



# MONTEREY NEWS

January 2020  
Est. 1970 Vol. L · Number 1



Pick up at: the library (in and outside), town hall, community center, Roadside Cafe, Swap Shop, Church foyer



The ukeles are here! See page 7.

The *Monterey News* is celebrating fifty years as a monthly town newspaper from its inception on March 24, 1970.  
Fifty Years Celebration pages 16-17

We just might find we're free to cross through that previously blocked archway into more rich green life, right here, right now, in the middle of winter.  
Looking Back, Looking Ahead pages 18-19

I want to just stuff it all in a big garbage bag and throw it into the paper bin. Can I do that?  
Talkin' (about) Trash page 12

The frozen mole tunnels in the mowed grass are raised up. How did this affect the moles? We can only assume they are equipped to handle that upstairs traffic.  
Wildlife Report page 25

pumpkin pie is like that big old moon in the sky and I love to take slice after slice until it's all gone by  
Thanksgiving Query page 9



Monterey News 1970-1974 pages 16-17

Interested in the future of the school house? Come to a special select board meeting on February 5 at town hall.  
Select Board Corner page 26

The Monterey Select Board voted unanimously to form a "Regional School District Planning Committee."  
School District Consolidation page 5

However, we can look forward to revisiting the matter of the Monterey school house again this coming May.  
Special Town Meeting pages 2-4

She will be speaking about and showing art and animations which express the value of mindful awareness.  
Community Potluck Supper page 12

Are Monterey's taxes rising more rapidly than neighboring towns? Is Monterey a more expensive town to live in compared to our small-town neighbors? The answer to both is no.  
Monterey's Financial Health pages 6-7

The real story is down here, with us, we who aim with our lives to love, we who aim to spend our time with care.  
Christmas Eve pages 10-11

Open burning season is from January 15 to May 1. Go to [bcburnpermits.com](http://bcburnpermits.com), read the regulations, and follow the section titled "How to obtain a permit."  
Open Burning page 5

The joy of engaging with new customers "who come far and wide for our famous pancakes...especially the large. People who have been here know the large is impossible to finish."  
Who's Who page 24

## Special Town Meeting

On the frigid night of December 5, a small but vocal group convened to make their opinions known about the ten articles on the warrant for a special town meeting. Not only did the meeting differ in size from the usual May town meeting, with just thirty-five of the 630 registered voters attending and with a much shorter warrant, but for the first time in sixty-six years, a new constable signed off on the warrant. Julio Rodriguez stepped into the position following Ray Tyron's resignation in May prior to town elections.

Mark Makuc, town moderator, opened the meeting promptly at 7 p.m., and as usual, town clerk Terry Walker read the introduction to the warrant and a motion was quickly made and passed to waive the reading of the rest of it. **Articles 1 and 2** asked for appropriations of relatively small amounts of money. A sum of \$214 was transferred from free cash to pay for a cemetery bill from FY 18 and another sum of \$444 (originally \$413 but amended by a motion from select board chair, Kenn Basler) was transferred from free cash to pay FY 19 bills that were submitted late. Both were passed unanimously.

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The *Monterey News* is published monthly by The Monterey News Inc, PO Box 9, Monterey, MA 01245-0009.

**Article 3** involved a bit more money, asking for \$15,000 to be transferred from free cash to cover any unanticipated legal expenses. Steve Moore asked if this was for a general or specific purpose and Kenn Basler responded by saying the town had two lawsuits, one against the planning board, and the other against the zoning board of appeals. These funds were meant to cover any additional situations. This article also passed unanimously.

Article 4 asked for a transfer of \$9,959 for the bonds and insurance line item to cover unanticipated insurance increases. Kenn Basler explained the need for additional funds due to increases in the insurance costs, a vehicle involved in a crash and a worker's compensation claim. There was no further discussion and the article passed.

**Articles 5 and 6** generated a bit more conversation as they had to do with transferring \$2,500 from free cash to the town treasurer services line item, and transferring \$14,000 to the town accountant services line item. Mickey Jervas started the discussion by asking why the town is paying so much more money for these services. Select board member Don Coburn explained that the firm handling both the accountant and the treasurer positions, Baystate Municipal Accounting Services, would be going out of business as of December 29, 2019. He said, "We got our back to the wall and had to scurry like mad to find new people." Steve Moore questioned whether or not the services had been put out to bid and Coburn said it was not necessary by state law. Select board member Steve Weisz added that the town

needed a treasurer and accountant who were familiar with the software VADAR, which was used by Baystate, and who had experience transitioning municipalities from Baystate. Rebecca Wolin, a finance committee member, voiced the opinion that we should forget about the software and find local people to fill the positions as this would be most responsible from a fiduciary aspect. Steve Moore asked if both of the people who will be filling the positions are part of the same company and Don Coburn explained that they were not. The accountant is part of a company and the treasurer is self-employed. Kenn Basler responded to Rebecca Wolin's concern by saying, "The treasurer and accountant services are a crisis in Massachusetts" and after an extensive search, the town was fortunate to find two qualified people. However, Wolin was still not convinced and expressed the opinion that the Town was limiting itself by looking for people who knew the software. Steve Pullen grouched that when he was the town accountant, he was only paid \$14,000 for the whole year. In the end, both Article 5 and 6 were passed.

**Article 7** was quickly passed and transferred \$1,500 for planning board expenses from free cash. Mari Enoch questioned why the Town was transferring all this money from free cash instead of from the reserve fund and finance committee member Jonathan Sylbert responded that because the tax rate was set early the town could not appropriate any more funds for this year.

**Article 8** had to do with authorizing the select board to apply for, accept, and

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expend a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant and to transfer money from free cash for this purpose. The discussion started off on a positive note as Steve Weisz made a motion to decrease the sum from \$135,000 to \$35,000 and this was readily approved. The decrease, Weisz explained, is because the grant rules have changed. We no longer have to approve the potential full expense of this phase of work, as the grant is for the \$100,000 difference. Then, Richard Pargament asked why this grant is needed. Grant writer Dennis Lynch responded that the town is trying to prepare for potential flooding due to climate change. He said it was the first step of a three-part process and “a far reaching look at our future.” Lynch said it was intended to evaluate and possibly redesign the old stone dam behind the library and the culvert adjacent to town hall as well as to enhance the storm water capacity at the Lake Garfield dam. Steve Weisz added, “we are trying to be proactive” so the town is not faced with disasters such as flooding in the future. Mickey Jervas asked if the funds will be used specifically for these projects, pointing out that funds were appropriated for repairs to the dam behind the library back in 2011 or 2012 but then the funds got diverted elsewhere. Director of operations Shawn Tryon explained that the funds appropriated at that time were not sufficient to adequately address the problems with that dam. Jon Sylbert warned the crowd that this project may end up being expensive, with a figure of \$2 million dollars stated in the select board minutes, but Kenn Basler responded by saying that the town is just in the planning stages and that the dam or culvert might fail at any time, so that some action is necessary. It was pointed out that the state has been quick to close other structures in the county in need of repair and we don’t want to have Route 23 cut off in the middle of the village. With that, the article passed.

Probably the most anticipated discussion of the night concerned **Article 9**, which proposed transferring the care, custody, and control of the Monterey school house to the select board for the purpose of selling it. The Monterey school house has long been a topic of sometimes heated and often emotional discussion. So many people in town

have fond memories of attending the school themselves or of sending their children off to that sweet school house for their first educational experience. So it’s no wonder that emotions run high when the subject of the school comes up. Barbara Swann started the discussion off giving an impassioned speech about what it would mean to give up our local school, citing the benefits of having a preschool and kindergarten program in our community. She shared research noting that when children are educated in their own community, they are validated and they end up doing better in school. Swann gave the example of two towns in Kansas, one of which kept their community school and one which gave it up. The town that no longer had a community school eventually began to decline overall. She reminisced about the charming poetry recitals that the kindergarten children used to put on under the direction of Susan Anderson. Swann also talked about how the town of South Egremont went to extraordinary lengths to retain their school, in spite of many problems with the building. Finally, she cited the interesting statistic that 65% of the emergency personnel in Monterey attended the Monterey kindergarten, creating a longstanding camaraderie. Swann then suggested tabling the article until the May annual town meeting when more people could be involved in making this critical decision.

Maryellen Brown, the Monterey representative to the Southern Berkshire

Regional School District (SBRSD) school committee, spoke next, saying with resignation that “we have five five-year-olds in Monterey. We don’t have little kids.” Brown said that she joined the school committee for the purpose of preserving the Monterey School but had come to the realization that it was just not feasible unless children were bussed in from New Marlborough, which now has a kindergarten program of its own. Kenn Basler commented on “how hard it was for Maryellen to say that.” He went on to say that 75% of the homes in Monterey are second homes and the reality is that something needs to be done with the school. Basler said that the town can’t get insurance on the building because it is uninhabited and that an engineering report indicated the building is not structurally sound. “It’s hard to pull the trigger,” he said.

Jonathan Levin also felt that the townspeople should have more of a say in >

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*Special Town Meeting, cont. from p. 3.*  
 the process and that we shouldn't be giving carte blanche to the select board. "This is a hot button issue," he said. Barbara Swann made another case for preserving the school, saying, "What about the babies at Gould Farm?" to which Steve Snyder humorously replied, "Put a stop to it." John Higgins, who lives next door to the school building, asked if there was a possibility of doing something with the property other than selling it. He made the suggestion of perhaps selling the building, which could be moved, and retaining the land to make a small park, possibly making it into a memorial for all of the past schools in Monterey.

Kenn Basler made a motion to table the article, but had to withdraw his motion two times, because people just had more to say about the issue. Jonathan Levin suggested that town members should have the opportunity to submit proposals for the use of the property which could then be discussed and acted upon at the May town meeting. Steve Pullen brought up an important point, asking "Who owns the frigging building?" The town and the SBRSD have been sharing responsibility for the building for many years, so this would be an important point to clarify should it be put up for sale. Don Coburn indicated that the owner is a school entity which no longer exists, so who would pay for a title search? Finally, Kenn Basler made a successful motion to table Article 9. As a voice vote indicated one nay vote, Moderator Mark Makuc opted for another vote with colored cards to ensure the 2/3 majority vote needed. The article was tabled with a 33-1 vote.

**Article 10**, the final article on the warrant, proposed establishing a town report committee, which would collect the reports from the department heads, be responsible for layout and presentation of the materials, send it to the printer, and distribute it to the people of the town. The original wording indicated that the report should be ready for distribution prior to the annual town meeting, but Mickey Jervas suggested that it be available by March 15 so that everyone would have a chance to read it well before town meeting in May. A motion was made to amend the article to have the report distributed by March 15. The amendment passed, and the amended Article 10 also passed unanimously.

With that, a motion was made to adjourn, and by 8:20 this special town meeting came to an end. However, we can look forward to re-visiting the matter of the Monterey school house this coming May.

