. Her parents were George and Frances Brett.

Marge left the farm to go to college in 1942, where she found herself in several classes with a young man named Bob Day. Because students were often seated alphabetically in those days, they found themselves in frequent, close proximity. Bob and Marge were married in September 1945. In 1954 they returned to Amherst, with Bob as a professor at U-Mass, and Marge working in the Amherst Pelham Regional School District. It was while they were living in Amherst that Marge's neighbor, Rob, told her of this event which happened to him one early spring morning in Holyoke.

Rob went to the Holyoke Mall to make a few purchases. Upon exiting his car he noticed a dead cat on the raised median near where he'd parked. He went into the mall thinking the cat wasn't a nice thing to have lying around. When he returned to his car he remembered the cat and figured he could do something about it.

He emptied his Steiger's purchases from the store bag into his back seat, popped his trunk, took out his shovel carried for winter emergencies (many of

us carry them), and scooped the cat into the bag. He placed the bag on the hood of his car figuring he would toss it into a dumpster on his way home. He returned the shovel to his trunk where he spent a couple of minutes organizing things.

When he closed the trunk lid and went to get in his car, the Steiger's bag with the dead cat was gone! Looking about quickly, he spotted a woman walking hurriedly across the parking lot carrying a Steiger's bag. Figuring this must be his bag, and curious about what would happen when she realized what she had in the bag, he followed her. (Curiosity did kill the cat, they say.)

She entered a fast food establishment where she went to the counter and ordered a cup of coffee. Taking her coffee, and her newly acquired bag, she slid into a booth, placing the bag on the seat beside her. Rob observed her, as giddy with excitement over what she might have in the bag, she took a sip of coffee, turned, and peeked into the bag. And promptly fainted!

Concerned customers and management personnel rushed to her side. 911 was called, and police and EMTs arrived quickly. Suddenly the center of attention, the embarrassed woman, not wanting to disclose what had really happened, insisted she was alright. But after urging from the EMTs, and probably just wanting to get away from there, she agreed to get herself checked out.

The crowning moment occurred when the woman, now strapped to a gurney, was about to be taken out to the ambulance. A customer spotting the Steiger's bag, shouted, "Wait! Don't forget her bag!" An EMT grabbed the bag, plopped it on her chest, and wheeled her away.

Rob, figuring he'd had his entertainment for the day, and no longer having to dispose of the dead cat, continued on his way home thinking sometimes there is a measure of justice in this world.

Addendum: As an interesting side note, *Common Phrases and Where They Come From*, by Myron Korach and John Mordock, has this to say about the phrase, "Let the cat out of the bag," and "pig in a poke":

"The phrase, 'Let the cat out of the bag' refers to revealing a secret. 'Pig in a poke' means that you've bought something you thought was of value—only to discover that it's worthless. Both phrases can be directly traced to England, when traveling country fairs were a source of high amusement for people who lived in small towns and villages. These country fairs were often breeding grounds for those looking to make a quick shilling or two off unsuspecting country bumpkins through skin games, shell games, and sucker games.

"The word poc is Celtic for sack, and 'twas the custom to sell suckling pigs at these fairs, the snorters being bought in pocs (later pokes).

"'Twas also the practice of the hucksters to put cats in the 'pokes' rather than little pigs and to sell them blind—that is, sight unseen—whenever possible. When the seller claimed that opening the bag would let the suckling pig escape, the smart buyer would insist upon opening it, thus 'letting the cat out of the bag' before he bought its contents. But the naive buyer would often buy blind, and, upon returning home, discover that the 'pig in the poke' was really a feline."

—Lyman Thomson



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## Knox Gallery

The “current” show in the Knox Gallery that was hung for March and early April is indeed hung...up.

The show is *Nature’s Beauty and Fragility*, by PL Meriam. With no notion of when the library will open again, the show could be up for a while still.

The next show, featuring painter Alan Roland, was to open mid-April, but of course that is now uncertain as well. See Alan’s musicians on page 14.

An opening reception was held for PLMeriam on February 29.

