

MONTEREY NEWS

May 2024 Est. 1970
Vol. LIV · Number 5



Pick up at: the library (in and outside), outside town hall, transfer station



Totality in Lemington, VT, by Kateri Kosek.

Eclipse observations page 14 to 18.

Soon we were all pals. My conclusion is we need more eclipses to bring the world together. Who do we petition for that?

April 8- Total Eclipse page 14

We might find some common ground, right here under the moon and the sun. We might find the midpoints between and among us.

Right in the Middle page 29

If you've been thinking about introducing more native plants on your property, don't miss the native plant giveaway on Saturday, May 25.

Native Plants Giveaway page 26

And then, all at once, the sun slipped back like someone hoping you didn't even notice they were gone, and it warmed us again, and it was like nothing at all had happened.

Eclipse page 18

My new plan is no plan—to just stop trying to manage things and let it go. What is never in question is that Monterey and its vibrant community are now wholly part of my life and a place I call home.

Who's Who-Lin Saberski page 22

The American Parkinson's Disease Association's annual "Optimism Walk" takes place this year in Framingham, MA on Sunday, May 19.

Optimism Walk page 18

Meanwhile, I feel better and stronger every day just watching those big leaves surge up, unfurl, and stand taller and taller. This is the power of spring.

Hellebores: True or False page 19

Now, I've *never* been a fan of falafel, But *this* falafel...I was blown away.

Monday Night Supper Club page 27

If we want that firefighter or EMT coming to the rescue, then we must find ways to support them in every sense of the word—financially of course, but maybe also with a deeper appreciation for what it means to serve and protect.

Blazing a Trail page 9

Monterey Pantry PickUp Inc. is pleased to announce that the IRS has granted the Pantry its own independent certification under Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3) as a tax-exempt foundation.

Pantry PickUp page 21

Read a lightly edited version of the cover letter the select board wrote which accompanies each warrant that has been mailed to every household in Monterey.

Town Meeting page 6

With these considerations, the Monterey Select Board has decided to hold back on applying for the construction grant. The culvert is still in usable condition.

Culvert Grant on Hold page 11

We will be organizing another forum about the future of the meeting house for some time in June. If the meeting house and its future holds your interest, perhaps you would consider using your unique talents and offering some time and/or treasure to this project.

Meeting House page 25



Pollywogs! page 28

Town Elections 2024

Town elections will be held on Tuesday, May 7, from noon to 7 p.m., at town hall.

Everyone is encouraged to vote to support our residents who have offered to fill these important positions.

Contested Seat

Tree Warden (1 year)

Myles Pierce (R)

Kevin West (D)

Uncontested Seats

Board of Appeals (5 years)

Jonathan Levin (R & D)

Board of Assessors (3 years)

Teresa Steibel (R & D)

Board of Health (3 years)

Mort Saloman (R & D)

Bylaw Review Committee (2) (3 years)

David Myers (R & D)

Jeff Zimmerman (R & D)

Cemetery Commission (3 years)

Linda Thorpe (R & D)

Finance Committee (3 years)

Steven Pullen (R & D)

Finance Committee (1 year)

Ilene Marcus (R & D)

Library Trustee (2) (3 years)

Nancy Kleban (R & D)

Cheryl Zellman (R & D)

Moderator (1 year)

Mark Makuc (R & D)

Parks Commission (2) (3 years)

Thomas Mensi (R & D)

Tracey Brennan (R & D)

Planning Board (2) (5 years)

Thomas Sawyer (R & D)

1 seat vacant

Select Board (3 years)

Justin Makuc (R & D)

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Town Elections - Candidate Statements

Candidate Statement

Kevin West—Tree Warden

It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve the town as tree warden over the past year.

Some voters might want to be reminded: what does the tree warden do? The job is laid out in Chapter 87 of Massachusetts General Law. Its responsibilities are two-fold: to manage risk by mitigating hazard trees on town property, and to protect town trees as a valuable public resource. The responsibilities are not either/or. The job is both to safeguard public safety and to safeguard public trees.

My basic view is that the town's trees are a valuable public resource to be managed for the common good and in accordance with best practices under the Massachusetts Association of Tree Wardens and Foresters, a professional organization to which I belong. The job of tree warden requires long-term planning and long-term leadership. I can offer the town my steady commitment to both.

At a practical level, the job description posted by the Town of Monterey requires the tree warden to survey public shade trees on town property. (Most are in the road right of way.) Despite that requirement, no written survey existed when I took the job, but I have now surveyed nearly all the town's fifty-two miles of roadway (about half of which is paved). The survey is done to identify hazard trees and potential hazard trees.

Based on the result of the survey, I have instituted a five-year cyclic management plan, which aligns with industry best practices, to ensure that approximately 20% of town roadways are closely assessed and maintained per year. This year's work began with Tyringham Road, Corashire Road, and Brett Road. Before the end of the current fiscal year, work will be completed along Hupi Road and, time and budget permitting, on Art School Road. I have also met with the board of the Monterey Community Center to discuss managing at-risk trees on that town property.

As part of my tree survey, I also identified heritage trees of exceptional importance—the majestic old specimen trees and beautiful over-arching tree canopies to protect. They make Monterey's scenic roadways what they are.

In the year ahead, my goals are:

- Continue risk management and cyclic cutting—above all, to continue the unfortunate work of cutting ash trees killed or weakened by the emerald ash borer;
- Protect mature roadside trees by making strategic investments in cabling, pruning, and other cost-effective, low-intervention conservation techniques, and;
- Plant and nurture a next generation of town trees for a tree-filled future.

In recent years, the town has cut many trees but has not done enough to conserve important heritage trees or to plant the next generation—this is not just my view, it's what I've heard from many residents as I've made my rounds.

I've lived in Monterey for eight years and have taken great pride in tending the mature maples on my property and planting more trees. As an author (my next book is about vegetable gardening), I have a deep and serious interest in such topics as natural history, ecology, forest management, native species, conservation, and biodiversity. All these themes inform my view of stewardship and what it means to manage Monterey's town trees for a climate-resilient future.

In a nutshell, my vision for the year ahead, if town voters see fit to return me to the job of Monterey Tree Warden, is to pursue three goals: managing risk, conserving our town trees, and planting for a tree-filled future. I hope we share that vision, and I humbly ask for your vote in the upcoming town elections.

—Kevin West

THE GOULD FARM 5K
Sunday, June 2, 2024
Check-in: 8-9AM • Walk or Run Start: 9:30AM
LOCATIONS: Gould RD, Monterey, MA,
or Create a Virtual Event
Scan the QR code to register, donate, or learn more; visit gouldfarm.org/blog; or contact Kelley at 413-528-1804, ext. 14, 5K@gouldfarm.org

Candidate Statement
Myles Pierce, Tree Warden

Myles Pierce is interested in the tree warden position in Monterey. He was the tree warden in New Marlborough for about a year and a half; the only reason he left the position was because he moved to Monterey. He was the former tree warden in Monterey, but had some personal reasons for not running again that have since been resolved. Myles has worked for the Haupt Tree Company for seventeen years and he has worked for the Haupt Tree Company division of Bartlett for one year. Haupt was sold to Bartlett, but Myles stayed on and still holds the same position as a foreman. He has training and years of knowledge in proper tree care. He would love to get into the tree warden position again and serve the community keeping the roads safe from hazardous trees, where he and his wife are raising their family.

— Samantha Pierce

Reprinted from April issue.

Candidate Statement
Ilene Marcus—Finance Committee

It would be my honor to continue serving as a member on the Monterey Finance Committee. Over the past seven years, I have served on several town committees including: council on aging, parks commission, friends of the library, the transfer station committee, and the Memorial Day parade committee.

During the past year the finance committee has focused on maintaining an accurate picture of the town's financial needs and priorities for both the short- and long-terms. Given my background in municipal and non-profit finance, development of early stage founder projects, and operational experience managing complex organizations, I bring the necessary insight that builds consensus on difficult decisions to keep our town's finances in order. Thanks to both the Democratic and Republican caucuses for their support as well as all of your considerations.

— Ilene Marcus

Candidate Statement
Steven Pullen—Finance Committee

I am running for a position on the town finance committee. I am perhaps best known for growing and selling organic vegetables, with my wife, at our farm stand here in Monterey. My wife, Sally, grew up in Monterey and we were married in the church forty-seven years ago. I am currently the treasurer of the Monterey Water Company and past treasurer of the Monterey church and the *Monterey News*. Perhaps most relevant to this endeavor is that I served as the town accountant for three years ending in 2013.

Prior to moving to Monterey in 2000 to care for Sally's parents, I had a career in financial management. I was a CPA licensed by Vermont. I was employed by the international accounting firm now known as KPMG. I subsequently spent the rest of my corporate years as a CFO (chief financial officer).

If you will vote for me, I assure you I plan to continue the fine work of the finance committee and strive to keep our tax rate among the lowest of any town in Massachusetts.

Thank you,

— Steven Pullen



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Candidate Statement

**Tom Mensi & Tracy Brennan—
Parks Commission**

There are no contested seats for the Monterey Parks and Recreation Commission during this election period. Tracey Brennan and Tom Mensi, whose terms on the commission will be expiring, are enthusiastically interested in renewing their positions. Along with Steve Snyder, Gerry Clarin, and Chris Andrews, Tracey and Tom have contributed to the maintenance and improvement of the recreational facilities and parks in Monterey.

We have worked to make the experience of residents at the Lake Garfield town beach a safe and enjoyable one. An upgraded boat ramp, professional lifeguards, organized allocation of racks for kayaks and other vessels, and a beach monitor to effectively manage parking are a few of the steps taken by the parks commission. Greene Park has seen a new playground incorporating present-day play concepts, a pickle board court outline painted over the boundaries of the basketball court, and upgrades to the baseball field for a better playing experience.

Coordinated efforts between the parks commission and the conservation commission on the Brewer Pond trail, and with the Monterey Historical Society at Bidwell Park, will result in enhanced experiences for all visitors. The parks and rec has sponsored the children’s summer beach parties and the outdoor movie night at Greene Park. We have been involved in the Berkshire Pond Hockey Tournaments and the town’s Octoberfest and Winterfest events.

All of us on the parks and recreation commission are grateful to the residents of Monterey for providing the support to achieve these accomplishments.

Thank you for your support.
—Tracey Brennan and Tom Mensi



**Candidate Statement
David Myers—Bylaw Review**

I am both pleased and honored that both the Republican and Democratic caucuses have nominated me to be reelected to a three-year term on the Monterey Bylaw Review Committee.

In the last three years since my first election to this committee, the committee has worked hard to gather together separate but related articles from our bylaws into a more coherent whole, as well as make the flow easier to follow. In addition, we have both re-read older town meeting minutes (both annual and special meetings) to incorporate the new bylaws the town passed at these meetings, and done a “deep-dive” into Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) to be able to provide relevant references to MGL supporting our bylaws.

There is still much work left to be done, and we are all working with our select board to bring this revision to a close, with a new set of bylaws to present to the town for its approval.

Thank you for your support.
—David Myers

**Notice of Service
Elizabeth Thorn**

Elizabeth M. Thorn, 61, a native of Monterey, died March 23, 2024, at home. A service of remembrance (i.e. party in her honor) will be held June 15, 2024 from noon until four at her home on Main House, Bracken Brae Farm, Monterey. All are welcome. Special thank you to Birches-Roy Funeral Home for their caring assistance with Liz.

—Tom Thorn



**Candidate Statement
Jeff Zimmerman—Bylaw Review**

Dear Citizens of Monterey,

I am interested in serving again on the Monterey Bylaw Review Committee. We tackled a very large, detailed, and complicated project and are very close to completion of our initial charge, which was to review and propose to the select board a set of up-to-date and in some cases consolidated bylaws. There were multiple versions and revisions to go through. I was honored to be part of a committee that worked so well and so respectfully with one another, and would like to continue for another term.