—Laurie Shaw



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## Open Burning Permits

The Monterey Fire Department will again be using an online application for burning permits. Permits will be available from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. daily, only when weather conditions allow for open burning. The DEP requires fires to be started after 10 a.m. and be extinguished by 4 p.m. for air quality purposes. Open burning season is from January 15 to May 1.

Go to [bcburnpermits.com](http://bcburnpermits.com), read the regulations, and follow the section titled "How to obtain a permit." If you cannot obtain a permit online, you can call 413-445-4550 (Berkshire County Sheriff's office) between 8:30 a.m. and 1 p.m., and follow the prompts. Make sure you print out your permit and keep it with you when burning.

- You may only burn brush—no leaves, grass, hay, stumps, building debris, or any other material.
- All open burning must be a minimum of seventy-five feet from a building or structure.
- Burning is allowed only from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Any open fire must be attended at all times by the permit holder.
- No person shall set, maintain, or increase a fire in open air except by permit.
- You must be eighteen years or older to apply for a permit and tend the fire.
- You must have a means to extinguish an open fire completely at the end of the day or if requested by the fire department.
- The fire department can refuse or cancel a permit at any time.
- Open burning season is from January 15 to May 1.

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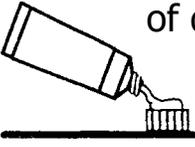
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## Knox Gallery News New Exhibit Opens January 10

Our winter community exhibit, *Connections*, received great reactions, through December to January 4. We hope everyone interested had a chance to get in to see the astounding range of talented artists who support our efforts by showing their work. We hope folks supported them and and continue to support us.

### *This Is Not a Zoo*

*This is Not a Zoo*, photographic work by Susan Terni Taff, opens on Friday, January 10, with an opening reception from 6 to 7:30 p.m., and will be on view through February 22.

Susan is a photographer and mixed media artist who lives and works in Glastonbury, CT, and is the sister of Monterey resident and well known Monterey Library professional, Esther Heffernan.

The wildlife of the Nambiti Game Reserve near Ladysmith, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa is the subject of the striking photographs that compose *This is Not a Zoo*. Over 26,000 acres of grasslands, savanna, and bush comprise Nambiti, which is home to the big five (lion, leopard, rhinoceros, elephant, and Cape buffalo), and to forty other species and a host of birds.

The artist's first thought upon entering the preserve was "this is not a zoo!" She found the proximity to these magnificent animals in their natural habitat to be breathtaking, exhilarating, and ideal subjects for her photographic work. In choosing the work for this show she hopes to pass on the beauty and enormity of this landscape and the wonder of her interaction with these animals.

All Knox Gallery events and openings are admission free. Exhibits can be viewed during library hours (see back page of this issue). Knox Gallery, Monterey Library, 452 Main Road, Monterey, MA, 528-3795; MontereyMassLibrary.org/Knox-Gallery; Facebook.com/KnoxGallery.

—MaryPaul Yates



Susan Terni Taff

## School Districts Consolidation

On December 10, the Monterey Select Board voted unanimously to form a "Regional School District Planning Committee," as per Massachusetts General Law (MGL) C71 Section 14, to explore regionalization between Southern Berkshire Regional School District and the Berkshire Hills Regional School District. Our town moderator, per the MGL process, appointed our three representatives. They are: Mary Ellen Brown, school committee, Donald Coburn, select board, Jonathan Sylbert, finance committee. The eight-town school consolidation committee meets again on January 7, 5 p.m., at the Stockbridge Town Hall.

—Jonathan Sylbert  
Chair, Finance Committee

## SUSAN M. SMITH Attorney At Law

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Massachusetts 01230

Telephone: (413) 229-7080  
Facsimile: (413) 229-7085

### Having a Good Day

- The new year brought news of a new grandchild.
- On an icy day, you follow a truck sanding down the Tyringham hill.

## Monterey's Financial Health Fiscal Year 2019 Report

The primary duties of the Finance Committee are to advise and make recommendations to town meeting on the budget and other areas of finance. It is the Finance Committee's responsibility to receive the budgets from the executive branch (either as a collective whole or individually by department), analyze them, have hearings where the department heads and the public can testify, and present a balanced budget to town meeting. That budget should reflect the Finance Committee's decisions based upon their best judgment of the issues and finances of the town. The budget before town meeting is the Finance Committee's and it is their job to explain and defend it. —Adapted from *A Guide to Financial Management for Town Officials and the Finance Committee Handbook*.

### Total Town Funds Raised

For fiscal year 2019 (FY 19), the town raised a total of \$4,874,581.42 at two town meetings on May 5, and June 29, 2018.

Levied in taxes	\$3,886,675.42
Est. State and Local receipts	\$301,700
From Free Cash	\$585,206
Other Available Funds (Stabilization Funds)	\$101,000

An additional \$6,907 was appropriated for FY19 from Raise and Appropriate at the town meeting of May 4, 2019.

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### Excess Capacity

The FY19 Maximum Allowable Levy was \$4,265,405. This included \$266,182 in Debt Exclusions. The FY19 Total Tax Levy was \$3,886,675.42; as a result, our FY19 Excess Capacity was \$378,730. (Maximum Allowable Levy minus Total Tax Levy equals Excess Capacity.) Our Excess Capacity reflects additional amounts available for appropriations before requiring a Proposition 2 1/2 Override.

### General Fund Revenues

General fund revenues as of June 30, 2019 (actual, unaudited) were as follows:

Local receipts	\$312,327.76
Not estimated	\$8,110.56
State Aid (Cherry Sheet)	\$282,461.00
Changes in receivables	\$113,903.17

### Free Cash

FY19 Free Cash was certified at \$251,140, of which \$140,548 was appropriated at the May 4, 2019 town meeting, resulting in an unappropriated balance of \$110,592 as of June 30, 2019.

### Stabilization Fund

FY19 Stabilization Fund balances as of June 30, 2019 were as follows:

General	\$949,302.96
Fire	\$15,000.00
Retiree Health/Life	\$103,963.02
Roads and Bridges	\$30,157.18

### Indebtedness

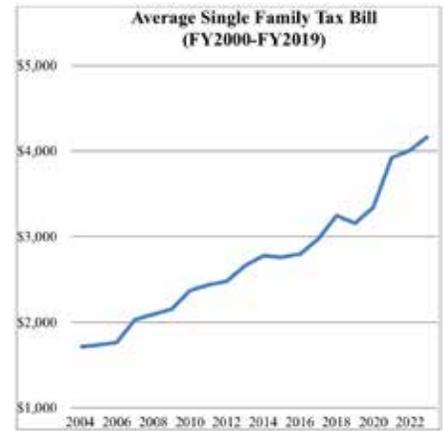
FY19 total indebtedness of \$729,670 included the following outstanding debt as of June 30, 2019:

Highway Grader	\$75,200
Highway F550 Truck	\$49,572
Fire Truck	\$400,000
Transfer Station	\$200,000
Septic System Betterment	\$4,898

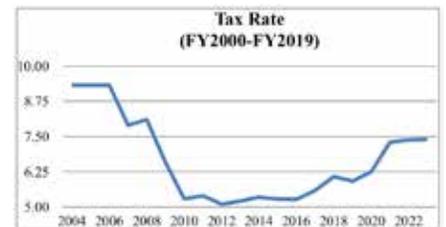
This \$729,670 debt represents 14% of the \$4,874,581.42 FY19 budget.

Please note that while the tax rate and your assessed value are used in the calculation of your tax bill, the determining factor in the amount of total property tax paid is a function of the town budget. If the town budget increases, your taxes will increase.

Here is a chart showing the Average Single Family Tax Bill since FY2000:



Here is a chart showing the Tax Rate since FY2000:



As you can see, the tax rate can fall, as it did between FY2000 and FY2008, while your taxes increase. The tax rate can also remain stable (FY2008-FY2012) while your taxes increase. Even when the tax rate rises slowly (FY2013-FY2019), your taxes can rise rapidly. The tax rate is not the determinant factor to your tax bill. For example, in FY2000, the tax rate was 9.32 and the Average Single Family Tax Bill was \$1,733. In FY2019, the tax rate was 7.40 and the Average Single Family Tax Bill was \$4,175.

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by Timothy Basil Ering.

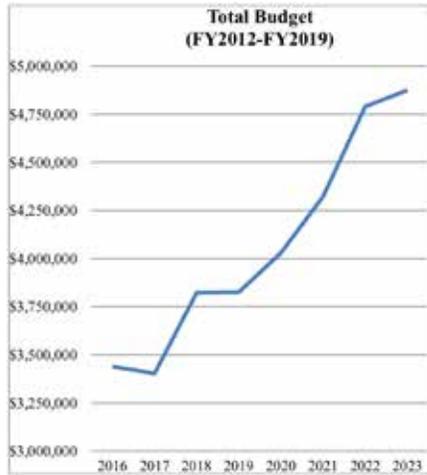
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## Total Budget Recent History

For your information, here is a chart showing the town budget since FY2012:

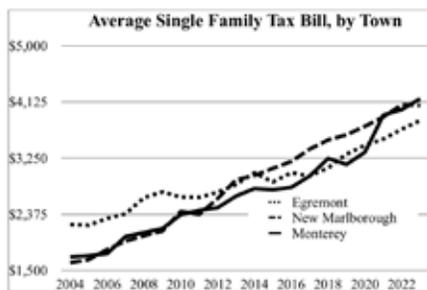


If you compare this chart to the Average Single Family Tax Bill chart, you can see that your taxes increase as an effect of budget increases.

Please note, however, that any improvements made to your property will also increase your assessment and your taxes. This is separate from how the town budget affects everyone's property taxes.

## Neighboring Towns Tax Bills

Our property tax increases might lead residents to wonder if Monterey's taxes are rising more rapidly than neighboring towns, and if Monterey is a more expensive town to live in compared to our small-town neighbors. The answer to both is no.



The chart above shows the Average Single Family Tax Bill for Monterey, Egremont, and New Marlborough. As you can see, the long-term tax trend is the same. This is also true for the towns of Alford, Tyringham, Sandisfield, and Otis. No southern Berkshire town has escaped property tax increases, which reflect higher cost-of-living increases in New England and the inexorable shift of

## Library News

The ukuleles are here! The Monterey Library has three ukuleles available for patrons to borrow. The loan period is three weeks. We also have a DVD and a couple of beginner books about ukulele playing. There are many more books available from CWMARS as well. If you try one and like it, there is a band that plays at Berkshire South that you can join.

Don't forget that the South Berkshire Kids play group for ages birth to five years old, begins on Friday mornings, January 3, from 10 to 11. It is free and you don't

municipal costs from federal and state to local taxes.

The finance committee is committed to recommending a cost-effective budget for the services—and the level of services—the town wishes. The best way residents can make their wishes known is to communicate with the finance committee and the select board during the budget process and, for registered voters, to vote at town meetings.