—Photos by Maureen Banner.



Above, l. to r.: Swan, Three Ibis, and Ibis.  
Below, Acadia Woods.  
Left: Ann and John Higgins, with PLMeriam, a cousin of John’s from Vermont.



Above: Mike Banner trying to level a group of cows resting in a pasture. At least they held still for him, and this had to be easier than trying to herd them.



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## Bluebirds, Blackbirds, Moose, and More

In mid-February, Emily Dowling of Lake Buel saw the “resident bald eagle” sitting by an ice-fisherman’s place, dipping its beak into the hole. Was it looking for fish? Getting a drink of water? Finding bait or cleanings in the hole? We don’t know. Emily also reports seeing a bobcat that ran on the frozen ice that same morning, right in front of the house.

Bonsai Cox, of the Stevens Pond area, sent in a photo of acorn storage in her garage: twenty nuts in one sneaker (below).



Later in February, Kenn Basler set up his trail camera and got some photographs of a black bear, awake and foraging at the hanging bird feeders (below).



The red-winged blackbirds were back at the end of February, in a flock of about 150 in the fields along Curtis Road, a route many of us take on the way to the dump or to Gould Farm. Steve Snyder sent in this report.



In early March the hooded mergansers were still on Brewer Pond (above), and had been joined by common mergansers, too. Cindy and Rob Hoogs have been reporting on this and other sightings there. Later they saw about fifty ring-necked ducks and six buffleheads in Lake Garfield proper, on the part of the lake you see from the public beach.



On Fairview Road, some wildlife reporters saw a bear the first week in March and got photographs of the visitor coming right up the steps to their patio (above). About this same time, John Higgins was driving home from the Pioneer Valley, and along Route 66 between Easthampton and Westhampton he saw two moose.

Later, in mid-March, Elaine Lynch wrote to say she’d seen “a gorgeous young bobcat come out of the woods on the side of our house this morning at 9:15 a.m. and casually patrol the perimeter of the back of our house, sniffing the ground as it went. Then he or she veered off the driveway and investigated the high dead stalks before continuing on to the next batch of shrubs. Short tail and not too big yet.” Elaine says this young cat certainly looked “cute and cuddly.”



Right on Friday, March 13, Lisa Smyle reported the blooming of crocuses, as well as the earlier arrival of a bluebird. Since then more folks have seen the bluebirds return. Cora and I went for a walk along Housatonic Flats, from the Route 7 parking and trailhead just north of WSBS Radio Station. We heard a twittering and saw the sun sparkling on five or six wonderful male bluebirds in the cottonwoods and box elders along a meander of the river.

There is all sorts of news just now, including news of spring. This is always cause for notice and celebration, and for telling each other all about it. Thanks to everyone.

—Bonner McAllester  
528-9385 bonnermca@gmail.com

Mary Kate Jordan caught this embroidered Tufted Titmouse (below) at the end of her needle. From the 2015 Piecemakers’ Bluebird quilt.



## Here's a Thought... Four Thieves Herbal Folklore

It's twenty-two hours before deadline and I've just tossed both of the earlier articles I've intended for this month—one started, one finished—into the circular file. That's less a complaint than it is a metaphor for the upheaval we're all going through as we learn to live on this planet during the cultural-climate change offered to us by Covid-19.

We all have our coping mechanisms. Mine range from prayer, meditation, gratitude, inner work, spending time outdoors, and connecting with folks virtually, to raking the gravel off the lawn, getting stocked up for this dive deeper into Mystery, and doing a fair amount of what's recently been referred to as anxiety baking. My late-twentieth-century herbalist sub-personality has taken pride of place in my consciousness at the moment, too, as I contemplate the herbal folklore of the common herbs, spices, and foods in my kitchen. So, a few days ago, I started the simple process of creating a bottle of Four Thieves Vinegar.