In terms of my background, I have served on many not-for-profit boards and committees (large and small) since the 1990s and in many different positions as treasurer of two boards and as president of two boards. I have been through a number of bylaws revisions in those capacities. I have served as a consultant to a number of municipalities over the course of my career and while no two towns are alike, I am familiar with some of the challenges faced by relatively small and modest-sized towns. I am currently an elected member of the Monterey Finance Committee.

Most importantly, I urge you to vote in this and all elections.

Thank you for your consideration.
With best regards,

—Jeff Zimmerman
522 Main Road, Monterey, MA



Letters

Vote for Kevin West

I am writing to urge Monterey voters to support Kevin West to continue as our tree warden.

During this past year, West became a member of the Massachusetts Association of Tree Wardens and Foresters, attending the annual two-day conference on best practices in the wider industry. The conference addressed defining the work of tree wardens and foresters worldwide today—both municipal and commercial—focusing on key risks to trees and forests, such as disease and pests, climate change, sustainability, and planting for a climate-resilient future. These important themes have not previously been part of the program for previous Monterey tree wardens.

Already, West has demonstrated his diligence. I attended his presentation to the select board last winter. He had completed a survey of town trees, identifying hazard trees and trees to watch for future decline. He included a list of our town's "heritage" trees—those exceptional specimen trees and beautiful canopies that the town should conserve and protect.

He has established relationships with John W. Field Tree Service, who is contracted with Monterey for the next three years, the Monterey Highway Department, as well as his regular, ongoing collaboration with National Grid to make best use of their ability to remove hazard ash trees at no cost to taxpayers.

Growing up on woodlands managed by his family, West is a lifelong naturalist. He is a gardening writer with a deep and serious interest in related topics, such as ecology, native species, conservation, and biodiversity.

According to West, "Monterey will be best served long-term if the tree warden takes a similar approach: mitigating risk, conserving mature trees, and planting the next generation of trees.

—Maggie Barkin



Letters

Vote for Kevin West

Kevin speaks up for trees—as well as public safety.

I first met our tree warden, Kevin West, one day about five years ago as I was riding by his historic home across from the community center. I stopped to chat because I was curious about the trees he had taken down along Route 23 and others he was planting. He explained that one of his first investments in the property was protecting the row of sugar maples that lined the highway, by pruning, fertilizing, and cabling the mature trees. He also planted five more young maples where he had removed several dying ash.

It was obvious right away that Kevin loved talking trees, knew a lot about them, and was committed to their wellbeing. He proudly mentioned the pair of American chestnuts growing on the east side of his property, along Eaton Road. Given the rarity of healthy, nut-bearing chestnuts, and the proximity of this pair to the community center, the idea of an annual chestnut roast was born. The event, now going on its fifth year, celebrates the legendary species and educates townfolk about them. Each November on the Friday after Thanksgiving, rain or snow (I'm not sure we've had a clear day yet), Kevin sets up a grill and offers a taste of roasted chestnuts from his trees to people who filter over after a talk at the community center.

Kevin came to his post by filling a vacancy left by former tree warden, Myles Pierce, who resigned last May. In the past, I didn't give much thought to the office of tree warden, or if I did, it was of someone who basically cuts down hazardous roadside trees. But in less than a year, Kevin has brought new dimensions to the job that he takes quite seriously, starting with his regular tree surveys. As he tools along town roads, tape measure and clipboard in hand, he notes trees that seem immediately hazardous, ailing trees that will soon need attention and weakened trees to keep an eye on. He also notes legacy trees of exceptional scenic importance. "These are trees to protect as town assets," he wrote in a tree warden report published in the October issue of this paper, "the trees that we hold in trust

for future generations. These include grand old 'witness' trees—notable rows of boundary trees aligned like colonnades and light-dappled canopy corridors where high branches merge overhead."

My occasional conversations with Kevin inevitably veer towards his ideas for Monterey's arboreal future. He envisions more planting of more diverse species—including elms, paw paws, hickories, hornbeam, tulip trees, and more. The key, he says, is strategically selecting trees to match the space and conditions. "It's a question of the best tree for the site," he says. He's particularly interested in conserving oak saplings, because oaks are more salt tolerant than maples, nurture a wide variety of insects and other critters, and are not facing immediate threats.

I always come away from my chats with Kevin so grateful that he is serving Monterey as an advocate for both trees and public safety. I encourage everyone to vote for him in the only contested spot in the May 7 election. If you want to learn more about this man who speaks up for trees, an excellent profile of him ran in the January issue of this paper. You may also be able to catch up with him at the transfer station on May 5 where he plans to meet and greet people. And he will be available before and after the annual town meeting on May 4. Keep an eye out for his campaign buttons – "KW for TW".

—Janet Jensen



Town Meeting Select Board Cover Letter

Below is a lightly edited version of the cover letter the select board wrote which accompanies each warrant that has been mailed to every household in Monterey. These are meant to serve as notes for the significant articles and provide some explanations.

Article 3: Operating budget

Cost of Living Adjustment: The Town is offering a 4% Cost of Living Adjustment so most compensation lines in the operating budget are up by 4%. Some lines are adjusted in different percentages due to raises, turnover, or additional hours.

Fire Department Compensation: There is serious concern across the country about fire and emergency services (see Susan's article in the May *Monterey News* for a wider perspective). In our own corner of the county we are struggling to find enough on-call fire fighters who are willing to commit their time and to risk themselves for our lives and property. In Monterey we are doing better than many towns but we are facing upcoming retirements and relocations. Financial support of firefighters has become crucial. The select board and finance committee have also worked to address in this year's budget the issue of the firehouse lease.

Information Technology Expenses: The Town has been internally maintaining

the hardware and software. It is a mixture of different aged desktops and laptops, different software that has some locally installed and others that are available online. The Town is engaging a new information technology firm to help upgrade our equipment, software, data storage, and most importantly cybersecurity, as well as providing technical support. Initially this means increasing the budget from \$12,500 to \$28,000 which, along with support, will also include some one-time costs to upgrade and replace networking and security equipment.

Article 7: Additional debt service payments

Minimum required debt service payments are proposed part of the operating budget. However the select board and finance committee have prioritized making payments beyond minimum in order to pay down as much debt as possible. This consideration is being made prior to the forecasted overlapping few years in which the library loan and new fire tanker engine will both require large payments, as well as projected capital purchases on the long-range capital plan. If these additional payments are approved, along with the minimum payments put forward in the operating budget, the Town will be on pace to pay off the highway truck in three more years after the current fiscal year, and the tandem axle dump truck in two more years after the current fiscal year.

Article 8: Fire tanker engine

The Select Board and Finance Committee, in conjunction with the Fire Department, are

asking that the Town residents approve the purchase of an engine tanker truck. The new engine tanker truck will replace a truck that is past its useful life according to National Fire Protection Association standards. It is imperative that our first responders have equipment that meets the standards of their industry. The process itself to receive a new engine tanker truck takes upwards of twenty-four months from order to delivery.

Article 9: Plow truck

The article seeks to replace the oldest vehicle in the Town's fleet of five plow trucks, a 2016 F-550. The proposal includes paying for the truck with Free Cash and General Stabilization funds to avoid further debt.

Article 10: Highway 1-ton truck

The article seeks to replace the truck primarily driven by the Highway Superintendent, and also outfitted with plow capability, in order to replace the current 2018 Chevrolet. The proposal includes paying for the truck with Free Cash.

Article 11: Ambulance services

This year saw an almost 36% increase in




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the assessment from Southern Berkshire Ambulance, with whom the Town now has a one-year contract. All six Towns served by SBA were assessed the same percentage increase. The Select Board actively approached all the towns serviced by SBA in hopes of presenting a combined effort for reducing the assessment but were unsuccessful.

Article 16: Regular date for Special Town Meeting

The Select Board is asking that the town begins a tradition of addressing substantive changes to town governance, such as bylaw revisions or new bylaws, at a Special Town Meeting on the first Saturday in November. The Annual Town Meeting has become increasingly lengthy, with attendance often falling as the meeting progresses. The operating budget and special financial articles will always be a priority at the spring annual meeting, but by prioritizing important non-financial matters on our fall calendar we will be allowing for substantive discussion about important issues.

Article 17: Recall Special Act

This Article is being proposed again after passing Town Meeting and being halted by lack of action in the State Legislature. The Recall Special Act was first voted on at the November 6, 2021 Special Town Meeting, and passed by majority vote, 68-11. State Representative Smitty Pignatelli informed the Town in May 2023 that Town Meeting would need to approve the Recall Special Act again for it to be re-filed. The Select Board is proposing language very similar to that initially approved in November 2021, with modifications made by the select board and town counsel.

Article 18: Lake Garfield Tax District

This Article is being proposed again after passing Town Meeting and being halted by a clerical error within Town government. The Tax District was first voted on at the February 18, 2016 Special Town Meeting, and passed by majority vote, 39-29. It was later identified that there was a procedural clerical error and the bill was never approved by the State Legislature. The Tax District was proposed again at the October 6, 2016 Special Town Meeting. A motion

to table the Article passed by a two-third majority requirement to table. The select board is presenting a Lake Garfield Tax District similar to the one considered in 2016, with modifications suggested by town counsel and the Lake Garfield Working Group. We see compelling reasons for and against the Lake Garfield Tax District. On one hand all Town residents have access to Lake Garfield via the public beach and boat ramp, but on the other hand those residents who live within the proposed District do, in general, benefit from the Lake in a stronger, more direct way while their homes have the most impact on Lake Garfield's health.

We look forward to seeing you on Saturday May 4, at 9:30 a.m. Please reach out if you have any questions before then.

— Signed by town administrator, select board, and finance committee members.

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Emergency services are in a time of great change and small communities are in the most difficult situation. For those who follow the news, perhaps this isn't a surprise. The *Berkshire Eagle* and *Berkshire Edge* have had many articles about imperiled, budget-strapped, or closing ambulance companies, including Adams Ambulance and Southern Berkshire Ambulance. But fire companies are under equally serious pressure as they scramble to find volunteers (and even paid personnel) and to pay for the spiraling cost of equipment and its maintenance and housing. The more I learn about this field, the more complexity I find. But fundamentally I believe it comes down to three essential ingredients: people, money, and community support. To understand where Monterey stands, I need to provide a bit of history about the Monterey Fire Department.



Stephen Moore

Rising Need, Precarious Staffing
 Way back in 1978, the Monterey Fire Department had twenty-one firefighters on the rolls, all Monterey residents. That year they responded to fifteen calls. In 2023, our department responded to 172 calls (on average one every two days). Our current roster still has twenty-one firefighters. But... two of them are likely to move out of the area soon, ten of them are not Monterey residents (about half), and five of them will be retiring within the next five years. Meanwhile with a town with an average age of approximately sixty-five years, and falling volunteerism nationwide, recruiting volunteer firefighters has become extremely difficult, not just for Monterey, but for all the surrounding communities. The personnel crisis is affecting far more than emergency services, but its impact on these critical services is profound.

- They help improve response time, by having firefighters already in the building, able to deploy a truck immediately and/or prep equipment in preparation for the arrival of other firefighters.
- They allow firefighters who may not reside in town (approximately half of them) or who live farther from the station, to turn out rapidly for calls if needed.
- They prevent the call from going to the entire company if a major turn-out is not necessary (as it would be for a structure fire), and also protect the families of firefighters from nighttime disturbances. (How would your family cope with being rousted in the middle of the night every five days or so?)
- They reduce the load on individual firefighters (except the Chief and Deputy Chief of course).
- They allow additional training opportunities.
- Leader participation in the shift program is a vital part of establishing the importance of the program, as well as allowing for additional training opportunities.
- And, they build team coherence, commitment, and retention.