—Respectfully submitted,  
 Monterey Finance Committee  
 Jonathan Sylbert, Chair,  
 George Cain,  
 and Rebecca Wolin



have to be a resident of Monterey. This is a trial period for every Friday during the month of January. If you are interested, please make sure to come to show your interest so they can decide if they will continue this program.

Thank you to Susan Cain, Hume, and the Friends of the Library for the holiday decorations.

—Mark Makuc  
 Library director  
 MontereyMassLibrary.org



### South Berkshire Kids Playgroup Monterey Library

Fridays in January 10 to 11 a.m.  
 (January 3, 10, 17, 24, 31)

We are taking our playgroup fun to the newly renovated Monterey Library! Join us for free play, storytime, songs and more!! Best for families with children ages birth to 5. This program is free and open to the community, no registration required.



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While you might be tempted to hunker down and stay warm in your home during these winter months, resist the temptation to hibernate. Come over to the Monterey Community Center where it is warm and cozy and something is happening every day.

**Ping Pong**

Ping pong every Saturday afternoon continues to generate a lot of interest. Players of every ability, from novices to experts, meet from 2 to 4 to have fun, get some exercise, and socialize with friends and neighbors. Both singles and doubles matches are played every week. Everything you need (ping-pong balls, paddles etc.) is provided free of charge. There's lots of laughter and an overall good time is had by all. If you want to freshen up your game, plan on coming on January 18 to get some ping pong tips from champion player, Steve Graves. The first half of the session will include tips and tricks provided by Steve, followed by playing time to apply what you have learned. Come join in the fun with the ping pong group. The more you play, the better you will get.

**Other Upcoming Events**

**January 10**, at 11:30, the Cookbook Club will be meeting again, using recipes from *Simply Scratch: 120 Wholesome Homemade Recipes Made Easy* by Laurie McNamara. The December meeting resulted in lots of delicious food and fun. If you would like to attend, pick a recipe from the book in the library, make it and bring it to share on January 10. (See page 14.)

**January 12**, at 1 p.m., the Bidwell House will be presenting a history talk replay entitled "Coming to Terms with Colonial America: Another Look at Natives and Other Early Americans." This will be a broadcast of the original lecture given last June by James Merrell, Professor at Vassar College. This presentation is free of charge. (See page 21.)

**January 25**, at 10 a.m., Sue Young will be presenting another free seminar on the college admission process, entitled "College Talk and Tips: Questions and Answers." For more information, to pre-register, or to submit your questions, call Sue at 413-854-5048, or you can email her at collegeprocesscoach@gmail.com. Getting into college can be a confusing and overwhelming process. Let Sue share her expertise with you and make the whole thing easier. While it is not necessary to submit a question in advance, pre-registration is requested in order to contact you if the session needs to be re-scheduled due to weather.

**Help Wanted**

The community center is looking for a volunteer to help out with publicizing the events, setting up for activities, distributing calendars, and working on a database. If there is a senior out there who has some time, this would qualify for the tax abatement program. It's a great way to work off some of your tax obligation. If you are interested, contact Mary Makuc, our program coordinator at calendar@ccmonterey.org, or leave a message at 413-528-3600.

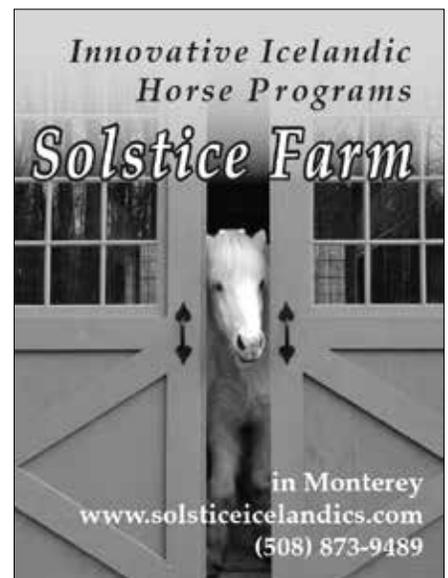
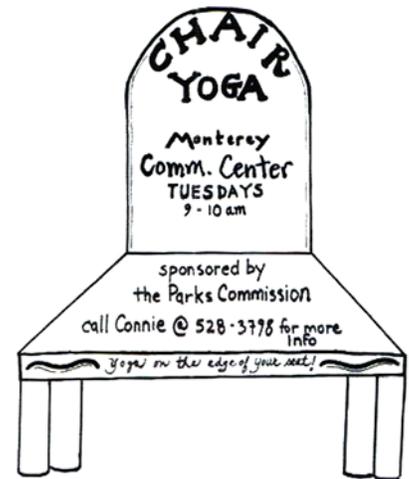
**Ongoing Activities**

- Al-Anon:** Sundays at 9 a.m.
- Mahjong:** Mondays at 7 p.m., and Wednesdays at 3:30 p.m.
- Chair Yoga:** New time—Tuesdays at 10 a.m.
- Cards and Bridge:** Tuesdays and Fridays at 1 p.m.
- Community Chorus:** Tuesdays at 7 p.m.
- Darn Yarners:** The first and third Thursday of the month at 1 p.m. (January 2 and 16)
- Canasta:** (for experienced players), Thursdays at 7 p.m.
- Ping Pong:** Saturdays at 2 p.m.

If you have questions about any of these activities, or would like to check the calendar of events, go to ccmonterey.org.

—Laurie Shaw

Chair, Monterey Community Center





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Joe Baker (above) disconnecting the gutter system downspout for the community center from filling the cistern that supplies water to the community garden in preparation for winter. He'll be back in the spring to begin refilling the cistern. So dream about having a small plot in the community garden next summer, fed with rainfall.



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## Pumpkin Pie (Thanksgiving query)

(is pumpkin pie gonna be alright with you Dad?) s.z.

yes, well . . . pumpkin pie  
 is like that big old moon in the sky  
 and I love to take slice after slice  
 until it's all gone by  
 and go by it all will  
 past the doors and window sill  
 the ten thousand things and us billion beings until  
 out of naught the tea cup once again fills.

— Boney Oscar

December 12, 2019 (full moon)

## January Gong Bath

The kick-off for the 2020 gong bath program for charity begins on Tuesday, January 21, from 4:30 to 6 p.m., as a benefit to Community Access to the Arts (CATA) in Great Barrington.

CATA promotes learning and growth through the arts for people who are mentally challenged. They utilize a variety of art forms leading to transformation, personal growth, and celebrations. It is a well loved and successful organization nourishing people through a variety of art forms. To learn more at how CATA helps the community, visit their website at [CATAarts.org/](http://CATAarts.org/).

The thirty-six inch gong is played for forty-five minutes to release stress and anxiety as well as leading to wholeness and rejuvenation. Listening to these sounds will relax you and bring you into a deep meditative state for healing.

Over the past four months, the community gong bath has raised close to \$500 for the Volunteers in Medicine, the Humane Society, the Barbara Freedman Center, and the Monterey Library. If you

## December Contributions

Dan Zweig and Sally Petrick  
 Liz Sorlie  
 Linda Skipper and Jim Singelis  
 Ruth Rosenblatt  
 Rebecca Phelps  
 Christine and Ron Goldfinger  
 Alyssa Gelbard  
 Ellen and Clay Dilts  
 Dorothy and William Enlund  
 Carol de Harak  
 John Callahan  
 Mike and Laura Arnow  
 Louise Amstead  
 George and Jan Emmonds

have a charity that you'd like to support, please let me know. For further information call me at 203-249-8958, or email me at [susan Cain9@gmail.com](mailto:susan Cain9@gmail.com).

The gong bath will be held at 9 Heron Pond Park in Monterey. Bring a blanket and a yoga mat. Some mats are available. Best to reserve your spot. Free will offering to support CATA.

— Susan Cain

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## From the Meetinghouse Christmas Eve 2019

The president of the United States is often called the most powerful person in the world. But I always wonder at that. Is that true?

Look how the Christmas story unfolds. With two references to those in power, the Christmas story unfolds from their pervasion.

The Emperor Augustus was the pinnacle of power, and he shows up in the story by way of his exerting that. He sent out the decree that made it so all within his realm (which was basically the whole imaginable world) had to return to the place of their birth in order to be registered in the census. Unleashing what might have been a real scramble among the people, it's the perfect illustration of how the powers and principalities can set the whole world to wobbling, and by but one gesture, one whim.

For this, Joseph had to go from Nazareth, where he was living, to Bethlehem, where he was from. And for this, Mary, though far along in her pregnancy, had to join him. For this also, of course, the birth of Christ took place in the way: a stable, a manger, animals and shepherds.

On the one hand, the Emperor had all the power in this story, all the events of it pouring forth of his actions. On the other hand, once he's mentioned, he's just as soon gone. Not of interest, certainly not of any otherwise importance in this, one the most important stories ever told, the most powerful person in the world fades to black.

Herod was the most powerful person in this region, Judea. The client king of the Jews on behalf of the empire, he shows up in this story for his ruthless protection of that—his own reign. A new king born to the Jews threatened his power, and he wouldn't stand for that. Later, we'll hear how far he's purported to have gone in order to guard his throne. For now, it's useful to notice how the journey of the Magi unfolded as it did because of his actions, because of his manipulation of power.

Following that, though, he comes to nearly nothing. The Magi defy him. Mary and Joseph (for now) ignore him. Jesus is born and will be paid homage for what he would come to be in the world and for the world—king and God and sacrifice.

This story insists upon the little things, things that would otherwise be easy to dismiss. It suggests that God insists upon the little things, the unimportant people, the little town of Bethlehem. That we're to focus on the things which history would have rolled on past, that we're to train our attention on things rude and simple and commonplace as if here takes place actual power, actual wonder: so this is Christmas.

For what it's worth, I believe it, which maybe goes without saying. What's more, the Holy Spirit would have us trust it—that small acts can play out greatly, that momentary graces can amount to so much.

Magical thinking, you suppose? The old timey belief that you can cast spells, can impact greatly things though from afar: just say the magic words. And maybe so; maybe it is just magical thinking. We

live in a disenchanted world, after all. The modern era has made sure of that. Prizing human reason, prizing secular liberal thought, with no reference to anything beyond this realm of hard facts: get real.

But if we clearly effect so very little, why do anything at all? It seems to me the most reasonable among us would be the first to adopt cynicism as "getting real."

I can't live with that. Can you?

The incarnation of God in Christ suggests all sorts of things to us. That God, who is transcendent and omnipresent and absolute, would enter history; that God, who is limitless, all flow, would take on flesh, which is to take on limits, severe limits—limits of time such that you're mortal, limits of place such that you can only do so much, limits of the body which is to be vulnerable to injury and pain, illness and cruelty, and which is therefore also to be existentially dependent on love: that God would choose this?