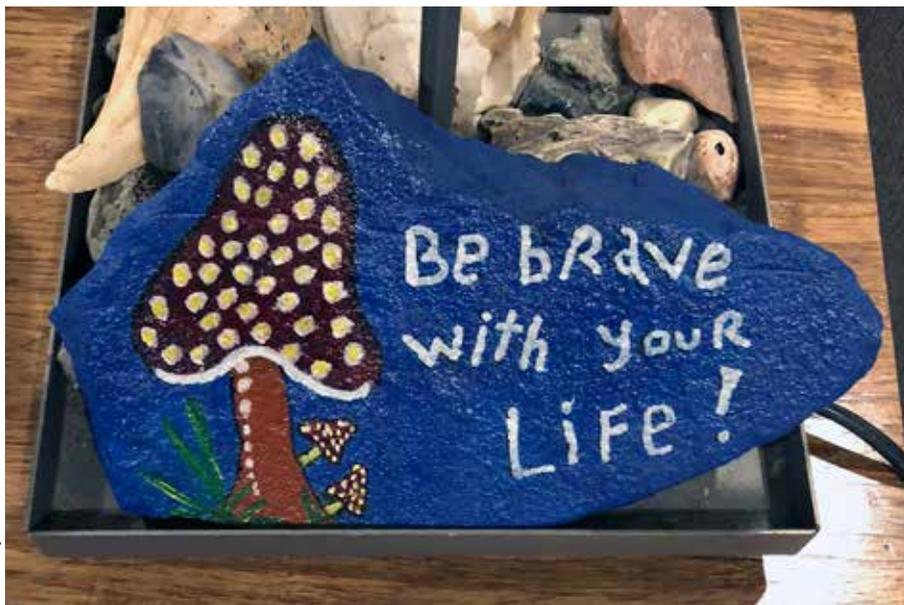
The story goes like this:

During a plague time in, or around, 1722, people in a town in France began to hear rumors of four thieves who'd break into the homes of those who'd died and steal everything of value. The general opinion? No need to do anything about it. It was obvious that the plague would wreak its vengeance on the thieves and their short run of ill-gotten gains would do them no good.

But it didn't work out that way. The thieves stayed healthy and kept on thieving. The authorities hunted them down, less to retrieve the stolen goods than to find out why they weren't becoming ill.

After being apprehended and some maneuvering, the thieves confessed they'd been taking an herbal vinegar which they credited with keeping the plague at bay. Folks were skeptical, but there was no other explanation for the quartet to still be alive to tell the tale.

Quite a story, isn't it? No one can guarantee that the folklore is any more than that, and the recipe's gone through countless changes in the last three hundred years. Nevertheless, here's one of the many modern versions of their recipe.



*A sign for our times on a painted rock I saw at my cousin Mary Gin's house last December.*

### Four Thieves' Vinegar

Infuse good vinegar you'd use for salad dressing (organic apple cider vinegar is one traditional choice) with garlic, and your choice of dried herbs/spices. If you're making a small amount, as I did, adjust the recipe to accommodate the amount of vinegar you use. Easiest to just divide by quarters.

For a large amount, you will need:

- 32 ounces of vinegar
- 1 bulb (not just one clove) of garlic
- 2 tablespoons each of four additional dried herbs.

Folklore suggests you choose from sage, marjoram, cloves, rosemary, juniper berries, thyme, cinnamon, and lavender. As a nod to those thieves, tradition says, choose any four of those herbs to accompany the garlic. My current tincture in process contains garlic, sage, thyme, juniper berries, and rosemary.

You might want to check their traditional herbal properties, and look for cautions about their use before you go ahead. Sage, for example, is an herb women used to use at weaning time to dry up their milk. Definitely not an herb to put in a tincture for a nursing mother! Checking online can be useful, and I recommend the two-volume classic, *A Modern Herbal*, by Mrs. M Grieve, reprinted by Dover, as a good herb book.

You'll also need a clean glass jar with a tight-fitting lid. Make sure the jar

is large enough to contain its contents with room to spare.