The Shift Program
 Fire Chief Shawn Tryon and his officers have been working for years on this problem. A few years ago, the fire department began both recruiting firefighters from outside of Monterey and instituting a shift program that pays firefighters to stay on call in the station. Shifts serve multiple purposes:

Too Heavy a Burden for Volunteers
 But while the shift program is helping, and is certainly providing a solid bridge,

Christopher J. Tryon
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the numbers and recruitment say that things are going to have to change. Why is it so hard to recruit? Consider that 97 of the 2023 calls were during the day—how many people can leave work for two or more hours, one out of four days (assuming you could get there quickly enough to be of help)? And how many employers would find that many absences acceptable? Right now, five of our firefighters are answering the majority of those daytime calls, and it's a serious burden to carry. In 2022, one firefighter answered seventy-four daytime calls. If those calls required only two hours, that is equivalent to an entire month's worth of lost work. At only fifteen calls a year, it was absolutely reasonable to solve this problem with volunteers. But even with pay-per-call, which the town currently does, this load has become unmanageable for the volunteers.



Stephen Moore

make sure that the fire company gets the financial and administrative support it needs not only to operate, but also to audit its financial records and allow for greater transparency as we move forward into the next phase. They are an independent non-profit because of political issues in the past—but they are a critical resource for the town and we all need to find a way to heal those old wounds. The mistrust is holding us back and keeping us from pulling together as a healthy community.

Forging Alliances for the Future

When most of the nearby towns could field firefighters, the mutual aid system was enough. Yet that no longer seems to be the case. And when nearly half of the “fire” calls are for emergency medical services, combining fire and EMS (done in nearly every large municipality) seems like another logical transition. If every small town is having staffing issues, how can we work together to solve this problem? (If you're not sure that's an issue, please read the *Berkshire Edge* articles on April 12, 13, and 16. And then think about human behavior.) How do we navigate all the complicated interpersonal and financial issues of multiple fire companies, ambulance companies, and multiple town governments? How do we solve all the logistical problems that result from a sparse population and long distances? Response time is the difference between a salvaged home and a ruined one; a life lost and a life saved. Help has to arrive in time to be of any use. It is not going to be easy, nor will it come cheaply. Clearly the costs to the town will be increasing over the coming years, especially for staffing. But we want and need the ability to respond to emergency situations fast and effectively. These are essential services.

Communication Builds Cooperation and Trust

In the meantime, we need to keep our own department on a solid footing, and

Creating a Sound Plan

The officers of the fire department and the members of the select board think it is time to give this issue the serious attention it requires. We plan to task the three most active officers to develop a vision of the future FD/EMS service, including a draft transition plan to make that a reality. Those roles will include a stipend for their work in helping the department plan for the future, and likely develop more robust relationships with neighboring communities for shared services. The fire chief, with his extensive knowledge of the issues and the players in local fire/EMS departments, will take the lead role in this, but will work cooperatively with the town administrator and a delegate of the select board to ensure clear lines of communication. This early period of developing healthy relationships is crucial. A path forward is going to require trust, respect, and frankly some risks. We must figure out a way to work together, overcoming all of the personnel, political, and logistical issues.

Most people believe that access to emergency services is important. We want protection for our lives and our homes. If we want that firefighter or EMT coming to the rescue, then we must find ways to support them in every sense of the word—financially of course, but maybe also with a deeper appreciation for what it means to serve and protect. Let's give

our fire chief the community support to help us build a bridge to a stronger future Monterey Fire Department, with a healthy firefighter/EMS staff that serves our community and very likely some others as well. It's time to try to put egos aside and truly work together.

—Susan Cooper, member
Monterey Select Board

Editor's Note: For the purpose of clarity, the distinction between the use of “Monterey Fire Department” and “Monterey Fire Company” should be understood.

The “department” refers to when the firefighters are working as paid employees of the town, as shift workers or when they turn out in response to calls. All the equipment used in these activities, the trucks, tools, personal equipment, etc., is owned by the town.

The “company” refers to a private, non-profit corporation that owns the fire-house land and buildings, including the open pavilion. The company maintains these assets with public funds (via a lease with the town) and privately raised funds. The members of the company also maintain all the town-owned equipment.

Editor's Note: In My View: The views expressed are solely those of the writer, and are not meant to reflect the views of the full board.

Monterey Softball Open Call

All softball players
Join a 50+ year tradition of
pick-up slow pitch softball.
Ages 10 to 80.
Summer Sunday mornings
Greene Park, Monterey
Batting practice at 10
Games begin at 10:30

Community Center Events May 2024

Weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly activities:

Mondays:

Hablemos! 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., first three Mondays of the month; then 10 to 11:30 a.m. on the fourth Monday. *Intermedio y superior*—to practice Spanish and meet new friends.

Simple meditation, all are welcome, 4:30 to 5:45 p.m.

May 27: Cookbook club—No meeting in May due to Memorial Day.

Tuesdays:

Chair yoga, 10 to 11 a.m.

Vikki True, 11:30 a.m.

Bridge and pitch, 1 to 4 p.m.

Mahjong, 7 to 9 p.m.

Wednesdays:

Tai chi with David Crowe, at 10 a.m. \$8 per class, or \$30 for the month.

May 1, 8, 15: Theatre workshop with Maggie Barkin, 3:30 to 5 p.m. For information email maggierobertsbarkin@gmail.com.

May 22: Council on aging's "Game Time!" 2 to 4:30 p.m. Board games with coffee, tea, and snacks. Fourth Wednesday of the month.

Ping-pong, 12 to 2 p.m. on May 1 and 8; 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on May 15, 22, and 29.

May 15: Monterey Quilters, 1:30 to 3 p.m. Please send an email if you are interested to Lindarneilson@gmail.com.

May 29: Transformational breathwork, 7 to 8:30 p.m. Suggested fee \$30.

Thursdays:

May 2: Darn yarners at 1 p.m. First Thursday of the month. Featuring knitting with Molly Goodchild on May 2.

May 16: Wellness check, 2 to 3 p.m. Third Thursday of the month. With Tritown Health nurses. Flu vaccines and checkups including blood pressure, pulse, and blood oxygen levels. No charge for Monterey residents. Please RSVP to Jill at (413) 717-7209. Minimum of five people required.

May 2 and 16: Music jam sessions with Mark Andrews, 6 to 8 p.m. All skill levels are welcome, instruments, and singers. If you are interested, please contact Mark at mccjamgroup@gmail.com.

May 9 and 23: Chorus with Oren Rosenthal, 4:15 p.m.

May 23 and 30: Open studio with Beth Hoffman, 10 a.m. to noon.

May 23: Living After Loss. Grief support, co-sponsored with the council on aging. An open discussion around grief and loss, 2 to 3 p.m.

Fridays:

Super gentle yoga, 10 to 11 a.m. Please register by emailing jamesboneparth76@gmail.com.

Bridge, 1 to 4 p.m.

Saturdays:

Coffee club, 8:30 to 10 a.m.

Ping-pong, 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Friday, May 10: Yoga Nidra with Nancy Monk, 6 to 7 p.m. By donations. Register by emailing nancyamonk@gmail.com.

Sundays:

AIAnon family group meeting, 9 a.m.

Special Events

Sunday, May 19: CPR Class, 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. Cost: \$65 (includes training, materials, and eCard). To sign up, or for more information, email Kathie Tryon at Kathietryon@gmail.com.

Friday, May 24: Coffeehouse with Allan Dean, 7 p.m.

Saturday, May 25: Native Plants Working Group, 10:30 a.m. See page 26.

Sunday, May 26: Native American Flute, 1 p.m.

Coming Up

June 1: Moving Life Stories, Berkshire Pulse.

June 21 and 22: Stephanie Sloan, "Love Letters." See page 31.

August 24: Desperate Catskill Mountain Band.

This listing is based on information we had as of April 17. You can find updated information on events on our website, ccmonterey.org, or by calling (413) 528-3600, or emailing montereycommunity-center@gmail.com.

—RJ Supa, MCC director,
and Nancy Kleban

See page 30 for Knox Gallery



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The Crystalline Image
Rod Lamborn
May 3 - June 8
Opening Reception: Fri, May 3, 5:30-7pm



May 19 at 5 pm, Sound Bath Experience

KNOX GALLERY
Monterey Library

Knox Gallery is supported by Friends of the Monterey Library

Route 23 Culvert Project Culvert Grant on Hold

Zoom call with the engineers

The Town of Monterey and Berkshire Regional Planning Commission are hosting a final outreach event to hear your questions and comments on the Main Road/Route 23 culvert designs on Monday, May 6, at 7 p.m., over Zoom (registration link below). On this call GZA, the engineers working on the plans, will present background to the designs and answer any questions you may have.

To register for the Zoom event please go to: <https://bit.ly/Rte23ask>.

Grant Application Held Back

The town has been looking to the state Municipal Vulnerability Program to pay for most of the costs for the culvert project. Currently the MVP program has a grant maximum of \$3 million. The project, which a while back was estimated to cost in the mid-\$2 million range now has a recently estimated cost of \$3.8 million. There is a move in the state legislature to consider raising the MVP annual funding to \$100 million and with it a possibility that the grant max may be increased. If the legislation yields success, the town may consider applying for those funds next year. In the meantime, alternate funding options are now being explored for the important culvert project. With these considerations, the Monterey Select Board has decided to hold back on applying for the construction grant. The culvert is still in usable condition. The point of the replacement is to prepare for anticipated extreme weather events.

—Courtney Morehouse
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Getting the Monterey News

Pick up in several locations in town.

Have it mailed free of charge.

Receive it via email.

The *News* has been financed by voluntary contributions for over fifty years without a subscription.

Contact the *News* at Monterey-
News9@gmail.com.

P.O. Box 9, Monterey, MA 01245

Monterey News Transition

Some of you may be aware that a new editor was being sought for the venerable, fifty-four year old *Monterey News*, another editor in the long line of people who have stepped up to support the town of Monterey.

Wait no more! Shannon Amidon Castille has offered to take on most of the tasks as editor. Beginning with this issue Shannon is job sharing with me, doing a goodly share of the editing, and learning about the rest of the elements of putting this together.

She will be largely responsible for most of the content editing for the June issue. I will be in the background continuing to do the photo editing and the layout work until we find someone else who can step into that fairly technical role. I will be content to continue doing that for a while at least.

Shannon has an MFA in creative writing, enjoys writing and teaching poetry, and has worked in various media and fund raising positions. In addition she has a long history with and many acquaintances in Monterey.

No changes are anticipated for how folks can send in submissions of texts, photos, poetry, artwork, opinion or appreciation letters, or questions. Simply email montereynews9@gmail.com and she will be sure to respond.

My work on the July issue will complete a full ten years with the paper. It has been full of rewards—connecting with folks, supporting all the activities in town, and developing content of all sorts. I have thoroughly appreciated everyone's support all these years, and hope that your support will easily be transferred to Shannon.

—Stephen Moore



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**Sun., May 5 2-4 pm - Memorial Garden
Opening and Reception in honor of Val Coleman**
Poetry and remembrances. Light refreshments. Free

**Sat., May 25, 7:30 pm - Andre Lambertson,
award-winning photojournalist and filmmaker**
Screening of the music-filled "The Whole Gritty City." A unique window into the world of New Orleans school marching bands. Discussion with filmmaker. \$20 / 12 and under: Free

For details, reservations, and upcoming events,
check our website:
SANDISFIELDARTSCENTER.ORG

Catching up with the CoA

We hope you have already marked your calendars to hear Peter Poirier and his band on the evening of May 9. You don't want to miss this opportunity to dance to live music right here in Monterey! Details are below.