Dear everyone, I think we're in for a rough year ahead. Our country's governance is heading into unknown territory, and the stakes are high. We could really rip at each other given what's coming. The rest of the world isn't any better off. The rise of populism and authoritarianism, along with the rising temperatures and rising sea levels, though threatening, also feels inexorable, like a ride we're strapped into, we've perhaps long been strapped into though it's been just warming up. The fracturing of old alliances and consolidation of new ones suggests a new set of values at play, and the deception and



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double-speak about it all has me suspecting they're far less good. The powerful are engaged in exchanges of power, all way over our heads, though setting the whole world to wobbling. Really, the ancient words of ancient prophets seem hardly overmuch: "Why do the nations rage?"

Yet it all only strengthens what has been a gathering trend as the modern era grows late, to disempower us all as participants in our world. The postmodernists, fifty years ago, imagined us here—spectators in our common life and little more. But if the postmodernists were early prognosticators of the illness, the coming of God in the Christ child was earlier still with the medicine.

Here's what to do. Find a baby lying in a manger and love it. Find burgeoning life somewhere, anywhere, and nurture it. Lift this gentle life with your hands into your arms, set your heart to the task of bringing it up. As it happens, here in the Berkshires, such burgeoning life abounds.

The Literacy Network: you could volunteer to be a tutor. Railroad Street Youth Project: you could become a mentor to a young one, which means you could get to know a young one. Berkshire Theater Festival: hand out playbills for their shows, help people find their seats and the bathroom when they need it. Answer phones for Volunteers in Medicine. Collect unused coats and bring them to Construct. Read stories to the kindergartners at the closest public school. Shelve books at the library. Become a firefighter. Run for the select board.

Bill McKibben, the climate activist who has been at it for forty years, claims the way forward through the roiling to come is in connecting with actual community. Lucky us in the Berkshires: we have so many ways to connect.

You could also, I have to add, join in on congregational life.

As it happens, we're accepting new members here.

But if this isn't the one for you, go in search of one that is.

This is how you do it, according to Eugene Peterson, longtime Presbyterian pastor who recently died and left quite a legacy of quietly going about great small things. Look for the smallest congregation within easy distance of where you live. Go there for worship every week for six months.



MaureenBanner

*Apologies to everyone, especially those who turned out for the Veteran's Day ceremony, led by Pastor Liz Goodman, on November 11, in front of the library. The paper was composed and sent to the printer when it was discovered that not only had the photo not been included, but there was no mention of the annual ceremony.*

If then you figure it's not a good a fit, try the next one. But by then, you very well might have made it a good fit simply by bringing to it yourself. You know, the Magi probably didn't fit in with the shepherds already there. But it's not like they were all gathering at the inn, where there had to be room. When times are lean, you make room. That's the blessing of lean times. And humans have a funny way of becoming involved with one another, of influencing our environments. It's really hard to keep your distance when you're in the same place.

Meanwhile, the nations will rage. The emperors will on a whim set the whole world to wobbling, and their toadies will go along because their political power is the only power they have.

But they're the least interesting part of the story. The real story is down here, with us, we who aim with our lives to love, we who aim to spend our time with care.

The baby is born. The mother ponders. The father protects. The shepherds gather. The angels sing. Alleluia! Alleluia!

—Pastor Liz Goodman

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## Talkin' (about) Trash

Dear Trash Talker,

Well, the holiday season is finally over, grandkids are gone, but what a mess! We've got ripped boxes, ribbons, wrapping paper galore (these kids are spoiled, I'll tell ya). We're still finding parts of games and puzzles that need to be sent to them.

Most of the stuff I can figure out what to do with, but I don't know what to do with some of the wrapping paper. A lot of it is really shiny, or super crinkly, or feels more like plastic than paper. And then there's the ribbons.

I want to just stuff it all in a big garbage bag and throw it into the paper bin. Can I do that?

—Plain Clothes Santa

Dear P.C. Santa,

This is definitely a first-world problem, so much stuff given and packaged and thus creating tons of debris materials.

If the paper really feels like paper, it probably is, so put that in the paper bin. If it feels like it's got a heavy plastic coating, or maybe even metallic, it goes in the household trash bin. And for heaven's sake, don't stuff it all in a big plastic bag and pitch it in the paper bin! But you could stuff the real paper into the real paper-based boxes to collect it for bringing to the transfer station.

Remember the motto: "If in doubt, throw it out." Better to put something in the household trash that maybe could go elsewhere than to put something into recycling bins that really doesn't belong there.

And when you're back at the north pole, maybe you could talk to the elves about giving fewer but more durable presents next year, wrapped in reusable wrappings, like fabrics.

Ho ho ho!

—R.E. Duce



## Community Potluck January 15

December's potluck was a small, relaxed affair on a very cold night, with two salads, a loaf of bread, roasted veggies, and many desserts. Oh, yes, and a great speaker—we really enjoyed Eleanor Windman's memoirs about her childhood and, as an encore, a more recent account of a wedding in Israel. Maybe we will be lucky enough to have her back and have more people experience her wry sense of humor and great use of language.

For the January potluck, we have artist, author, and mindfulness practitioner Deb Koffman, who has a gallery in Housatonic, Deb Koffman Art Space, where she hosts an open mic night once a month and teaches drawing as mindfulness practice on Saturdays. She will be speaking about and showing art and animations expressing the value of mindful awareness.

The next Monterey community potluck dinner will be held on Wednesday, January 15, at 6 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall of the Monterey Meetinghouse. Please bring a dish to share with a serving utensil, and a place setting and silverware for yourself. Please join us—everyone is welcome.

—Kyle Pierce

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## Fiber Connect Update

As we start 2020, you may be asking where does Fiber Connect's work to build Monterey's fiber optic broadband network stand after starting in July 2017. Looking back to about a year ago, Fiber Connect was the sole respondent to Monterey's request for proposal (RFP) for broadband service. The Monterey Broadband Committee (currently disbanded) recommended acceptance of Fiber Connect to the Monterey Board of Selectmen. The committee's recommendation was based on their findings that Fiber Connect had either satisfactorily addressed, or expressed their willingness to work with the town and its select board on issues important to the town's broadband network.

Fast forward to today, Fiber Connect has not swayed from its commitment to provide Monterey with broadband service, dependent on continued financial feasibility and sufficient numbers of residents taking service. Fiber Connect continues to invest in expanding our fiber broadband services throughout Monterey. In late fall 2019, Fiber Connect entered into direct negotiations with the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) to qualify as a vendor, a required step before Fiber Connect can receive the state subsidies making feasible 96% or better broadband coverage in Monterey. A next step is to draft a service agreement between Fiber Connect and Monterey to complete the December 2018 RFP process, another required step to secure the town's MBI subsidy. Fiber Connect and the select board did sign off on MBI's action plan this past summer, a preliminary statement of intent among all involved parties.

Returning to the status of Monterey's continuing network build, in December 2019 Fiber Connect's crew returned to Beartown Mountain Road to complete fiber distribution between Fairview Road and Hupi Road. (Above right.) This construction was preceded by distributions on Cronk, Griswold, Chestnut, Mt. Hunger, Hupi, and Art School roads. The crew will be doing further construction on Beartown and Fairview roads. With National Grid recently licensing poles around the Route 23 and Route 57 intersection towards New Marlborough, Fiber Connect is anticipating construction on the roads leading off Route



57, plus Corashire and Blue Hill roads. The actual construction schedule will depend on Verizon licensing these same poles. (National Grid and Verizon have to each separately consider pole surveys and grant a license for the additional cable.)

Fiber Connect continues to negotiate "make ready" costs with National Grid and Verizon (the pole owners) over a key stretch of Route 23 necessary to light subscribers. Negotiations over these poles began in August 2017 when Fiber Connect submitted and paid the pole applications for them as well as all others. Fiber Connect has submitted their own surveys and visual documentation supporting their position that there is room on the disputed poles to attach their fiber cable making replacements unnecessary and an unjustified "make ready" expense. Though pole owners post "make ready" time schedules, in reality these schedules are seldom adhered to, and pole owners are not under any governing body to force these obligations. As of now,

the pole owners have decided to resurvey the pole route that includes the disputed poles.

Fiber Connect continues to hold in reserve the pole easements granted by the select board. These easements allow Fiber Connect to place new poles to which they can attach their fiber cable thereby skipping over disputed poles. This is a last resort option to failed "make ready" negotiations. Given the pole owners' decision to resurvey as already mentioned, Fiber Connect does not believe at this time "make ready" negotiations have failed.

Fiber Connect urges you to stay informed as to the facts of what is happening with broadband service in Monterey. To stay informed, sign up for Fiber Connect's e-newsletter for updates on fiber builds in Monterey. You can sign up by going to Fiber Connect's website, [bfcma.com](http://bfcma.com), then scroll to the bottom of the home page for the form. You can also check the website's Berkshire Town Network page for a list of locales where service is currently available, as well as where the crews are active. Monterey's town website also includes a page reporting on broadband activity under the tab "Boards and Committees." For a more personalized way to stay in touch, Fiber Connect is a participating member of the Google group, Monterey Community, founded by Chris Blair and which recently reached 100 members. To join this group, send an email to [christopher.blair3@gmail.com](mailto:christopher.blair3@gmail.com).

—Adam Chait, CEO, Fiber Connect



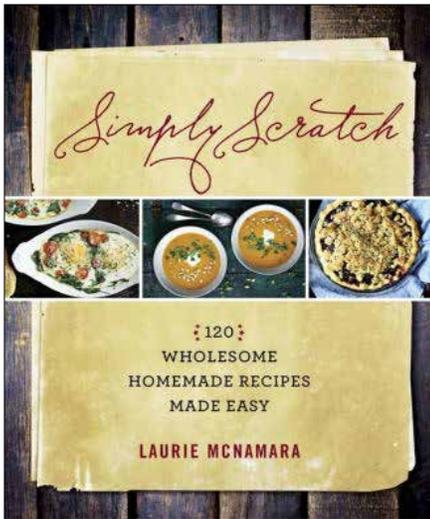
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## Monterey Cookbook Club

The new Monterey Cookbook Club had its first delicious meeting on Friday, December 13. Susan Johnson and Wendy Jensen organized the first meeting. We had twelve attendees, all with assorted new dishes to taste and discuss from this month's cookbook choice, *Celebrate*, by Sheila Luskin. It was a fun, informative, and tasty lunch gathering with fellow cooking friends. Some of the dishes made were: deviled chicken wings, smashed potatoes, elegant butternut squash soup with truffle oil, Sheila's tzimmes, roasted tomato and fennel soup, fennel and arugula salad, blueberry coffee cake, and pear and apple sauce, to name a few.

The Monterey Community Center was a perfect place to gather for this event. The cookbook for January is: *Simply Scratch: 120 Wholesome Homemade Recipes Made Easy*, by Laurie McNamara. The club meets on second Fridays, January 10, at 11:30 a.m. (Check the community center calendar to be sure.)