Remove the skins from each clove in the bulb of garlic. Chop lightly, no need to mince, and put the garlic into the jar. Add your chosen dried herbs and pour in your vinegar. Tighten the lid, label the bottle and include the date you started the process, and the date you'll take it out of the bottle, fourteen days later.

Put the bottle in a window where it will get good sunlight. Several times every day, gently shake the bottle so that the herbs disperse again and don't stay settled on the bottom of the jar. (Make sure that lid is on well.) Any blessings you add as you do so will only enhance your work and your product.

On the designated day, strain the vinegar into another clean container. Then pour your strained Four Thieves' Vinegar into bottles for storage. Discard the garlic and other herbs, ideally by returning them to the earth to compost.

How much should you take? The recipe I used suggests 1 tablespoon in an 8-ounce glass of water for an adult, sized down to accommodate a smaller/younger person's body mass.

Maybe those four thieves were right. Or not. Either way, give it a try if you're so inclined. Worst case scenario—you'll have some pretty intense oil to use in salad dressing, and have an herbal tale of your own to tell.

—Mary Kate Jordan



## Select Board Corner

This has been a very busy time for the select board and for town governance. Please check both the town website and the state’s website, Mass.gov, for updates and solid information.

### MontereyMA.gov

Our town website is a great way to access information about the town. Use the website to access a calendar for upcoming meetings, and how to log into them. While the state’s Open Meeting Law still applies, recent legislation has provided flexibility for online or conference call meetings to allow public participation.

All non-essential meetings have been canceled. Go to “Boards & Committees,” select the group, and click the agendas listed in the right column for the call-in instructions.

While the town hall is closed, staff are working. Please see pages 2 through 4 for more information about current accommodations the town is making for the COVID-19 epidemic.

— Kenn Basler, Chair  
Don Coburn and Steve Weisz  
Monterey Select Board  
(kenn@montereyma.gov)  
(don@montereyma.gov)  
(steve@montereyma.gov)

### Police Emergency Contacts

- For real emergencies, call **911**.
- For non-emergencies to contact the Monterey Police Department, call:

**528-3211.**

## The Monterey Library— But Where?

From Mark Makuc, library director.

I’ve had people come in odd hours saying that Google said we were open. The first time or two I didn’t understand, but now when it happens, I simply tell them to search for MontereyMass library. The only library listing that seems to compete with us on Google is in Monterey, CA. The others must not have as much web presence or the internet geolocation must rule the others out. Monterey, CA seems to come up if you search for Monterey library without a state.

A woman came into the library and saw a book on the hold shelf. She said it was hers. The slip said not. I asked why she thought that. She said she had an email that said it was on the shelf. I looked up her card and couldn’t find her name at all. Even tried misspelling. I asked her if I could look at the email. I looked at it and told her she’d need a plane ticket to pick up that hold. It’s on Pacific Boulevard—in Monterey, CA.

Apparently you can now get a Monterey, CA library card online. She did and put it on hold. And it was waiting for her in California! So I set up a CWMARS card for her and she had her book in a couple of more days.

(By the way, CWMARS does not give out cards on the internet. But I can work it out by email to give someone a card.)

## Candidate Statement Michele Miller—Finance Committee

Hello,

I would like to put my name forward as a candidate for the finance committee.

I have been a resident of Monterey since 1975. In that time I have served on the select board and cultural council, as well as compiling and writing a large part of Monterey’s Master Plan.

Having lived in Monterey for almost half a century I have a keen appreciation for the many changes our town has experienced and the challenges we face as we adapt to pressures from growth and development.

I have always been self-employed and have learned the importance of money management and budgetary discipline. As a taxpayer I am also keenly aware that there is a sense of inevitability to escalating taxes. I hope to make use of my experiences in service to this town I have called home for so long. I appreciate the nomination from both the Republican and Democratic caucuses.

— Michele Miller

*Miller received nominations from both the Democratic and Republican town caucuses.*





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## Calendar

There are a few remaining calendar items coming up in Monterey. Mark your calendars!