Looking ahead to June, there is more excitement! We have arranged to show two films in which Karen Allen stars, *Colewell* and *Year by the Sea*. The dates will be Saturday, June 29, and Sunday, June 30. Karen will join us both days to discuss the films. Times are to be determined, but likely both days in the afternoon. We are grateful for Karen's generosity with her time and look forward to welcoming her to these council events.

Van transportation in Monterey is available for everyone, with expanded hours and new towns added. The phone number to book a ride is (413) 591-3826.

To reach me to reserve for events, with questions about scheduled events, or suggestions for new ones, please call (413) 528-1443, extension 112 or email me at coaoutreach@montereyma.gov. Phone messages are picked up once daily Monday through Friday.

—Kathryn Roberts
Council on Aging Outreach Coordinator/
Administrative Assistant

Coming Events

Wednesday, May 1: Lunch at the Main Street Cafe in Stockbridge at noon. Call or email Kathryn at the number/email above to reserve a seat at the table.

Thursdays, May 2, 16, and 30: Essential Exercise with Annie Rye at the community center, from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. Annie's back by popular demand. Don't miss a chance to improve posture and balance with our master teacher. \$10 per class.

Wednesday, May 8: Movie night at the Monterey Library, 7 p.m. Our May movie is Mel Brooks' *Young Frankenstein*, one of his best and one of the most beloved comedies of all time. Don't miss your chance to see it again—or for the first time (but don't let anyone know...). Rotten Tomatoes critics consensus calls the movie "a riotously silly spoof featuring a fantastic performance by Gene Wilder." Get there a few minutes early for schmoozing and light refreshments.



Kathryn Roberts

Virgil Stucker (left) and Lin Saberski (right) presented Richard Pargament (center) with a certificate of recognition for his exemplary leadership of the Southern Berkshire Parkinson Support Group, which has been meeting monthly in Monterey since October 2022. Richard will be taking a sabbatical from his role as coordinator to catch up with life at home, and the council on aging is grateful that Virgil has agreed to accept the huge responsibility of interim coordinator.



Kathryn Roberts

Did someone say, "Light refreshments"?

Thursday, May 9: Peter Poirier and his band at the church at 7:30 p.m. Join us for great music and dancing with Monterey's movers and shakers.

Monday, May 13: Monthly council board meeting at town hall from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. The agenda is posted on the town hall website. All are welcome.

Wednesday, May 15: Documentary film in the Monterey Library at 2 p.m. Our May documentary will be *Ruthie and Connie: Every Room in the House*. This film is described by Apple TV as the story of "two Jewish grandmothers in Brooklyn

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Massachusetts 01230

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Facsimile: (413) 229-7085

[who]recount nearly five decades as friends, lovers, and unlikely pioneers in the marriage equality movement..." Light refreshments will be served.

Wednesday, May 22: Game Time! at the community center, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Bring your favorite games or play one that's new to you. Fun for all ages and a great way to spend an afternoon with friends or make new ones. The council will serve light refreshments.

Ongoing Services

Parkinson's Support Group: This month's meeting is on Thursday, May 2, from 2 to 4 p.m., at the Monterey Library. Caregivers are encouraged to attend. Call Kathryn at the number above if you'd like more information.

Transportation: For trips to Great Barrington, Sheffield, Egremont, Stockbridge, and Pittsfield (Pittsfield is for medical only, Mon & Wed). Call (413) 591-3826. Hours are M-F 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., Sat and Sun 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Priority is given to seniors and people with disabilities.

Foot Nurse: Beverly Dunn is available for home visits. Call (413) 446-2469 to schedule an appointment. The council covers \$10 of her fee.

Free Safety Vests: Vests to ensure you are visible to car traffic when walking, running or biking are available in town hall.

—Lin Saberski, chair
Council on Aging



**Monterey Library
What's all the hoopla about?**

No waiting!

Hopefully you have had a chance to use Aspen. Please let us know how it's going. Now we have another way to borrow items with another name that does not explain what it is about: hoopla! What is hoopla?

hoopla Digital offers patrons an enormous selection of digital video (movies and TV shows), music, audiobooks, Ebooks, and comics to their patrons. They've pioneered a unique model that allows patrons to borrow content immediately, removing artificial availability constraints and maximizing the power of digital content and Internet distribution. Technologically, it focuses on the latest browser, phone, tablet, and TV products to deliver the best possible experience to our patrons.

What this means is that if you can find an item in the hoopla catalog, you can download it immediately. No waiting for other patrons with holds. Hoopla even has BingePasses that allow you to borrow many episodes of one particular program. While our current CWMARS Libby app has a lot of offerings, many of

them have waitlists. You will still be able to use Libby, and all the other services that we offer. hoopla is an additional resource that will be available and may even have items not available in any of the other resources we offer.

All you'll need to do is download the hoopla app and follow the directions. You will sign in with your Monterey Library card. This service will only be offered to Monterey Library patrons, and though we have tried to ensure all Monterey cardholders can access it, there may be a glitch here and there with your card. Please come in and see a staff member or email montereylibrary@gmail.com if you're having trouble. You will be able to borrow up to ten items a month. Let us know how you like it. The first year is being sponsored by the Friends of the Monterey Library! Thanks to all who have contributed to make this possible.

We are still looking for an intern to help with the children's reading program and performances this summer. Go to the library website for an application. Our volunteer last summer wrote the following:

"Working as a summer intern in the Monterey library was my first job experience and I'm very glad of it. I got the chance to learn many new skills, such as introducing performances, making posters and signs, and even shelving library books. The library is a very welcoming environment and it is a great opportunity to gain experience while having fun over the summer."

—Mark Makuc
Library Director

**Peter Poirier Band
At The Monterey Church**

Nick Toscano
Shinichi Otsu
Peter Poirier
Brad Hallen

Thursday May 9th 7:30- 9pm
449 Main Rd Monterey, CA
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Bring your dancing shoes! This will be fun!

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April 8—Total Eclipse

A request for eclipse stories yielded experiences and photos from all over the east coast!

We were en route from Florida back to Monterey, leaving early Monday morning, our SUV loaded down with a winter's worth of clothes and equipment—and two pairs of \$2.59 convenience-store-quality eclipse glasses.

We tried to synchronize our afternoon gas stop with the darkening sky. Around 3 p.m. we had just crossed into South Carolina and pulled off of I-95 and into a Circle K gas station/convenience store.

I filled the tank and pulled out my eclipse glasses. Wow...I was dumbfounded to see three-quarter of the sun obscured and sharply delineated.

The clerk from the store saw me being excited and said: "Can you really see it?"

I nodded and he went back inside. I went in to buy a beverage. I asked if he wanted to come and see; he demurred at first but I knew he was curious. I offered again and he followed. As we stepped outside he saw my license plate—"What part of Mass are you from?"

I said a small town in the Berkshires. He lit up—"I grew up in Lee, off Tyringham Road." The world is indeed a small place.

I handed him the glasses from my car and we bonded over geography and astrophysics. Another car pulled in—a family with kids and no glasses.

Soon we were all pals.

My conclusion is we need more eclipses to bring the world together.

Who do we petition for that?

—David and Jan Feinman

Monterey, MA, USA, Planet Earth



Kyle Pierce on her south-facing porch.



Bonsai tried eclipse glasses over the iPhone lens. —Mary Kate Jordan



Julie Kern's pal Charlie was all set.



Party time at the Banners.

—Maureen Banner

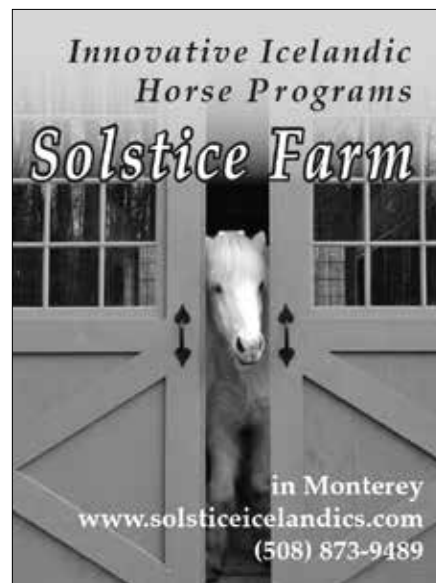


At 3:20, about three minutes before totality, the sky turned an ominous shade of dark blue—almost black! It got much colder; we put on our jackets.

At 3:23, right on schedule (thank you NASA!), the total eclipse began. We could not see the corona at all due to the heavy clouds...but the effect of totality was incredible. It became very dark and cold... like it was well past dusk. There was a faint pink line along the horizon across the lake. I began to understand the terror that people throughout history felt when they experienced an eclipse.

—Rob Hoogs

from central New York state





I debated traveling to Burlington, VT where one of my sons lives, but for a tangle of reasons I didn't go. I didn't know where to get the glasses, but I got intrigued by pinhole cameras. I wondered about variables... hole sizes, distance to the viewing surface. So my eclipse experience began by spending a few hours making a pin hole scope. I made little slides with aluminum foil tape so I could switch in and out for different size holes, and used a tube of ducting so I could make a viewing surface that could be pushed up close or pushed further away. Science! While I was



hanging around it did get very quiet, and definitely the temperature dropped quite a bit. Strangely, a small flock of seven or eight turkey vultures came swooping in and around our field for a few minutes (total coincidence I'm sure, but weird).

The smaller hole was a crisper image. The bigger hole was brighter. The clouds were annoying... Surprisingly the distance to the viewing surface didn't alter the image much, which was maybe 1/4" in diameter, but then the moon and sun are far far away!

Now I have to decide if I should keep my scope for the next eclipse.

— Stephen Moore



Cora made pinhole cameras for us. We went down to the Eclipse Party at the New Marlborough Library in Mill River. They even had Moon Pies and sun tea for snacks. Cora and I were the only folks there with pinholes, but lots of those gathered remembered having made them for eclipses past.

When I was at summer camp one time we made our own smoked glass for looking at an eclipse. Real glass, real smoke, from kerosene lamps adjusted to make lots of smoke. Now we have NASA approved glasses, but not approved beyond a few years. Liability issues in case anyone saving the glasses wants to sue NASA in 2044 (the next eclipse). Maybe the mirror coating gets old and flakes off? Which some of the rest of us may do, too.

—Bonner McAllester



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Gwendolyn Evans, age 5, enjoying a Moon Pie in New Marlborough.

—Elizabeth Evans



Partial —Dorene Beller



Eclipse beginning —Maureen Banner



At 3:01 from Boca Raton—Doreen Beller



Eclipse beginning —Mark Gerow



At 3:16 —Dan Zweig



At totality, 3:27 —Dan Zweig



Totality



Martin Brunk sent in this series of images from

3:16 p.m., Moriah, NY. Moon shadow begins to cover the sun from the bottom up.
 3:26 p.m. Totality for two minutes—corona light bleeds out larger on the photo. Really looked like a black disk with a strip of fiery light around it like pictures you've seen before. Got noticeably colder and darker and Venus and some stars appeared.
 3:29 p.m., the sun appears again from the bottom side and birds all start to sing like it's morning.
 —Dan Zweig

The gods were surely angry yesterday! My partner Laury and I were settling in to watch the eclipse when he received a call from his doctor, telling him to go to the ER—he needed a pacemaker! Laury had just gotten a heart monitor earlier in the day because of dizzy spells. I kept running out of the ER for sightings of the eclipse, which I luckily did see!
 —Dorene Beller



—Liz Halla-Mattingly

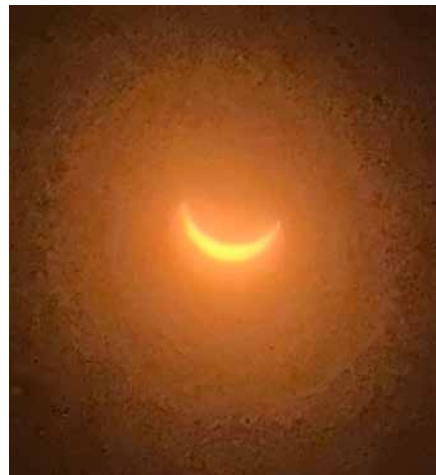


Totality over Island Pond, VT

—Martin Brunk



earlier, at totality, and later during the eclipse.