The month's book is stationed behind the circulation desk. You can take it to a nearby chair and enjoy. Find a recipe that interests you, make a copy to take home and place a post-it note on that page with your name on it so others will know that recipe is taken. On the day of our meeting, make your recipe as written, and bring it along with your own place setting to the community center. We will have lunch together and talk about each recipe.

So stop in the Monterey library, ask for the cookbook club book, and peruse at your leisure. If you have any questions, email Wendy Jensen at [wendygj@gmail.com](mailto:wendygj@gmail.com).

—Susan Johnson and Wendy Jensen

## Council on Aging Events

On **Thursday, January 9**, the Berkshire visiting nurse will hold a wellness clinic at town hall from 2 to 3 p.m. No appointment is necessary.

The Council on Aging board will meet on **Monday, January 13**, at the community center at 9 a.m., prior to the regional Councils on Aging meeting at 10 a.m. Vicky Linscott from Elder Services is a social worker who is their caregiver coordinator. She will be presenting their "Family Caregiver Support Program," which includes multiple kinds of support such as community referrals, support groups, and one-on-one counseling. This meeting is open to everyone in the southern Berkshire area.

**Tuesday, January 14**, at 7 p.m., at town hall is movie night. This month we will show *Harvard Beats Yale, 29-29*, the most famous football game in Ivy League history. Netflix calls it a "surprisingly engaging recounting, with movie stars, politics, comic strips, and the Vietnam War."

**Wednesday, January 22**, is lunch at the Roadside at 11:30.

The foot nurse will be at town hall on **Thursday, January 23**, from 9 a.m. to noon. Call 413-528-1443, ext 247, for an appointment. The cost to you is \$25, the council picks up the other \$10.

**Monday, January 27**, at 10 a.m., at town hall, is the monthly Council on Aging board meeting.

—Kyle Pierce

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## Counting Monterey Residents

The 1980 Census was a lifesaver for me. I had recently quit my job as a reporter for the *Sandpoint Daily Bee* in Northern Idaho and was trying to patch together a living as a news stringer for some other new outlets. With a major story with photos paying \$125, at most, it wasn't that easy.

So when I heard the census was hiring, I signed up. It was a better hourly rate than I could earn elsewhere, flexible hours, weekly paychecks, and a generous mileage allotment. It would take me to backroads I hadn't traveled, and to homes, off-the-grid cabins, and clusters of shacks and trailers I would not otherwise have entered, meeting people that I was unlikely to come across in sprawling, rural Bonner County.

So I sometimes found myself driving up deeply rutted country lanes for as long as the wheels of my car could straddle the ruts, and then, when the road became impassable, walking up to remote dwellings tucked away in the hills that nevertheless showed up on the census maps. And for several months, those extra paychecks came in handy.

I recalled that experience when Mark Sebastino, a partnership specialist for the Massachusetts Census briefed the Monterey Select Board on the upcoming census and asked for their support. He mentioned that recruitment of the 833 enumerators needed county-wide is well underway. As of mid-December, a pool of about half that number had been identified. Hiring announcements will be sent out in January with paid training in March and April. April 1 is the official census day. House-to-house surveys of non-responding households will begin in May through early July.

The aim, Sebastino said, is to hire people living in the same zip code as where they will be knocking on the doors of the approximately 30% of people who typically do not respond to several attempts to reach them. It's estimated that some thirty-one temporary employees will be needed for Monterey and Tyringham. The Monterey Library has already hosted four meetings with the recruiter.

The job requirements are minimal: citizenship, age eighteen years or older, a driver's license and access to a vehicle, no criminal record, completion of an ap-

plication, assessment, and training, and access to email and a computer. The local pay rate, which is based on the area, is \$19 per hour (it rises to \$25 an hour in parts of New York City). Typically, about half of the people hired are over fifty years of age.

This year, for the first time, the census is being conducted primarily online. The fact that low-income and elderly people—and Monterey residents without Internet access—may have trouble with that aspect of this year's survey complicates the challenge of reaching every individual.

Our library is on board with computer access and help. "We've made it a goal to get every staff member trained so they can help people get through it," said librarian Mark Makuc. Melissa Noe, the town's administrative assistant, is the local focal point. The town's website includes a link to the 2020 census information page, including an online address to report false information, or find out whether a rumor you heard is true: [rumors@census.gov](mailto:rumors@census.gov). The official surveys, for instance, will not ask for income, bank account, social security number, donations, or any related personal information. So don't give that information out or you may be responding to a scam.

The census goal is to count every single person at their main place of residence—the large number of people with second homes in Monterey should answer only once, and at the residence where they spend the most time.

Residents will initially receive a letter that contains an online address where the surveys are located. Those who don't respond to the initial invitation will receive reminder letters between March 12 and March 16 and March 24; a reminder postcard between March 26 and April 3; then a reminder letter with a paper questionnaire between April 8 and April 16. A final reminder postcard will be issued between April 20 and April 27.

Those who have not responded to any of the notices by the end of April are likely to get a visit from an enumerator.

The census is mandated by the US Constitution right up front —Article 1, Section 2. In a world that increasingly relies on good data, it's the country's most important source of data, and the largest peacetime mobilization undertaken in this or almost any country. A glance at the 173-

page operational plan gives a snapshot of the complexity. A key element, identifying each and every housing unit, began in 2015, and has been fine-tuned since then.

The list of uses for the data collected is extensive: In addition to helping governmental bodies forecast educational, transportation, and health service needs, it can be used for disaster relief and other public safety strategies—such as estimating the spread of communicable diseases and facilitating scientific research. Two of the most important uses for Massachusetts is determining what share of the \$675 billion of federal aid will be allocated to the state, and how many congressional districts will represent us in the House of Representatives and Electoral College.

As a result of the 2010 federal census, Massachusetts received \$22.8 billion through 55 federal spending programs. The state also lost a congressional seat. Former Representative John Olver's constituency was folded into that of Representative Richard E. Neal's. The first district now spreads from Berkshire County eastward to include the Springfield area and is the largest in the state—it covers about a third of the total area—making it difficult for Neal to meet with all his constituents.

Since 1910, Massachusetts' share of congressional representation has decreased from sixteen to nine representatives as the country's population has moved southward and westward. This year, Berkshire County's population is projected to decline by 3.7 percent, one reason why state and local officials are trying to ensure that the people who do live here are counted. The Census Bureau estimates that as many as 20,000 children under age five were missed in Massachusetts in 2010. And because each uncounted person translates into about \$2,700 in federal aid, that adds up to \$54 million. That's why a number of states are investing heavily in getting people to participate: Massachusetts has appropriated \$2.5 million to the effort, much of it going to non-profits in the Boston area where counting everyone is challenging.

So make sure you get counted. Each response could mean more money for our state. And more representation in Congress.

—Janet Jensen

*Editor's note: See the ad seeking census workers on page 26.*



## 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. Each month during 2020 we will print some highlights for a four-to-five year period.

### Monterey News, 1970-1974.

The Monterey News began under the sponsorship of the Monterey United Church of Christ. The paper was financed by the parish council of the church "to serve the whole community, to be available to all or-

ganizations, and to encourage the creative spirit in the community." The first editor was Marie A. Seifert; shortly thereafter, Patricia Howard became editor. At the end of the first year, the costs of putting out the paper exceeded the parish council's funds, so donations were solicited from residents to keep the paper going. The response was great, with enough funds to keep the paper going for the next year.

### Lake Garfield Dam

Several big news stories happened in 1970 to 1972. The first was the repair to the Lake Garfield dam, construction of new dam, the creation of Brewer Pond, and the relocation of Sylvan Road and Tyringham Road. In May of 1970 the Massachusetts House appropriated \$350,000 for this construction project, with a completion date of July 1972. The selectmen spent many hours on trips to Boston, dam inspections, and reviewing plans. A condition of the state funding was construction of a public boat ramp to Lake Garfield (a state-owned lake). The town did several land takings for the new dam at Brewer Pond, the new twelve-acre pond, and the relocation of Tyringham Road.

The pond was dredged during the winter of 1972, so that construction could begin in the spring and be completed by November of 1972. Discussion ensued about the placement of the new public swimming beach and the placement of the

public boat ramp. The town voted to have the new town beach on the north side of Brewer Pond with an emergency access by boat, as there was no room for a road access. The public boat ramp was to be situated at the location of the old beach area. (Author's note: The new beach area was used for one year, with Linda Tryon as its lifeguard. The new beach area proved to be very unpopular with townspeople, and the beach was moved back to its old location on the main part of the lake. The town was then presented with the problem of where to locate the public access boat ramp, a problem that was to plague the town for many years. To date, the issue has never been formally resolved, although a workable compromise seems to be in effect now.)

### Route 23 By-Pass

The second big story of 1970 to 1972 was a proposal to construct a Route 23 by-pass south of the current Route 23 roadway from the Great Barrington town line to the Otis town line. The current Route 23 roadway was owned and maintained by the town (rather than the state) and was in dire need of repair. The state indicated there were no funds for rebuilding the current road, but there were sufficient state and federal funds to build a new road. Many residents, including Dick Tryon, Kay Mielke, Tom Gillis, the conservation commission, and the finance committee, were against the proposed by-pass. Opponents to the by-pass created a "Save Scenic Monterey" committee, which met bi-weekly for more than a year. Those in favor of the by-pass including Dean Amidon and Robert Gauthier, the select board, planning board, and safety committee created a competing "Save All Monterey" committee.

Some of the talking points against the proposed by-pass included increased noise and air pollution, destruction of eighty acres of woodland along its one-hundred-to-three-hundred-foot-wide land taking, destroying 4.7 miles of wildlife refuge, damaging or destroying many wetlands areas, bypassing the center of Monterey, costing a minimum of \$3 million, increasing real estate taxes to offset town's loss of revenue from tax takings, and the demolishing of several homes. Those in favor of the by-pass argued that

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traffic on the current Route 23 would increase yearly. After the by-pass was built, the current Route 23 would become a secondary road and lessen its current hazardous travel conditions. Pollution per vehicle would decrease on the by-pass as there would be less stop and go traffic. It would increase the value of currently inaccessible lands. The proponents felt that it was better to fill a swamp than take a home. The same funds that would be used to build a new road could not be used to rebuild an existing road.

Several public meetings were held in Monterey with state representatives. The opponents to the by-pass had help from George Wislocki of the Berkshire Natural Resources Council. George organized fifteen members of Save Scenic Monterey to attend a transportation committee hearing in Boston. On that bus ride, Karl Finger composed the anthem "The Ballad of Route 23" which he performed during that hearing. The proposed by-pass would go through a seven-acre parcel of Swann State forest, of which the state committee of transportation disapproved. An environmental impact study would also be required which would take a year to complete. In early 1973, Gov. Francis W. Sargent decided the project was unnecessary and instructed the state highway commission to drop it from their budget. The decision was announced at the February 1973 annual town meeting.