**Tuesday, April 14:** The annual salamander march to vernal pools is still on, pending the ice thawing on the pools. It is worth noting that they will only cross recently dampened roads, so look for rain. The march is scheduled to begin at 10 p.m.

**Sunday, April 19:** The Parks Commission is holding its Singles Speed Dating again, this time in the parking lot at the town hall. Please arrive wearing a gown, gloves, face mask, and face shield, and park well away from the other cars.

**Wednesday, April 6:** The Monterey Memorial Day Parade committee will meet at 6 p.m. to discuss holding the parade either entirely online, or with marchers spread at least eight feet apart. They calculate that even in double rows, the Mt. Everett Marching Band might take up nearly one hundred yards.

## Monterey News

The *Monterey News* is an independent nonprofit corporation dedicated to fostering communication in the Monterey community. We invite signed letters, articles, drawings, poetry, and photographs. Submissions may be sent via email to [montereynews9@gmail.com](mailto:montereynews9@gmail.com) or to PO Box 9, Monterey, MA, 01245.

For advertising rates or other information, contact the Editor at 413-528-4007 or email.

## Corashire Cemetery Rules New Section Opening

In preparation for the opening of a new section of Corashire Cemetery, the Monterey Cemetery Commission has published rules that will apply to the entire cemetery area. These rules are intended to maintain a quiet, respectful, and serene environment for the remembrance of those who have passed away.

- ◆ Section 1. Each Proprietor of a lot will be entitled to a ticket of admission into the Cemetery with a vehicle, under the following regulation, the violations of which, or a loan of the ticket, involves a forfeiture of the privilege.
- ◆ Sec. 2. No vehicle will be admitted unless accompanied by a proprietor, or a member of his or her household, with his or her ticket, or unless presenting a special ticket or admission obtained at the office of the Cemetery, or of a Trustee.
- ◆ Sec. 3. On Sundays and holidays the gates will be closed. Proprietors of lots, however, will be admitted, on foot, by applying to the Keeper at the lodge.
- ◆ Sec. 4. Fast driving will be especially prohibited, and no vehicle will be allowed to pass through the grounds at a rate exceeding three miles an hour.
- ◆ Sec. 5. No persons or parties having refreshments to sell, will be permitted to come within the grounds, nor will any smoking be allowed.
- ◆ Sec. 6. No horse may be left by the driver in the grounds unfastened. Hitching posts are provided for that purpose. Any person violating the above rule, or fastening his horse to a tree, will be required by the Superintendent to leave the grounds forthwith.
- ◆ Sec. 7. All persons are prohibited from writing upon, defacing, or otherwise injuring any monument, fence, or other structure in or belonging to the Cemetery, or from picking any flower, either wild or cultivated, or injuring any tree, shrub or plant.
- ◆ Sec. 8. Any person disturbing the quiet and good order of the place, by noise or other improper conduct, will be compelled instantly to leave the grounds.
- ◆ Sec. 9. The gates will be opened at sunrise, and closed for entrance at sunset.
- ◆ Visitors are reminded that these grounds are appropriated exclusively to the interment of the dead. It is therefore indispensable that there should be strict observance of all the proprieties due to the place. The Superintendent, being clothed with the powers of a special policeman, will be required to arrest disorderly persons.

If you have any questions about these rules, or realized they are just a timely joke, share your comments with Linda Thorpe, Chair, Monterey Cemetery Commission. (These rules were from a cemetery in Syracuse in 1860.)

## 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.org](mailto:chief@montereyma.org)

#### 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)

#### Post Office: 528-4670

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)

Town website: [Montereyma.gov](http://Montereyma.gov), under each department, for office hours.

# MONTEREY NEWS

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## MONTEREY LIBRARY

The Library is temporarily closed during the COVID-19 crisis.

For information, or to access online library services, please go to:

[MontereyMassLibrary.org](http://MontereyMassLibrary.org)

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*Contributions from local artists this month:  
Maureen Banner, pgs. 3, 19, 27; George Emmons, p. 24;  
Bonner McAllester, p. 20; Glynis Oliver, p. 11*

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