Nearly complete — Carl & Elise Hartman



Eclipse ending

—Mark Gerow

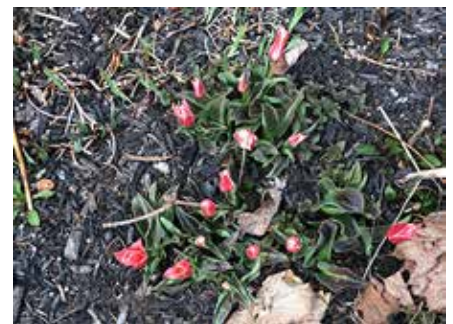
My husband, Peter, and I were able to watch the last fifteen minutes leading up to near totality with glasses (thanks to Myrna).

We saw the moon move almost across the sun. There remained a golden crescent on the left. It got cooler and hazy. Although there were lots of clouds, with the glasses we could see through the clouds.

—Roberta Weiss

My daughter Guin and I watched the total eclipse from Brighton State Park in Brighton, VT. We brought a colander to see shadows and during totality we saw Jupiter and Venus! We had a great time. All photos taken with my iPhone.

—Liz Halla-Mattingly



The crocuses all closed up from the eclipse, taken at 4:01

—Kyle Pierce

Eclipse

Down in the upper Connecticut River valley, it was balmy, and traffic crawled in Colebrook, on the New Hampshire side of the river. We struggled a couple of miles up the slushy trail of a lesser known Mt. Monadnock, for which we could barely find the trailhead. The snow got deep when we got higher, piled up well over a foot on the 3,148-foot summit, with its grand old fire tower. Half a dozen other eager people had hiked up, too. We set up camp a short distance from the tower, amid the spruce and fir, where lots of sun poured through a stand of dead trees.

A Canada jay and a couple of black-backed woodpeckers—northern species you'll only find in this farthest northern pocket of Vermont—landed in the trees around us, while a flurry of pine siskins buzzed and chattered. We tried to stay warm, we took mincing steps and tried not to fall through the snow. We tried to tune out the annoying commentary of people perched a little ways up the fire tower, who acted like they had the place to themselves. As totality approached, the snow turned a sepia-like tint, as if we were

wearing sunglasses. It got even colder. The horizon took on the color of twilight.

I had read about a wall of darkness rushing toward you, a dark disc of moon detaching and slamming over the sun like the lid of a pot, but nothing like that happened. It simply got dark, all at once, when the smallest sliver of sun gave way. We heard the siskins flying by, calling as if a little confused, as if they might be looking to roost. The three-plus minutes went by fast. (I don't know how anyone would remember to count at such a time.) It might have been really something to be on the fire tower, where you could apparently see beyond the path of totality to the world still lit by the sun—bands of light and dark, Mt. Washington and the Whites, for instance, where everything was normal. But the dog had tried one flight of metal steps, turned around, and lost her head when one of us climbed up. Anyway, I kind of liked the idea of the ground beneath me. And then, all at once, the sun slipped back like someone hoping you didn't even notice they were gone, and it warmed us again, and it was like nothing at all had happened.

—Kateri Kosek

Parkinson's Disease Optimism Walk

The Monterey Council on Aging is a proud sponsor and supporter of the Southern Berkshire Parkinson Support Group (SBPSG). The SBPSG meets monthly in the Monterey Library, and is an affiliate of Massachusetts chapter of the American Parkinson's Disease Association (APDA). APDA Mass helped our local group get started and continues to provide welcome support.

APDA's annual "Optimism Walk" takes place this year in Framingham, MA on Sunday, May 19, starting at 11 a.m. The walking team that SBPSG is part of for this event is called the Western Mass Movers and Shakers.

If you're interested in attending the event to watch or walk, please contact Richard Pargament, the founder of our SBPSG, at Richard.Pargament@gmail.com or (646) 596-1178.

General information regarding the Optimism Walk and the link for registration are on the following web page:

apdaparkinson.org/community/massachusetts/upcoming-events-ma/

For our local APDA Contribution Page, go to apdaparkinson.donordrive.com/participant/Richard-Pargament. A voluntary contribution of any amount will help APDA continue its good work, which includes helping our SBPSG.

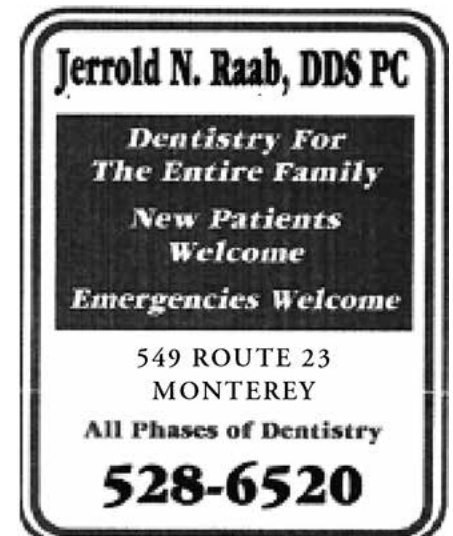
—Lin Saberski, chair
Monterey Council on Aging



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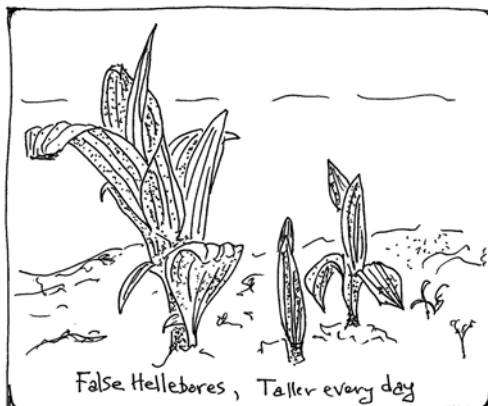
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Hellebores: True or False?

There is a mighty plant rocketing upwards in the wet places, one called "False Hellebore." This is not its only name. Over the centuries here it has also been called Bear-Corn, Big bane, Big Hellebore, Crow-Poison, Devil's Bite, Itchweed, Rattlesnake-Root, and quite a few more. I learned its most common name from my parents, and there was even a very different plant they taught me which we all called Hellebore, without the "False." That one is an orchid, with a long slim look and many teeny, little greenish orchid blossoms all up its stalk. Though we called it Hellebore, some folks say it is "Helleborine." It is not native to these parts, but here it is anyway. It gets to be a foot or two tall and does not choose the wet places.

False Hellebore can be eight feet tall! It has been here in New England since way before the white folks arrived, and another of its names is Indian Poke. When it first comes up, like a green torpedo bursting out of the ground, it somewhat resembles another mighty plant called Pokeweed, or Poke. False Hellebore's Latin name, which is not much help, is *Veratrum viride*, which translates to Truly-black Green. So, what is it? Truly black, or green. Hellebore, or false.

In 1672 an Englishman named John Josselyn wrote about this plant in his book *New England's Rarities Discovered in Birds, Beasts, Fishes, Serpents, and Plants of that Country*. Josselyn made two trips to these parts spending nine years in Maine and Massachusetts. He wrote and wrote, and his chapter called "Fifthly, of Plants," is considered his most valuable. No one



came around again to write a treatise on New England's botany for another hundred years. Then in 1785 Manasseh Cutler, school-teacher, chaplain, and medical practitioner wrote this: "The root (of this plant) is a most drastic cathartic and sternutatory. The fresh roots, beaten up with hog's lard, cures the itch." Cutler also wrote: "Crows may be destroyed by boiling Indian corn in a strong concoction of the fresh roots (of the plant) and strewing it on the ground where they resort." (An Account of Some of the Vegetable Productions Naturally Growing in This Part of America.) Manasseh Cutler was a 1763 graduate of Yale.

Here on the homestead we knew not to let our goats browse on those big tempting leaves. There are many things you cannot let your goats eat, this was just common knowledge. Some plants are way too powerful for eating, but Josselyn wrote that "the Indians cure their wounds with it, anointing the wound first with raccoons grease, or wild-cats grease, and strewing upon it the powder of the roots; and for aches they scarifie the grieved part and anoint it with one of the foresaid oils, then strew upon it the powder."

I appreciate my 1993 book *The History and Folklore of American Wildflowers*, by Timothy Coffey, for much of what I've learned about this False Hellebore. I wonder if I could dig up some of its root and make a powder to "strew" upon my knees. I looked up "sternutatory" and discovered this means it causes sneezing. In fact I read that police have "subdued a crowd" using a sternutatory, though I doubt it was powdered False Hellebore root. I do have a little trouble with my knees and would like to slather on some of just the right sort of "greese" plus powerful plant powder from out by the brook here. I'd try this first without the "scarifying."

Meanwhile, I feel better and stronger every day just watching those big leaves surge up, unfurl, and stand taller and taller. This is the power of spring.

— Bonner McAllester

Monterey Native Plants Working Group



Native plant giveaway! Tree warden talk! Tree crawl!

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Listed below are the contributions we've received this month (as of April 17). So far our annual appeal response has included over two hundred donations. Thank you very much.

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Monterey Pantry PickUp Tax-Exempt Status Granted

Monterey Pantry PickUp Inc.—a Massachusetts not-for-profit corporation—is pleased to announce that the IRS has granted the Pantry its own independent certification under Internal Revenue Code 501[c][3] as a tax-exempt foundation—meaning all financial donations made to the pantry from January 2024 onward are tax-deductible by the donor on the donor’s federal tax returns.

This is a significant step forward in ensuring the Pantry’s long-term viability and is due in no small measure to the continuous support of the citizens of Monterey and the Pantry’s almost forty volunteer workers.

Since the founding of this much needed organization in 2021, four thousand boxes of food have been distributed in Monterey. Presently, we serve about thirty boxes of food weekly which feeds about seventy people.

Donations can be made out directly to the Monterey Pantry PickUp Inc., and mailed to the Pantry, PO Box 182, Monterey, MA 01245.

—Stacy Wallach



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inside the garden
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 —Laura S. Denman
 from: *Skating Over Stars*

Laura Denman was Bob Cutick’s first wife who passed away.

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Who's Who Lin Saberski

On a recent snowy April afternoon, Lin Saberski and Bob Cutick welcomed me into their warm home overlooking Lake Garfield. I asked if I might take a photo before Lin and I began our conversation. With obvious pleasure, they grinned and held each other in a loving pose. Theirs is clearly a special partnership. I sensed this would prove a memorable chat as well.

Laura Litwin: When Steve Moore asked me to do this profile, he assumed that I knew you. I told him that I really didn't, but that certainly I knew of you because of all the good things the council on aging does.

Every town in Massachusetts has a council on aging. It seems unlikely that any of them are led by someone more accomplished than ours. Let's begin with your extraordinary career as Deputy Commissioner of New York City Adult Protective Services. Perhaps you can give us some background and perspective on the role.