### Town Appointees

In 1970 some of the town appointees included:

- Moth Inspector: Douglas Lyman
- Pound Keeper: Ernest R. Heath
- Highway Department: Howard R. Wells
- Inspector of Animals: Sheldon E. Fenn
- Inspector of Slaughtering: Clarence C. Kinne
- Care of Veterans' Graves: A. Wallace Tryon
- Conservation Commission: Robert G. Brown

### Other notable news

A state law was passed in 1970 requiring the town to replace open burning of rubbish at the dump with a sanitary landfill.

Georgianna O'Connell was the kindergarten teacher at Monterey school in

1970, with nineteen students in a half-day program. The school became kindergarten only in 1967. A new children's corner was built at the Monterey library.

The speaker at the Monterey Historical Society's annual meeting in 1970 was Jack Hargis, who spoke about the restoration of "Deepwood," the former home of Rev. Adonijah Bidwell, the first minister of Township #1 from 1750 to 1784. ("Deepwood" is now the Bidwell House Museum.)

The Wetland Protection Act was passed by the state in 1971.

The new town seal designed by Edith Wilson was selected in March 1971. (See page 26, at the top of the Select Board Corner.)

Gould Farm installed a new septic system (a lagoon system off of Wellman Road) for all buildings at a cost of \$17,000. The system is still in use.

Walter Parks was appointed postmaster in April 1971.

Henry Makuc became the new tax collector in September 1972.

Due to weed control and severe pollution on Lake Buel, the Department of Natural Resources granted Lake Buel \$16,000 for chemical control of weeds and algae on the lake in July 1972.

Fred Lancome's sculpture was to be shown in Paris at the Salon D'Automne 1972 Exhibition.

Some of the town topics discussed in the early 1970s included the need to

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repair the dam behind the General Store (an ongoing need), creation of a town community center, creation of a new town hall, and development of a master plan for the town. The Monterey Historical Society was looking for a space to house the growing collection of historical artifacts. They hoped to do an addition to the library. In November 1974 the library wing construction began with funds from the MA Bicentennial Commission and the Monterey Historical Society. The wing was to be called the General Knox Room.

*(Continued on page 19)*



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## The Phantom Deer

When Daniel Boone goes by at night  
The phantom deer arise  
And all lost, wild America  
Is burning in their eyes.

— Steven Vincent Benét

The white-tailed deer travel a path through these woods, going downslope near the brook, which they cross at a certain place. Deer have used this same path all my life, and I have imagined them passing along the “map” of it to generations of youngsters. Maybe they have done this for centuries. In the winter we can easily see their heart-shaped tracks in snow, but there are enough wet places on this route to show tracks anytime. A deer that is bounding or running leaves a track with spread toes. In open woods or clear land, a deer will typically run at a canter for a few paces and then leap up as if to get a look around. They can leap thirty feet at one bound.

The white-tailed deer are our only local species. That tail is pretty long, about twelve inches, and often as the deer go bounding away, you can see the white underside as the tail is held up tall. The does (females) especially do this. Other times, the tail is flattened downward, and the dark top side blends in with the rest of the coat and is not so visible. Deer show the white flag in order to be easy to follow, for guiding youngsters or others in the herd. But a single animal wanting to disappear from a pursuing predator will not flash the flag. And bucks are more likely to flare out their white rump hair when running,



rather than raising their tails. That white rump hair is three inches long and they can flare it or not, as they choose.

This is winter, and Monterey folks have been noticing places where the deer have dug snow away in order to find acorns. Turkeys do this, too. Deer are browsers and nip off buds and twigs, also bark. I have read one account of deer eating fish, though I find this hard to picture. These fish were reportedly left behind by fishermen, which is also tough to figure.

The teeth of a deer are designed to pull off bark or nip twigs, and then pass these back to the grinding teeth which have many sharp cutting ridges, built to deal with tough and woody material. The

long digestive system does the rest, with a rumen that can hold eight to ten quarts of food, and other specialized sections: the reticulum, omasum, and abomasum. There are sixty-five feet of intestines! This digestive system does not include a gall bladder, since these are not necessary for digesting most plant foods. We have to wonder again about a deer eating a fish.

Deer have no upper teeth right in front, just a tough pad on the top jaw. We used to watch our goats ripping bark off trees with this same kind of dentition. The lower jaw has sharp incisors and can cut the bark and pull it off a little, then hold it pinched up against that upper tough pad. Gripping the bottom end of a strip of bark, the goat or deer can expertly pull and rip off a long piece of bark, stripping way up the tree before yanking it loose. Then all this tough stuff heads down into the four sections of stomach and miles of intestines. Adult deer weigh about 150 to 200 pounds. Every year the males develop antlers, starting with a “button” and then a “spike,” but you can’t tell the age of a deer by its antlers. They are a good indication of how well fed he is.

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*A blue-sky winter day at the Bidwell house after snow and sleet icing.*

Year after year antlers grow and then are shed, which might well make you wonder why we don't find them lying in the woods. If we are lucky, we do. More often who finds them are the rodents who want the calcium they contain. Even when we do find an antler, it is likely to be well nibbled by mice. The bucks grow antlers in the fall, for rutting season. This is mating time and they first spar with saplings and rub their itchy antlers there to get the velvet off. Then they will fight each other, pushing their heads together. By mid-December mating time is over and the does are pregnant. Bucks drop their antlers. They have often lost weight during this time due to a lack of interest in eating.

Fawns are born in early May or June and at first have no scent so predators can't find them. The mother goes off browsing and comes back to feed the new babies several times a day but otherwise she stays away so her own scent doesn't attract predators to the fawn. At three weeks, the fawn follows the mother. By August the fawns are eating, as well as nursing and by September they are weaned. Those

bucks have got antlers again already and the seasons roll around.

Maybe that folk hero Daniel Boone still goes by at night, in his coonskin cap. I used to get him confused with Davy Crockett, who not only had the same kind of hat but was also played by the same actor on television, Fess Parker. One thing I know they both did was go silently through the woods, like the phantom deer of wild America. They got through the mountains by Cumberland Gap, "kings of the wild frontier" two centuries ago.

I think my East Monterey deer were here looping through these woods then, and ever more will be. May it be so.

—Bonner McAllester

*Fifty Years Celebration, cont. from p. 17.*

In May 1974 the annual town meeting moved from February to May of each year.

In 1974 Bill Gilchrist purchased the Roadside Store from Eleanor and Henry Wolfer. Albert Phoenix owned the Monterey General Store. Brook Walsh managed the service station across from the fire station.  
—Cindy Hoogs and Bonner McAllester

## Bidwell House Museum History Talk Replay in 2020

The Bidwell House Museum is excited to join with the Monterey Community Center again this winter to present the off-season program History Talk Replay. If you missed any of the Bidwell House Museum's History Talks last summer, then head to the community center one Sunday afternoon in January, February, or March to view a screening from our popular summer series. The first History Talk Replay will take place on Sunday January 12, at 1 p.m., when we will show the thought-provoking June 2019 lecture by Vassar Professor James Merrell titled "Coming to Terms with Colonial America: Another Look at Natives and Other Early Americans." In this talk, Professor Merrell asks: is thinking about our loaded vocabulary in relation to Native Americans an exercise in "political correctness," or is it simply "correctness"? Check the museum website in January for information about the February and March screenings.

## Annual Appeal

In December the museum's annual appeal mailing went out to all of the museum's members and donors. If you did not receive a letter but you are interested in making a donation, please call the museum at 413-528-6888 or head to the museum's website, [bidwellhousemuseum.org](http://bidwellhousemuseum.org). Every dollar donated supports the preservation of the historic 1760s homestead, 192-acre grounds, and history education programs. And don't forget the grounds of the Bidwell House Museum are open all year! Hike the trails, take a leisurely walk, or go cross-country skiing and snow-shoeing on a snowy afternoon.

Happy new year from the Bidwell House Museum.

—Heather Kowlaski  
Executive Director

*Thanks to Maureen Banner for the Monterey News 50 Years medallion design.*

*Editor's Note: The library has a nearly-full set of back issues available on open shelves. In addition, soon the library's desktop computers will have PDF copies from 2005 to the present available for viewing, downloading, or sending to others.*

## Here's A Thought... Looking Back, Looking Ahead

As the new year opens, we enter the month that ancient Romans dedicated to a figure named Janus. He was always shown with two faces, one looking toward the past and the other looking toward the future. The ancient Romans associated Janus with endings and beginnings, with moving through arches and doorways.

And, as this particular new year opens, I'm using this column to focus our attention on the threshold we're crossing as a nation. Almost everybody has an opinion about it. Almost nobody's listening to anyone else's different opinions about it. I mean, of course, the fact that President Trump was impeached last month. And I also mean wherever we've gone with the results of that by the time you're reading this.

I know, I know, this isn't what you expect here. But bear with me. No matter which side of the political righteousness any of us has been standing on, what if, this January, we decide to do something to move ourselves through our blocked personal communication doors?

If you're wondering what possible difference doing this could make, think about it in another context, one that isn't political. Did you ever get into an argument with someone you loved, only to have one or both of you stomp off in outrage with the dilemma unresolved?

Yeah, so have I. It hurts. And have you ever then started to weave more stories about why it happened, how at-fault the other person is, how OK you are, to bandage that wound? Me, too. And isn't that basically the situation we're in now, in this country?



Mary, Kate, Jordan

*In ancient Rome, arches and doorways were the province of Janus, who gives this month his name. Why does this image show a blocked archway, at least blocked from my point of view as the photographer? Read on to see.*

Like a personal argument, this painful national situation isn't checkerboard black and white. Its roots reach far back into our national history, back beyond the yet-to-be-fully-resolved War of Northern Aggression, back beyond the financial and racial issues that were not resolved in our founding documents, so that the Union might begin to hang together at all. Unfortunately, unresolved issues continue to fester and after a couple of centuries or so, tend to rise to the surface. And here we are.

I grew up in a politically-involved extended family, one side Democrat, the

other side Republican. In 1960 I attended a campaign rally for Richard Nixon. By the end of his speech that evening, the energy in the Buffalo Memorial Auditorium was electric. Within a few weeks, I was also part of a crowd at Buffalo Airport waiting to wave to John Kennedy after his own successful rally. When his limo pulled in to take him to the plane he was leaving on, he had the limo stop. He came out to shake hands with those of us close enough to the roadway to reach him. I still grin at both of the memories.

Now it's sixty years later, and we tell each other that things are different, and they are. But people aren't. That's what makes really looking at our ways of communicating with each other so daunting. We're all still operating with nervous systems designed to signal fight, flight, or flee as our only time-tested survival mechanisms. And we're designed, one way or another, for community. We're still terrified with the terror first generated when our species learned to use the power of blaming, exclusion, excommunication, shunning. That used to be—in some cases may still be—a death sentence. Why else would we have learned, back in our

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tribal days, to create scapegoats? Why else would we still be doing so?