Lin: I loved law school. I went to UCLA, which helped a lot in loving school. It was a beautiful place and not a cut-throat environment. When I graduated, my first permanent job was with the City of New York Law Department. I liked working for the city, there were lots of interesting issues, but I learned over time I did not love being a lawyer. I switched jobs several

times, challenging jobs at good pay, but the work was just not meaningful to me and my goal had always been to find something that was.

Then my life turned upside down. My brother Lee died suddenly at thirty-five—nothing worse could have happened to me—and everything felt wrong. I knew I had to make a change and I quit being lawyer. After thirteen years in the profession it was a big risk, but I never looked back.

I stayed in city government in a couple of different administrative positions. Then my boss asked me if I would be interested in becoming the head of adult protective services. I had no clue what they did, but I talked to a bunch of people and I went for it.

Adult protective services was a forgotten division—it was really complicated and really hard. Our clients were some of the most vulnerable and isolated in the city. It was here that I found satisfaction. I like to create order out of chaos and this meshed with adult protective services. Every time you picked up a rock there was something ugly under it. The combination of the challenge of the work and knowing we were helping people was exactly what I had been looking for.

Someone asked me when I started about my goals for the program. My response was simple: "keep a low profile."



Bob Cutick and Lin Saberski

Most of the time we managed. When a case would hit the newspapers it was always awful. Confidentiality meant we could never explain our actions. I stayed for sixteen years. When I left, we had grown from three thousand to over ten thousand clients. Even now I am kind of amazed by that.

When I first signed on for the job, I was working overtime to create order in my personal life too. Within three months of my taking the position, I adopted my daughter from China and I moved to a larger apartment. It was a bit insane but it all worked out really well. My daughter is Leah, named after my brother. Leah is now twenty-five, living in Indiana, and getting married.

In 2008, Lin was honored by New York City for her work as Deputy Commissioner of Adult Protective Services. She was given the prestigious Sloan Public Service Award, one of only six honorees chosen that year from all ranks of NYC government.

The Sloan Award said this about Lin: "She deals with the most unglamorous population in the city, one that often suffers from neglect. She is creative, pragmatic, and absolutely trustworthy. She is an extremely effective advocate—a champion for exceptionally needy clients and for the tireless staff who serve them."

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Laura: Is it accurate to say that the council on aging here in Monterey is a microcosm in certain respects of the city agency you served?

Lin: I really thought when I started with the council, it would be. It's not at all.

I was wanting to do some useful volunteer work when we moved up full-time during the pandemic. I knew Ilene Marcus from her time working at the Human Resources Administration in New York City. It was she who suggested I join the board of the council on aging. I thought we'd find isolated people who needed help but our first project, funded by a state grant, involved interviewing almost sixty full-time residents aged sixty and older, and they said they were fine. Very few said they felt isolated and most were very clear that they did not consider themselves seniors!

The evaluation we did closely tracked the initial visit form we used at adult protective services and it was a real learning experience for me. I think most seniors here in Monterey have a true network of support, whether it's family, friends, or both. Every once in a while we'll hear about someone who needs help, but it's infrequent. The council is the very proud sponsor of Monterey's Southern Berkshire Parkinson Support Group, and we fund van transportation, but the bulk of what we do is social.

Kathryn Roberts is our outreach coordinator and she's fantastic. A social leader from the get-go. If an event looks like too few have responded, she'll just start calling people up. We have a solid group of twenty to thirty regulars. Who knows, maybe if we rename the organization and drop the word aging we'll see those numbers grow.

Laura: Let's shift your story a bit more to the personal side now.

Lin: I was raised in Tarrytown, New York, the fourth generation of Saberskis to live there and the third born there. My grandmother and father and I actually attended two of the same schools. I started college at Dickinson, majoring in Russian, and after my sophomore year I transferred to Stanford. I arrived at the university having never seen it before. My love affair with California began at the moment I saw all those incredible palm trees lining the drive to the campus. After graduation, I had a great first job at the National Academy of



Sciences in DC, doing administrative work for a scientific exchange program with Russia and Eastern Europe. California drew me back for law school and then I clerked for a judge in Sacramento for two years. It was very hard to leave California—I cried the entire plane ride back—but my family was all on the East Coast and I made the decision to return permanently. Though the transition was hard, and I still miss California sometimes, I am glad I made that move.

Laura: Tell us about your Berkshires journey.

Lin: So, this is a really good story. It starts at a hard time for me, the summer after my brother died. I was still grieving and incredibly sad, but decided if I was going to be depressed, I may as well be depressed in a beautiful place. The Village Voice had lists of share houses and I found one in Otis run by a woman named Joan. She was not a stranger to the area. For a number of years she had been part of a large share house on Lake Buel, and she remained friends with a number of people from that house. Among them were Bob and his then-wife, Laura.

After two years in Otis—up until the time I adopted Leah—I was part of a share house that Bob and Laura organized. A little red cottage with bats in the walls that stood on the exact spot where we live now. My housemates were caring, smart, energetic, and fun, and it was a glorious time. Some of the best summers I have ever had.

Life continued in the complicated ways it does and I lost touch with Bob and

Laura. In May 2015, a few of the old share house friends took Bob out to dinner after Laura passed away. Bob invited us all up to the home they had built on the cottage site. Despite the “fast forward” of so many years, it was an absolutely wonderful reunion.

It soon got even more wonderful for Bob and me. By October we were a couple, a chapter in our lives neither of us could ever have imagined.

We were on vacation in Denali National Park in Alaska when Bob proposed marriage and yes, I asked him to get down on one knee! Ours being very much also a classic NYC tale, we needed to negotiate which of our respective boroughs would now be called home. Bob had lived in Brooklyn for over forty years, while I remained a firmly settled Manhattanite. We decided to buy an apartment on the Upper West side near Central Park, closing on the purchase just the week before New York City shut down for the pandemic. We came up to Monterey expecting to stay no longer than a month before returning to our new place. We all know how that turned out. Still, somehow in June 2021, with covid at a brief low point, we had a storybook wedding at the Palm House in the Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

Now we're basically in two places, constantly navigating how to do it. We keep saying we want to make a plan, spend a chunk of time here and then a chunk there, but it never works out as we intend. My new plan is no plan—to just stop trying to manage things and let it go. What is never in question is that Monterey and its vibrant community are now wholly part of my life and a place I call home.

—Laura Litwin

Butterflies

We're privileged to live where butterflies do,
Where they sip on flowers still polished with dew,
Whose intricate wings folded up at the sky,
At a moment's notice, are prepared to fly.

How weak they look, how tiny, how frail.
Yet they soar like a ship with a small bright sail.
Cutting the breeze of the wide azure sky,
While with watchful gaze on the earth we lie,
Witnessing the wonder of the butterfly.

— Evie Gadbois, age 13

Welcome to the Bidwell House Museum's 2024 Season

It is a blustery and grey day in early April as I put this article together. But with the rains come leaf buds and flowers, and by the time you read this, Monterey will be very green. The lush renewal of the local trees and gardens also signals the start of the Bidwell House Museum 2024 season. As we said last month, we have been working all winter long to plan a fun and engaging season, with a focus this year on the museum's incredible redware collection which you can learn all about in our programming and on the tour. We have so many great programs planned and I encourage you to sign up for weekly emails, if you have not already, so that you do not miss a thing.

The season begins at the end of this month with our special pre-season tours for museum members on May 20, 23, 24, and 25 at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., followed by the start of our official house tour season on Monday, May 27. These personal, small group tour tours typically take forty-five to sixty minutes, and look at the history of the Bidwell family and Monterey, the construction of the house, and the amazing collection of eighteenth and nineteenth century furnishings and houseware. This year, there will be a new exhibition of our redware collection viewable at the end of the tour.

Our schedule remains the same this year, with all tours by appointment only on Monday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturdays at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., or 3 p.m. They can be

booked by calling the museum at (413) 528-6888, or emailing bidwellhm2@gmail.com. Because we have such a tiny staff, we ask that reservations or cancellations all be made at least twenty-four hours in advance.

As we also mentioned in April, on Sunday, May 26, at 2 p.m., the Bidwell House Museum will begin its thirty-fourth season with a hands-on workshop "Throwing Back: Massachusetts Pottery Heritage" that introduces visitors to the history of redware. In this program, renowned potter Rick Hamelin will delve into the rich pottery legacy in New England and the captivating stories of the brave redware potters who fought valiantly during the Revolutionary War and War of 1812. Each participant will also have the chance to create their very own pinch pot. Whether you're a pottery enthusiast, history lover, or simply looking for a fun and hands-on experience, this workshop is for you. Following the workshop there will be refreshments to celebrate the start of the season. This event will be limited to twenty participants and pre-registration will be required on the museum website, bidwellhousemuseum.org/events.

Following our opening weekend, we have two history talks scheduled for early June that you won't want to miss. First, on Saturday, June 1, historian Justin Thomas, will present his talk "Exploring the History of New England Redware." The following weekend, on June 8, we will hear from Alice Nash, Associate Professor of History at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, who will present "Unlearning to Learn: A Conversation

About Local Indigenous Histories." Both of these talks will be held at 11 a.m. in person at the Tyringham Union Church, Main Road Tyringham and also via Zoom. Pre-registration is required for both talks if you want to watch via Zoom and can be completed on the museum website bidwellhousemuseum.org/events/. In-person attendees can buy tickets online or at the door.


These events are just the start of what we have planned for the 2024 season. On June 22, from noon to 5 p.m., we are very excited for the return of the Bidwell Country Fair, our free celebration of history and the community. We have Diane Taraz, Moonshine Holler, and Oakes & Smith coming in to entertain you all afternoon, along with an assortment of local craftspeople, historical societies, and the Butler's Rangers Reenactment group. We will share all of the final details about the Country Fair in the June issue of the *Monterey News*. Check our website, Facebook, and Instagram regularly through the summer for updates on all of our 2024 programs.

Finally, do you enjoy visiting all of the beautiful gardens on the Bidwell property? Do you like being outside in the summer? If so, we are looking for summer garden volunteers to work with the crew from Gardens of the Goddess this summer. Even if you only have any hour or two to spare each week, or can only help out a few times this summer, we would love to have you. Email the museum at bidwellhouse@gmail.com for more information. And if gardening is not your speed but you are interested in volunteering, just let us know. There are many ways you can help the museum this summer.

The Bidwell House Museum is located at 100 Art School Road and the museum grounds—194 acres of woods, fields, historic stone walls, trails, and picnic sites—are open all year free of charge. The program of events can be found on the museum's website at bidwellhousemuseum.org/events/.

We can't wait to see you at the museum this year.

—Heather Kowalski
Executive Director



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Monterey Meeting House Steering Committee Update

The steering committee of the Monterey Meeting House exploratory group continues to focus on compatible public uses for the church building to complement and expand what is already available in town. These include new opportunities for performances, concerts, and longer term activities while preserving space for the current food pantry, coffee club, supper club, and similar offerings.

The steering committee is also exploring in more detail the building's condition. We have engaged an architect and structural engineer who are experts in historic structures to conduct a preliminary review. Some examples of this "due diligence" include the belfry and structural timbers, as well as the stone steps and accessibility challenges.

One of the potential "big ticket" items is the beautiful slate roof, and the likelihood that it will need repairs and/or replacement at some point in the foreseeable future. A detailed inspection of the roof will need to be made to determine the condition of the slate. (If anyone locally has a bucket lift they might like to donate for a few hours for a very good cause, we would greatly appreciate it.)

Obviously, the next step after determining the costs of addressing any issues with the building's condition and potential future improvements, as well as expenses for programming and operations, we will need to move into raising funds. We're not yet quite at that stage. However, the Monterey Historical Society has offered to serve as the interim fiscal agent for the Meeting House project while the group considers the pros and cons of forming

a separate Monterey Meeting House nonprofit. The historical society can hold charitable contributions earmarked for these initial due diligence efforts. There is local precedent for this pairing as the Otis Preservation Trust is helping with their meeting house in a similar manner.

Committee members continue meeting with community organizers of like organizations in Otis, New Marlborough, and Sandisfield to learn from our peers' experiences. We will be organizing another forum about the future of the meeting house for some time in June. We are also in close contact with the Monterey Church parish council, the owners of the church building, who continue to be encouraging about purchase of the building by a community group such as this.

If the meeting house and its future holds your interest and you would consider using your unique talents and offering some time and/or treasure to this project, please write to us at montereymeetinghouse@gmail.com and let us know how you would like to be involved.

—The Monterey Meeting House Steering Committee

Peace Coalition

On April 4, in spite of challenging weather, almost one hundred people gathered at the Guthrie Center for a peace gathering and vigil. We shared a program of poems, songs, and silence, providing a safe space to grieve the suffering and loss of our fellow beings in Palestine and Israel. Participants were able to write messages to hang on a "Tree of Hope." There was also a resource table with reading lists and links to groups and actions available. In the future, Ani Nadler Grosser (ani@compassionaterelationships.com) will offer "Communologue," an opportunity for further insight. Currently we actively engage with lawmakers to express our hopes for a #permanentceasefire, #humanitarianaid, and the funding of UNWRA to preserve the refugee status of Palestinians and resumption of lifesaving aid.

If you would like to be on our weekly e-mail please contact paintlover0046@gmail.com. In the meantime, 5calls.org offers an easy way to connect with your representatives and let them know your thoughts. Our peace coalition meets weekly at the Berkshire Co-op at 11 a.m. We welcome new members.

—Michele Miller



Native Plant Giveaway Tree Warden Talk and Tree Crawl

Perhaps the most powerful thing an individual can do to build environmental resilience is to support native plants, trees, and shrubs—and then let them do the real work.

As Doug Tallamy, the founder of Homegrown National Parks (homegrownnationalpark.org), has said, “In the past, we have asked one thing of our gardens: that they be pretty. Now they have to support life, sequester carbon, feed pollinators, and manage water.”

Native plants are the key to providing this array of ecological services. Not to mention their beauty and capacity to thrive in their native ecosystems with little maintenance.

If you’ve been thinking about introducing more native plants on your property, don’t miss the native plant giveaway on Saturday, May 25, at the Monterey Community Center, starting at 10:30 a.m. A large selection of free plants, plugs, grasses, and shrubs will be offered by the Monterey Native Plants Working Group. Some of the plants will be dug up from our demonstration plot in the community garden; others will be purchased from



Alyssa Lovell

reliable local native plant purveyors with support from the state-funded Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program. Information and guidance on where and how to plant them will also be on hand.

At 11 a.m. Kevin West will be talking about the roles and responsibilities of the town tree warden, a post he has held for most of the last year—and hopes to be elected to on May 7. He also plans a “tree crawl” of the community center, so wear your walking shoes.

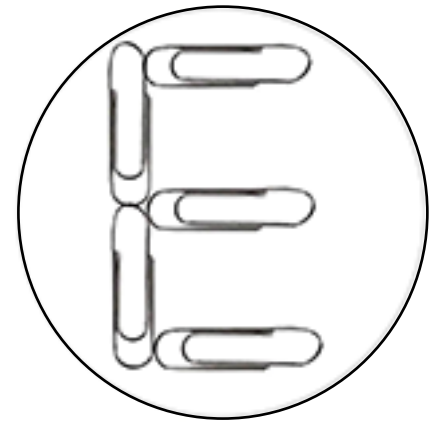
The giveaway and talk are part of the “Backyard Ecologist” series sponsored by the MNPWG. Our group is also planning a “Weed Warrior” event at Bidwell Park in June to remove garlic mustard and sow

a native seed mix to mitigate erosion and keep the invasives out. Another opportunity to wage war against weeds will focus on bittersweet identification and removal at the community center in July. We are also working on a “Native Gardens Tour” in August, with a special focus on native bees. Hope to see you at one or all of these events.

To stay posted on what plants we will be offering on May 25, be sure to sign up for our mailing list: Pollinators01245@gmail.com. We hope to have a list of the available plant materials by early May. Distribution will be calibrated based on supply and demand, but no one need leave empty-handed.

—Janet Jensen

Monterey Native Plants Working Group
Pollinators01245@gmail.com



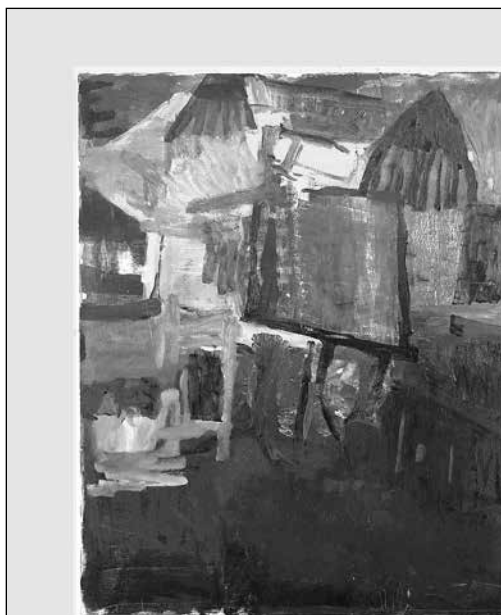
Your Neighborhood Art Gallery Returning This Summer

Gallerie 271 is thrilled to announce a full summer season of Pop-Up Art Exhibitions running from May through August. Our featured lineup of artists—Andy Bullard, Karen Dolmanisth, Mik Cooper, Adi Oren (returning artist), and Larry Shtasel—will inspire and delight you with their paintings, ceramics, and photography.

We invite you to visit our gallery, lovingly reimagined from its circa 1960 automotive roots, connect with neighbors, make new friends, view the art, and enjoy a nibble at our opening receptions.

Our first artist reception with Andy Bullard will be Saturday, May 11 from 4 to 7 p.m. Gallerie 271 is located at 271 Main Road, right next door to the beautiful Roadside Cafe, and is generally open Fridays and Saturdays.

—Dave Hattem
Gallerie271.com



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Opening Reception
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May 4 - May 18

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Historical Society News

This month's history talk will be held on Thursday, May 16w, from 7 to 8 p.m., at the Monterey Library multipurpose room. Our guest speaker this month will be Ron Bernard of Sandisfield who will present an illustrated talk about "The Churches, Pastors, and People of Sandisfield and Monterey." This includes Chestnut Hill cemetery, originally part of Sandisfield. The talk is free and will be available in person and also via Zoom with pre-registration.

Ron is a well-known local historian and author of *Sandisfield Then and Now 1762-2012*. His fourth and most recent book is *The Little Brown Church of New Boston, Mass. and the Lives of its Pastors*.

The histories of our individual towns are often circumscribed by artificial municipal boundaries. But in reality, the histories of the people of the towns in South Berkshire are interconnected by common ancestors, marriages, ministers, and commerce. Some of the pastors of the Monterey Congregational Church also ministered in Sandisfield, and vice versa.

For example, Rev. John Dooly moved to Monterey in 1898 and was the Monterey minister during the 150th anniversary of the Monterey Congregational Church (founded by Rev. Adonijah Bidwell in 1750). Rev. Dooly retired in 1908 to tend to his extensive beekeeping enterprise at his farm just west of Monterey village (across from the present fire house). But after retiring, he continued preaching in Sandisfield. After their church building was struck by lightning and burned, he was instrumental in planning and building a new church in South Sandisfield; he was pastor there until 1909 when a successor was found. He died in 1915. Rev. Dooly's daughter Eleanor married Rev. John Van Burk who became minister of the Monterey Church from 1910 to 1914.

Today, it is hard to imagine the importance of the meeting houses to New Eng-

land society. The churches, together with the granges, were the center of people's social as well as religious lives. "Going to Meeting" was not just an expression for them; it was a way of life. Families of all ages intersected there; children played with each other; young people flirted and sometimes married; older folks shared recipes and stories and memories. They celebrated births and weddings, and gathered to comfort each other when there were illnesses or deaths. The Ladies Aid Societies of the various churches were instrumental in carrying out many good works in town.

The fabric of townspeople's lives was woven together at their meeting houses. Ron's talk will help us understand the intricate tapestry formed by these threads.

Today, many of these meeting houses



CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, MONTEREY.
Photographed on occasion of 150th Anniversary by Rev. H. K. Job.

have been—or are being—repurposed into cultural and arts centers.

Thank you for your interest in Monterey's history.

—Rob Hoogs, President,
Board of Directors: Lauren Behrman,
Wendy Germain, Cindy Hoogs, Laura Litwin,
Paula Moats McNay, Mort Salomon,
Robert Rausch, Barbara Swann

P.S.: We recently set up a Facebook page: Monterey Historical Society – Monterey, Mass. In case you missed last October's History Talk, a videotape of "We are Still Here—The Stockbridge-Munsee Mohicans" is now posted on CTSB-TV's YouTube channel. You can find the link on our Facebook page. Please like our page and check back for more historic photos and memories about Monterey.

Monday Night Supper Club Trece de Mayo (May 13)

Supper club last month was vibrant with vitality as vegetables took center stage for our "Mediterranean: Living Sustainably" dinner. Keeping in mind that April is Earth month, we reduced our use of BPA and increased our consumption of Vitamin K—serving dishes were piled with foods harvested from the ground. Pasta primavera, couscous casserole brimming with veggies, green salad (of course), eggplant and chickpea casserole, spanakopita, authentic Mediterranean chickpea and tomato stew, Caprese, pesto pasta, roasted chicken with shallots and grapes...and a falafel platter. Now, I've never been a fan of falafel, those dry chickpea patties that lack flavor and make me need more water than Niagara Falls could offer. But *this* falafel...I was blown away. These golden-brown patties were moist and full of flavor, fried to a crispy, life-stopping perfection. I could've eaten them all day, dipping them in their hummus accompaniment that was so bold with its tang of lemon it dared me to pucker up—I resisted (and won). Ofer Aronskind and Leslie Miller, thank you. You have gifted me with a new perspective on falafel.

As May launches itself, we have increasing daylight as we put our winter selves in storage, dust our spring faces off, and embrace the sun—at least we always hope the hydrogen and helium burning ball is sparkling in the sky. The weather goes from mild to hot, much like the spice level of dishes typically cooked for the first holiday of the month: Cinco de Mayo. I've been dying to do a taco bar, but: ¡Cocinemos la comida Mexicana para el club de cena este mes! (Let's cook Mexican food for supper club this month!)

Roll up your enchiladas, fold up the tamales, and fry up your fajita fillings, folks—let's get our salsa on for "Trece de Mayo." We will cha cha at 6(ish) p.m. on Monday, May 13, in the church basement.

I would like to emphasize to please RSVP by the end of Sunday, May 12. I love-love-love Mexican food, so I can't wait!

—Hanna Jensen

April Wildlife Bears are Up at Last

Steve Snyder “saw a big bear this morning. . . grazing on new green grass.” The bear ran off into a nearby marsh. Steve went there and found a “well trodden path” in the soft damp ground and took a photograph (below). Liza Catino also saw a big adult bear in New Marlborough, near Route 57.



Steve heard his first hermit thrush of the season and here at the home feeder we have glorious male cowbirds gleaming in the sun as they dance and display to each other.



During the eclipse, observers in two different towns watched male turkeys sparring with each other: Julie Johnston (above) and Leiko Coyle (below).



Both folks think it could have been eclipse-inspired behavior, and maybe it was. In one case the turkeys had their tails fanned out, in the other they were twining their necks. Cora and I went to the Eclipse Party at the New Marlborough library and there was nothing like this going on though we all had a grand time and enjoyed the Moon Pies and sun tea provided.