Dipping our toes into making change in how we view ourselves and each other in this situation isn't impossible, it's just difficult. After all, it starts with a willingness to change ourselves, not them. That act alone is revolutionary—ask anyone working any twelve-step program.

What will serve best here is neither fixed dedication to our own views, nor surrender to another's. What if, instead, we surrender to a spiritual power greater than human ego, merciful enough to be incomprehensibly compassionate, and just enough to be incomprehensibly inclusive? One that may seem distant, or impossible to believe in, but worth calling on, calling forth, anyway.

In that surrender, we'd risk exploring an interior way of life based on self-respect and respect for those both in, and outside of, our political, religious, or personal family tribes. We'd risk having only one agenda for anyone, including ourselves: good health, deep happiness, and deep peace.

We'd also risk going back to that agenda even after we found we'd failed to keep it as well as we'd planned. After all, we'd find ourselves doing so in a world that still contains the apple-throwing trees, that intoxicating poppy field, that wicked witch and those gnarly monkeys Dorothy encountered after she knocked on the door of the Emerald City of Oz to begin her journey back home to Kansas.

Dorothy had to be lifted up by a tornado to get to the door that opened for her. Let's start smaller than that. Let's look within and acknowledge our own whirlwinds. Let's admit we're human enough to harbor confusion and fear, fight, flight, and freeze. Maybe we'll find there's no need to hate ourselves for that, or to hate anyone else for doing the same thing. Let's take time this month to shift our points of view enough to get beyond any one of the many fences we've inherited or created. Let's keep healthy boundaries but move beyond those fences that are no longer necessary. We just might find we're free to cross through that previously blocked archway into more rich green life, right here, right now, in the middle of winter.

—Mary Kate Jordan



John Szablowski

## Hume Holiday Joy

Happy New Year Monterey! Reflecting back on the holiday season, the staff of Hume New England had the opportunity to celebrate two amazing events with our community.

Our fourth annual pancake breakfast took place at our camp on November 23, and we were grateful to see many new and returning friendly faces. We had roughly one hundred people attend the event. Hume hosts this free breakfast every year in November and the community comes for the outstanding food, lovely decorations, and welcoming company. If you missed it this past year we look forward to seeing you in November 2020.

To celebrate the Christmas season, on December 7 Hume hosted a cookie exchange at the community center. This event created a wonderful opportunity for our neighbors and friends to interact

with one another and exchange different flavors of cookies. Who doesn't love a good Christmas cookie?

These events can only happen with the participation of our community—neighbors willing to come together to enjoy life with one another. Seeing many laugh with each other, share a smiling face, and graciously have conversations is why we look forward to these events each year. Hume is thankful we can reach out to the community of Monterey through these events. It was a great end to 2019 and we look forward to what 2020 will hold for Hume New England and the town of Monterey.

—Lacey Perez and John Szablowski  
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## Head Start for a Box Turtle

Box Turtles are a common and colorful species cousin of the terrestrial tortoise family. They are easily identified with an ornate orange shell with bony plates that hinge at the bottom to retract legs and head for protection against predators. Because they are slow and vulnerable, thousands of them are killed crossing highways every year, or collected from the wild as pets by children. Taking a turtle from the wild is not recommended, as many die from stress when removed from their habitat. Turtles appeal to youngsters possibly because they remember reading Aesop's Fables about the race between the tortoise and the hare. This ancient Greek fable, written two thousand years ago, has a moral lesson for children of a turtle winning a race against a hare. It teaches them that seemingly impossible goals can be achieved by determination and perseverance of character.

Box turtles are omnivorous, eating almost everything they can get, for a varied diet of insects, earthworms, and millipedes, along with vegetation. However, as they grow older, they turn to a 90% vegetable diet so healthy that they can live fifty to one hundred years or longer. The most hazardous part of this lifetime race into longevity is the starting point. From frequent mutilation and poaching of egg nests in the sand, and then hatching and striking off on their own, as illustrated, they are small and visibly vulnerable. They are easily taken by minks, skunks, raccoons,



dogs, rodents, crows, and ravens. The Box Turtles that survive the beginning of the race of life have somehow become the official mascot of four states, but are also listed as a threatened species.

However, this hazardous beginning of the Box Turtle's life journey, which, along with habitat fragmentation and loss, could ultimately lead to extinction, has surprisingly become a focus of learning by a group of high school students. Near where I live now, at the Bristol County Agricultural laboratory, turtles are hatched, fed, and raised during the winter, and then released much larger into the wild the following spring. They call this a "head start" program, and it is overseen by US Fish and Wildlife Service. It is interesting that both federal

and state hatcheries may ultimately be the ones to weave a safety net for endangered species to prevent their extinction.

The Box Turtle is among the oldest reptiles in the world. It is thought that some form of the first life on Earth probably included a reptilian form that crawled up on dry land out of the primordial soup of the ocean. Many indigenous cultures around the world hold the belief that the first land was created on the back of a turtle. The Box Turtle "head start" programs, working to insure continuation of species like the Box Turtle and perhaps others, may be strengthened by the next generation of students through their studies of environmental awareness.

—George B. Emmons

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## Remembrance Patricia Edelstein

Patricia C. Edelstein, a longtime resident of Monterey, MA, passed away on November 30, 2019 at Kimball Farms Nursing Facility at the age of 83.

Born on September 29, 1936 in Clifton, NJ, she was the daughter of the late Frank and Ruth Pulis Klippel. She was educated in New Jersey schools and after high school attended nursing school. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in nursing and later her masters degree from Hunter College in New York City.

She and her husband Richard were married in Putnam County, NY, in 1982. They bought a second home on Lake Garfield in 1985 and in 2015 they made it their permanent home. Patricia was active in the Monterey Conservation Commission and Friends of Lake Garfield; she spent countless hours monitoring the lake tem-

peratures and its overall health. She was a talented seamstress and quilter, fabulous cook, and loved all animals.

Patricia was a congregant of Grace Church in Great Barrington and a former congregant of St. John's Episcopal Church in New City, NY.

Besides her husband Richard, she leaves her daughter Debra Miller of New York and her son William Michaud of Waltham, MA. She was predeceased by her sister Barbara.

Funeral services were held on Saturday, December 14, 2019, followed by a memorial service at the Finnerty & Stevens funeral home, in Great Barrington. Burial will take place in the spring.

Memorial donations may be made to Grace Church, Alzheimer's Foundation of America, Friends of Lake Garfield, or the ASPCA c/o, 426 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230. To send remembrances to her family, please go to [finnertyandstevens.com](http://finnertyandstevens.com).

## Monterey Dancers Shine In Local Premiere

On Saturday and Sunday, January 18 and 19, at 3 p.m., Moving Arts Exchange (MAX) will present an adaptation of the children's book *Frog Belly Rat Bone*, by Massachusetts author Timothy Basil Ering. Come cheer on Monterey dancers Madelaine Rundle, Catherine Makuc, and Cora Baker, in this magical production based on a mystical story of a boy from Cementland who creates a scarecrow (and his subsequent new friend), Frog Belly Rat Bone, to protect the tiny specks that will grow to transform his dreary world into a beautiful garden. As the story unfolds, fantastical creatures and magical muses appear, and the gray world of Cementland bursts into fanciful colors to everyone's whimsical delight. This is a story of cooperation, friendship, strategy, and patience. There is no doubt that the performances will sell out, so capture your tickets online at [movingartsx.org/frog-belly-rat-bone](http://movingartsx.org/frog-belly-rat-bone).

Also on Saturday, January 18, there will be a reading and author book-signing at Matrushka in Great Barrington. See the MAX web site for details.

—Pam Johnson



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## Who's Who in Monterey

### Francie Leventhal

Anyone who visits the Roadside Store and Café has had the pleasure of meeting Francie Leventhal. She has been the manager and face of the Roadside for the last two years. Yes, there have been some changes but it is still Roadside. The famous pancakes still remain the center of Roadside's success. Francie is not only responsible for the Roadside, but manages the kitchen at Gould Farm. It is a dual responsibility that requires time, menu creativity, patience, management skills, and a vision toward the future.

Before studying at the Natural Gourmet Cooking School in the Chelsea section of Manhattan, Francie had a diverse career working in Colorado at a local newspaper as a graphic designer. After moving to New York in 1998, she worked for ten years in marketing for website and magazine publishing. Her interest in culinary arts began as a result of her cooking a Thanksgiving dinner for twenty to thirty people.

It was interesting to learn that the Natural Gourmet Cooking School focused on whole foods, mostly vegan. Francie's first cooking position was the complete opposite. At Back 40 West in Soho, Francie worked with Peter Hoffman, a pioneer in the farm-to-table movement, where butchering meat and using seasonal vegetables was prominent. She went from there to Lucy's Whey Tea Shop and Wine Bar on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. To quote Francie, "It was hard to live in the city on a cook's wage." Onward to Monterey!



Francie was told about an assistant kitchen manager's position at Gould Farm by a friend and jumped at the chance. She spent one year in that position before becoming manager. Due to staffing changes at the Roadside Store and Café, it made sense for Francie to "take on Roadside and the kitchen. It allowed for all three of Gould Farm's food services to synergize." (This includes the Harvest Barn.)

While I wanted to delve further into Francie's life, our conversation always returned to the Roadside and Gould Farm. Francie's goals, challenges, and expectations for the future center around her working life. Her goal for the Roadside is to "integrate into the greater Monterey community, such as a continued meeting place for the Monterey Coffee Club." She expressed appreciation for the people who use the Roadside for meetings and the

local construction people who get coffee, muffins, and occasional lunch.

Challenges and concerns were focused on the Gould Farm guests and volunteers who staff the Roadside. She felt that after business slows down in the summer "we cannot provide a challenging experience for our staff." To resolve this issue she is trying to expand food services: take-out dinners such as mac and cheese, beef stew, chili, and meatloaf, at a reasonable price. What is better than these comfort foods on a cold winter night? Roadside also prepares soups and such for the community outside the farm: the Childrens Health Program (CHP), Women and Infant Children (WIC), and Berkshire South Community Center.

As far as the future goes, Gould Farm is beginning the planning process for a new Roadside building where "we can provide a greater service to local residents and visitors to Monterey."

We ended our time together with talking about Monterey and what it means to us. Francie expressed her love for this town. "After spending so much time in New York City, being in Monterey is like coming home." She loves the sense of community here and even in the confines of Gould Farm, she does not think about returning to the city. She is enthusiastic about getting to know her "local customers and sharing in the daily events of their lives." The joy of engaging with new customers "who come far and wide for our famous pancakes... especially the large. People who have been here know the large is impossible to finish."

Francie is the face of Roadside and all of our conversation made clear her commitment to Roadside and the community it serves. She has tremendous appreciation for those who come in and enjoy a meal or even a friendly cup of coffee.

—Cheryl Zellman

*Editor's Note: Cheryl is a part time employee at the Roadside.*

Every month there are small, mostly horizontal blank spaces like this. If you like to sketch, doodle, draw—think about sending some to the Monterey News. Scan and email them (MontereyNews9@gmail.com), or stick them in an envelope and mail them to MNews, PO Box 9. Please!



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## December Wildlife Report

December brought the snow, so the trackers among us have been happy. At first we didn't feel we were seeing much of our wild neighbors in that new snow, but then the prints began to add up. Mice, small birds, deer and then the big excitement of bear tracks including a "slide" mark on a steep downslope onto Hupi Road. Bob Carlson is out on his skis every morning and has discovered new sets of bear tracks several times. It's clear this bear, and it may be just one bear, had not gone into a deep winter sleep by the middle of December. (At right)

With the new snow we could see foxes visiting our compost place, probably more interested in the mice that live there than in our squash seeds and onion peelings. We have also had a bigger canine here, probably a coyote rather than a neighbor dog. The scats contain deer hair, maybe thanks to a deer killed by hunters early in December during the hunting season.

Also early in the month, Steve Moore wrote to say he'd been noticing the effects of freezing temperatures on the mole tunnels in his mowed lawn. They'd been raised up, so that as he walked over them and broke the frozen ground he wondered about how this affected the moles. We can only assume they are equipped to handle that upstairs traffic. Moles are insectivores, very different from mice or voles. They are looking for "meat" meals, or at least animal protein. They love worms, also all sorts of insect grubs and larvae that live in the ground, feeding on the roots of plants, including grass roots. Moles also make tunnels in order to get around safely, out of sight of predators. They have great big front feet sticking out to their sides. These feet are perfect shovels, and must be designed for repair work as well as for construction.

Chris Goldfinger came upon a big flock of turkeys hanging out in the middle of the road and sent in a good photograph (top right) of this "traffic jam." Folks are reporting plenty of birds at the feeders these days, though at first we had a remarkably slow start in these parts. Now even the squirrels are leaping to the feeders, just like always, and winter is here.

Steve Moore and Wendy Jensen have been hearing a saw-whet owl for the first time



Bob Carlson

over at their place. This is a tiny owl with an odd sound that used to remind rural people of the sound made by someone across the way whetting a saw. This is a part of the sharpening job and the big metal saw amplifies the sound which can carry a long way. It does not sound like any bird you can imagine. The saw-whet owl makes a "toot, toot," sound that is whistle and nearly musical in a metallic way. But most people have never heard a saw whetted and in fact often assume this owl to be called (for what reason?) a saw wet owl. Maybe there is some sense that we must make the saw wet before we can side-joint it with a whetstone. Like we would make a knife wet before sharpening it? I am clutching at saws, here, obviously!



Chris Goldfinger



Bonsai Cox

*Rose-breasted Grosbeak*

Nowadays people rake leaves with a tool that makes a huge roaring engine noise. And type on a device that does not go rattle, rattle, tap. . . tap. . . bing!

Send me your wild sightings, even your wild ideas. I'll see what I can do.

—Bonner McAllester

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## Select Board Corner

Welcome to the Select Board Corner. Our goal is to submit an article each month to the *Monterey News* to keep everyone up to date on important issues, office closings, highway projects, etc.

### MontereyMA.gov

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

### Meetings and Events

**Board of Health:** Monday, January 6, at 4 p.m.

**Conservation Commission:** Wednesday, January 8, at 6 p.m.

**Council on Aging:** Mondays, January 13 and 27, at 10 a.m.

**Visiting Nurse:** Berkshire VNA will be here on Thursday, January 9, from 2 to 3 p.m. No appointment necessary.

**Parks Commission:** Wednesday, January 15, at 6 p.m.

**Planning Board:** Thursdays, January 9 and 23, at 7 p.m.

**Select Board:** Thursday, January 2, at 5 p.m., and Wednesday, January 15, at 9 a.m. Please call 528-1443 x111 to be placed on the agenda.

### Town Hall Closings

All town offices will be closed on January 1 for New Year's Day, and January 20 for Martin Luther King Day. Most individual office closings are posted on the town calendar and on the department's voice-mail message. We recommend always calling ahead.

## Other News

At the special town meeting held on Thursday, December 5, concerns were expressed from some present about the article requesting permission to sell the Monterey School building. Some present seemed surprised by this article and feared that the future of the building hadn't been given enough attention.

We would like to assure the residents that the board has been discussing the building and program in Monterey for quite some time and have had various committees appointed to research possibilities available, as well as several studies of the building itself to determine how much money it would take to continue to use the building as some form of a learning institution. The most recent committee (the Monterey School Study Committee) was appointed in FY13-14, and they were tasked with looking at alternative educational programs that could be held in the building in order to keep a program in Monterey. While everyone appointed gave it their all and had some really great ideas, it became inevitable that Monterey just did not have the population of students to sustain a program and the projections for the future just continued to decline. Prior to that there was a committee that looked into construction possibilities; whether the current building could be rehabilitated, and how much that would cost, and they looked into modular buildings that could be built on other town-owned properties. Again the committee determined that the population of students and declining enrollment did not justify the costs.

In 2006 the Southern Berkshire Regional School District hired a company (EDM) to perform a study of all the buildings in the district. Their report had fifteen pages of recommendations of items that would need to be replaced or repaired over a fifteen-year period totaling at the time \$846,300. EDM returned in 2014 to perform a visual structural observation and found that at a minimum, to just repair the structural items would cost approximately \$56,200-65,200. They commented that the general condition of the Monterey building was poor, and that the framing does not meet the structural requirements as required by the Massachusetts State Building Code. They also noted that this estimate was visual only and did not address any noncompliant architectural,

electrical, mechanical, etc. items that could be required in its current state or as part of a major building improvement. In 2017 the Board also had the building tested for lead which was found in several areas and would be costly to remediate.

Last year we learned from our insurer that since the building is vacant it could no longer be covered under our general policy and a separate plan had to be purchased at a cost of approximately \$1,500. This year the board decided that it was time to put it to the voters to decide what to do with the building, and asking permission to sell it was thought to be the best option as the possibilities for a private individual may not be as cumbersome as they are for a municipality that must pay prevailing wages and would possibly require more features as a public building than a private one would.

With that said we heard you, and want to give everyone a chance to be a part of the decision-making process. On Wednesday, February 5, at 7 p.m., we invite anyone interested to attend the meeting. If you are unable to attend, please send an expression of interest to be on the committee that will review the options available for the building and its future.

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

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

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## Calendar

### Regular Events

**Sundays:** Al-Anon, 9 a.m., community center.

**Mondays:** Mahjong, 7 p.m., community center.

#### Tuesdays:

Chair Yoga, with Connie Wilson, 10 a.m., community center. Sponsored by the parks commission.

Cards and bridge, 1 p.m., community center.

Community chorus, 7 to 8:15 p.m., community center.

#### Wednesdays:

Balance review classes, 10:30 a.m., community center.

Mahjong, 3:30 p.m., community center.

#### Thursdays:

Canasta lessons, 7 to 9 p.m., community center. See page 6.

December 5 and 19: Darn Yarners, 1 p.m., community center.

Darn Yarners, January 2 and 16, 1 p.m., community center.

#### Fridays:

South Berkshire Playgroup, 10 to 11 a.m., Monterey Library. See page 7.

Cards and Bridge, 1 p.m., community center.

**Saturdays:** Ping pong, 2 p.m., community center.

### January Events

#### Friday, January 10:

Cookbook Club, 11:30 a.m., community center. See page 14.

Opening reception for *This Is Not a Zoo*, Knox Gallery, 6 to 7:30 p.m. See page 5.

**Sunday, January 12:** Bidwell House Museum history talk replay, "Coming to Terms with Colonial America," 1 p.m., community center. See page 21.

**Monday, January 13:** Regional councils on aging meeting, 10 a.m., community center. See page 10.

**Tuesday, January 14:** Movie night, showing *Harvard Beats Yale, 29-29*, 7 p.m., town hall. See page 8,

**Wednesday, January 15:** Community potluck dinner with Deb Koffman, 6 p.m., church basement. See page 12.

**Saturday and Sunday, January 18 & 19:** Performance of *Frog Belly Rat Bone*, MAX in Great Barrington. See page 23.

**Saturday, January 18:** Lenox Contra Dance. Live traditional New England dance music, with calling by Jon Greene. 8 to 11 p.m., beginners session at 7:45. Lenox Community Center, 65 Walker St. LenoxContraDance.org. Contact 528-4007.

**Monday, January 20:** *Monterey News* February issue deadline.

**Tuesday, January 21:** Gong Bath fund raiser for CATA, 4:30 to 6 p.m., 9 Heron Pond Park, Monterey. See page 9.

**Wednesday, January 22:** Council on Aging lunch, Roadside Cafe, 11:30 a.m.

**Saturday, January 25:** "College Talk and Tips." with Sue Young. 10 a.m., community center. See page 8.

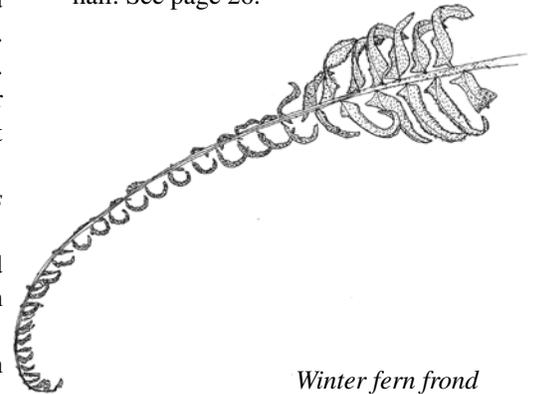
**Monday, January 27:** Adult book group, 7:30 p.m., community center. *Tip of the Iceberg*, by Mark Adams.

## 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.

### February Events

**Wednesday, February 5:** Discussion with the select board about the future of the Monterey School building, 7 p.m., town hall. See page 26.



Winter fern frond

## Town Contact Information Emergency! 911

#### Administrative Assistant:

528-1443 x111

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

**Assessor:** 528-1443 x115

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

**Building Department:** 528-1443 x118

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

**Community Center:** 528-3600

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

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

528-3136, [chief@montereyma.gov](mailto:chief@montereyma.gov)

**Highway Department:** 528-1734

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

**Library:** 528-3795

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

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

528-3211, Alt./Emergency 528-3211

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

**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.

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*Contributions from local artists this month:  
Rachel Arnow, p. 21; Maureen Banner, pgs. 1, 16;  
George Emmons, p. 22; Tristian Goik, p. 12;  
Bonner McAllester, p. 18; Stephen Moore, p. 27.*

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