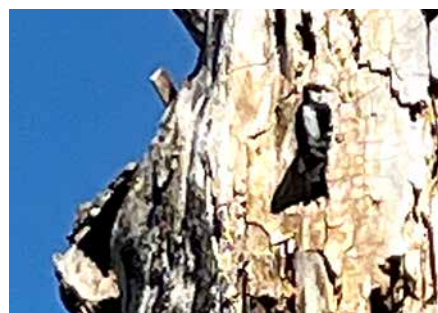
In our garden pool, the little wood frogs just hatching last month have reached the free-swimming pollywog stage (right). They like to congregate wherever there is sun shining through the water onto a pale surface, such as a white rock. Also new in that little pool are a few tiny “red velvet mites,” held up by the surface tension. They are a brilliant red and show up well against the dark water. Mostly these little eight-leggeds live on land and stay under the leaf litter, so are rarely seen. We will stake out the scene at the garden pool: do pollywogs eat red velvet mites?

We have another anuran (frog relative) down by the house, a large American toad a few feet from the main door into our house. This is a familiar sight, and we wonder if the toad is hoping for a meal, as insects are attracted to the doorway light at night. We also get both earthworms and slugs sliding across our damp flagstones after dark. More feasting for brother toad. Like the frogs, toads go to water for courtship and egg-laying. During this time, they make a sweet trilling sound that goes on and on.

Colleen Johnson sent in a photograph of a handsome bobcat (below). She says she has often seen these wildcats and feels this one looked particularly like a big housecat. She wondered if someone might even approach such a cat and so risk injury. Kenn Basler watched a bobcat walk through his yard recently. I have not heard or read of any folks injured by a bobcat.



Steve Moore has both bluebirds and tree swallows flying in his yard and orchard, which are well supplied with nest boxes and good places to perch. We have had one lone swallow swooping and checking out our bird box. According to Bernd Heinrich’s remarkable book *White Feathers, the Nesting Lives of Tree Swallows* (2020), this solo scouting is typical before selecting a nesting place.



Steve Moore also watched a hairy woodpecker up on a rewarding dead tree, pecking and foraging, not drumming (above). A tree like this one would make a poor drumming place but is a perfect picnic spot, full of delectable life.

Anna Poirier watched a porcupine one evening near Gould Farm (right). “The sun had just slipped behind the clouds, highlighting the color and texture variations in the porcupine’s fur and quills. And what an unexpected funny moment watching the prickly creature scratch an itch! Over the years I’ve seen them amble along roadsides, wander fields, and climb trees, nibble willows, and munch apples, but this was a new one for me. With the >



Here's a Thought Right in the Middle with You

Like most of us who didn't head north to view totality, Bonsai and I enjoyed the partial event here in Monterey. We'd invited Marcia Doelman from New Marlborough to join us, so we all shared the anticipation, the dimming light, the drop in temp, the frisson of disappointment when the cloud cover thickened to obscure the view.

The eclipse went on above the clouds, of course. The light faded a bit more, then brightened back to a normal early-April



right paw against its side, it flicked and scratched and flicked some more, followed by a full body shake off, resulting in a very fluffy porcupine."

Anna also reports that she and Peter "heard an American woodcock doing peent calls along New Marlborough Road."

Here in the East Hupi neighborhood, we have our first mourning cloak butterflies, adults emerging from winter hibernacula, fluttering through the woods.

Thank you everyone, and welcome to Spring in Monterey. Send your observations to:

—Bonner McAllester
bonnermca@gmail.com 528-9385.

cloudy day intensity. That change, like the rise in temperature, seemed to happen quickly. But we weren't through with our household dance of light and dark.

I'd baked a tiny banana cake and covered it with cream cheese frosting before eclipse time. Once the overhead event was over, it was time to add the candles and add a glow to Bonsai's birthday. Marcia and I sang the traditional tune. The candles went out; the cake was cut, served, and eaten. I still savor both events.

I delight, too, as I remember the midpoint of each one. The midpoint between cake batter and last nibble of iced cake was the moment Bon bent close to blow the candles out.

The midpoint of the eclipse we all shared was the moment of shadow maximum itself. No matter what percentage of sunlight was hidden, at that point most of us thought the eclipse had happened. Mission accomplished, right? No. Halfway through, like the arrival at the center of a labyrinth. Midpoint. The labyrinth walker still has to walk back out.

We've been trained to be aware of beginnings, starting points, births, and endings, goals, deaths. But without a little deliberate attention though, we generally miss the midpoints, the life along the way.

I wonder what a little simple attention to the moments between times might do for me. Moments when the sun and the moon are still up there dancing and I open



to the awe of that mundane, miraculous fact. Every day is someone's birthday too, cake and candles or not. What do I need to shed in order to be free to celebrate life for its own sake, mine and yours? What might happen if I take a deep breath and just pay attention? Or if you do?

We might find some common ground, right here under the moon and the sun. We might find the midpoints between and among us. We might find a bit more awe, maybe even joy, than we're used to feeling. And I've heard a rumor that feeling that good is really okay.

—Mary Kate Jordan

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Select Board Corner

Welcome to the Select Board Corner. Our goal is to submit articles to the *Monterey News* to keep everyone informed about town news and projects.

MontereyMA.gov

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

— Justin Makuc, Chair
Susan Cooper and Frank Abbott
Monterey Select Board
(justin@montereyma.gov)
(susan@gmail.com)
(frank@montereyma.gov)

For general inquiries, please click “Contact Us.”

For all meetings of town public bodies, go to the calendar on the home page. For agendas (with meeting location) and minutes, go to the individual board or commission tab.

Police Emergency Contacts

- For real emergencies, call **911**.
- The email address for the dispatch service is:
dispatch@sdb.state.ma.us.
- Police dispatch service number:
(413) 236-0925.
- For non-emergencies to contact the Monterey Police Department, call:
528-3211

Knox Gallery Lamborn's *The Crystalline Image*

Our next exhibit, *Rod Lamborn: The Crystalline Image*, is set to follow *Split Images* and will open right at the start of the month, on Friday, May 3, with an opening reception from 5:30 to 7 p.m. that evening. This is a chance to meet the artist, visit with your Monterey neighbors and friends, and enjoy snacks that are provided!

Following Lamborn's early career as a cinematographer, which took him to conflict zones—Chechnya, East Congo, Liberia, and Afghanistan—he emerged to pursue his current work, which evokes landscape. He uses an unusual approach to capture time, space, and light “in a single moment.” Lamborn prefers to present his work while viewers experience a relaxed mental state. “It’s sublime!” he says.

To encourage such a viewing Lamborn plans a special event in addition to the opening reception. On Sunday, May 19 at 5 p.m., “a sound bath activation” will take place at the library during off-hours, when the library would otherwise be closed “to allow for an uninterrupted visualization journey.” A facilitator who works for Kripalu will perform a sound journey. Participants will bring their own yoga mats and blankets, and will be invited to lie down for the experience. Lamborn will speak briefly to prepare for the experience with the facilitator. Group shares and journaling will follow.

(See the April *Monterey News* for more information on the artist and his work.)



Please join us for the opening reception of *The Crystalline Image* on May 3, and the “Art Immersion and Sound Bath Experience” on May 19. *The Crystalline Image* will be on view through June 8.

All Knox Gallery events are admission free. Exhibits can be viewed during library hours (see back page of this issue). We encourage visitors to check current protocols before attending any of our events. Knox Gallery, Monterey Library, 452 Main Road, Monterey, MA, 528-3795; MontereyMassLibrary.org/Knox-Gallery; Facebook.com/KnoxGallery.

—MaryPaul Yates

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May Calendar

Community center calendar on page 10.
Council on aging calendar on page 12.
Monterey softball begins in May. See ad on page 9.

Sunday, May 2: Bidwell House workshop, “Throwing Back: Massachusetts Pottery Heritage,” 2 p.m. See page 24.

Saturday, May 4: Annual Town Meeting, 9:30 a.m., firehouse pavilion.

Monday, May 6: Zoom call with culvert engineers, 7 p.m. Registration required. See page 11.

Tuesday, May 7: Town elections, noon to 7 p.m., at town hall. See page 2.

Wednesday, May 8: Movie night at the library, showing *Young Frankenstein*. See page 12.

Thursday, May 9: Peter Poirier concert, 7:30 p.m., at the church. See page 13.

Saturday, May 11: Roadside ribbon cutting ceremony, 4 p.m.

Monday, May 13: Monday night supper club, 6 p.m., church basement. See page 27.

Wednesday, May 15: Documentary movie in the library, showing *Ruthie and Connie: Every Room in the House*. See page 12.

Saturday, May 25: Native plants giveaway and community center tree crawl, at 10:30, community center. See page 26.

Monday, May 27: Memorial Day parade, beginning at 1 p.m. Parade and ceremonies in the village, followed by hot

dogs and refreshments at the firehouse pavilion.

Saturday, June 1: Bidwell history talk, “Exploring the History of New England Redware,” 11 a.m., Tyringham Union Church. See page 24.

Saturday, June 8: Bidwell history talk, “Unlearning to Learn: A Conversation About Local Indigenous Histories,” 11 a.m., Tyringham Union Church. See page 24.

Daytime Book Group

The daytime book group meets at the Monterey Library on the second Wednesday of every month at 1:30 p.m.

New members are always welcome.

On May 8 we will be discussing *Klara and the Sun*, by Kazuo Ishiguro.

On June 12 we will be discussing *The Winter Soldier*, by Daniel Mason.

We’re looking forward to seeing you there! — Beth Hoffman

Correction

In the April issue, under “Selecting a Town Administrator,” on page 5, I reported that “all the material was sent to Mary Aicardi of the Collins Center who provided a summary of all the evaluation materials for review by both board members and Ms. Noe.”

The evaluation materials were sent to our town counsel’s office to produce the summary for review. — Stephen Moore

Monterey News

The *Monterey News* editorial address is PO Box 9, Monterey, MA, 01245. We invite signed letters, articles, drawings, poetry, and photographs. Submissions or inquiries may also be emailed to montereynews9@gmail.com or telephone us at (413) 329-7912

“Love Letters”

Please save the date for “Love Letters” by A.R. Gurney, presented on Friday, June 21, at 7:30 p.m., and Saturday, June 22, at 3 p.m., at the Monterey Community Center.

The play will feature Stephanie Sloane and Kim Bradley, directed by Linda Josephs. Tickets will be \$20—more information will follow.

— Stephanie Sloane

Town Contact Information

Emergency! 911

Town Administrator:

528-1443 x111

admin@montereyma.gov

(for town boards and misc. questions)

Assessor: 528-1443 x115

assessors@montereyma.gov

Building Department: 528-1443 x118

buildingsafety@montereyma.gov

Community Center: 528-3600

calendar@ccmonterey.org

Fire Department (non-emergency):

528-3136

chief@montereyma.org

Highway Department: 528-1734

dpw1@montereyma.gov

Library: 528-3795 montereylibrary@gmail.com

Police Department (non-emergency):

528-3211, Alt./Emergency 528-3211

mpdchief@montereyma.gov

Post Office: 528-4670

SBRSD (Schools): (413) 229-8778

Tax Collector: 528-1443 x117 montereytax@yahoo.com

(for questions about your tax bill)

Town Clerk: 528-1443 x113

clerk@montereyma.gov

Town website: Montereyma.gov, under each department, for office hours.



MONTEREY NEWS

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*Contributions from local artists this month:
Everett Kreider, p. 14; Bonner McAllester, p. 18.,
Stephen Moore, p. 4.*

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