



The last installment on the construction of the Lake Garfield dam by Linda Thorpe can be found on pages 18–19. Above you can see the 350' dam at the far left, with the emergency spillway just to the right. Brewer Pond was the original name of Lake Garfield, with the lake having been renamed after President Garfield, who visited and fished the lake. Brewer Pond as we know it now was created with the construction of the dam in 1972.

We've never been down this road before. It's sort of over the river and through the woods to Grandmother's house we don't go...

Navigating Traditions page 14

- Biden and Harris, Democratic, 481
- Trump and Pence, Republican, 102
- Others, or blank, 13

Monterey Election Results page 11

Eugene Bounous, 92, was born on Valentine's Day in 1928.

Boston Post Cane page 16

Our emergency generator has finally been installed. Now you will still be able to come to the library 24/7 and connect your device and charge up.

Library page 5

In an effort to move past all the recent negativity both locally and nationally, town employees have decided to post a positive piece in the December issue of the *Monterey News*.

Employees' Corner page 8

Just because some content makes people uncomfortable, is not a reason to not include text that makes very opinionated statements.

Submissions to the *News* page 4

Has the pandemic left you with extra time on your hands? Want to make new friends and influence the town? Would you like to experience a greater sense of purpose? Opportunities abound in Monterey for those who are willing to serve.

Monterey Wants You! page 9

The reports were comprehensive reviews of all aspects of town governance, noting many improvements that have been made over the years, strengths of our current situation, and recommendations for the future.

Reports on Town Government page 6

Thus began, in 1968, the arduous task of planning for the present-day dam and creation of Brewer Pond out of a swamp. Lake Garfield Dam, Part 4 page 18

Then we go creeping around hoping to ambush someone who passes right under the mistletoe because now we get to kiss that person!

Mistletoe...Inspires Kissing page 20

If you *still* have not gotten your flu shot, call the CoA at 413-528-1443, ext 247, and let us know.

Council on Aging page 5

The poet Theodore Roethke wrote in his poem "The Waking," "We think by feeling. What is there to know?"

A Tale of Two Parties page 4

Studies have shown that crows can count, solve puzzles, learn symbols, recognize people, and retain information.

Crows page 22

It felt especially important that we remember our aspiration as a country to build an ever more perfect union both at home and with people all over the world. Veterans Day Ceremony page 13

Citizen input is important, and not just in an official capacity. "We are all caretakers of Monterey."

Simpler Ways to be Involved page 12

Letters Debating Through the Paper

I write this letter as a former member and former president of the Board of directors of the *Monterey News* who still takes an interest in the paper six years after leaving it.

Over the past decade or so, the News has seen some changes in its content and format, particularly when it comes to town news. Town governmental proceedings have always provided a major part of the paper's content, but that material used to be confined to reports of the past month's select board and town committee meetings and, when appropriate, information about upcoming town elections and their candidates. More recently, that part of the paper's content has expanded to include the "In My View" column. This column allows individual select board members to communicate their personal views on town issues to the community. At times the column's focus has perhaps been a little too personal but, on the whole, it has given some welcome insight into the thinking of some of Monterey's elected officials, even if the *News* readers have felt at times as if they were eavesdropping on an argument they would rather not have overheard.

Last month's issue was a little bit different in that it included two "In My View" columns by members of the select board, and each of them directly criticized named members of the town government. Such criticism is nothing new for the "In My View" column, especially in the past year; however, last month's columns, especially the second one, hit a level that I, at least, haven't seen before in the News. The first column, contributed by the select board chair, criticized specific aspects of the job performance of one of the other select board members and linked that criticism to the columnist's perception of the need for a recall provision in Monterey's bylaws. The second column, written by the person named in the first,

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but not offered as a response to it, consisted of a scattershot attack on various members of Monterey's town government, past and present, both elected and appointed, in which a number of named persons were accused of, at the very least, questionable behavior in the performance of their duties.

Despite the fact that both columns (but especially the second one) included assertions of various kinds about the job performance and ethical motivations of a number of people who were identified by name, I was surprised that November's issue of the News did not include any response from those people or any indication that they were offered the chance to provide one. This would not have concerned me too much if the Monterey News were a daily, or even a weekly publication. It is, however, a monthly publication, which means that any response to anything that appears in one issue cannot run until, at the earliest, over four weeks later.

The title "In My View" makes clear that the column reflects the thinking of its author, not that of the *Monterey News*, and the accompanying disclaimer makes equally clear that the authors are representing their personal views, not those of the select board. I am not at all suggesting that the *News* should not have published either of those columns. My point is that those columns were so clearly

Political Commentary

Take it lightly,
Don and John.

Not too tightly,
Don and John.

Life is short
Your town is small.

What's the need
for all this gall?

Beyond the world
of right and wrong,
There is a place
you both belong.

— Kit Patten

directed at specific members of Monterey's community that publishing them without inviting a response from their targets (or, if such an invitation was offered and refused, adding a note to that effect) risks giving readers the impression that the *Monterey News* shares the views that they expressed.

As a former member of the board of the Monterey News, and as a former president of that board, I strongly believe that any such impression is detrimental to the *Monterey News*'s well-earned reputation for fairness and impartiality when it comes to town affairs and that every effort should be made to avoid it.

—Ann Higgins

To Our Valuable Customers

Due to health, safety and staffing concerns, the Roadside will be closing until Wednesday, January 6, to ensure that our community stays safe during this period of increased risk.

We hope that everyone is staying safe and well, and we so appreciate your business and support. We look forward to serving you after the holidays. In the meantime, we wish you and yours a peaceful and healthy holiday season.



Roadside Store and Cafe.

Wed-Sat 7:30-2 pm. | 275 Main Road in Monterey | 413.528.2633 For your safety, there is currently no dining on site.

Letters Caretakers of Monterey

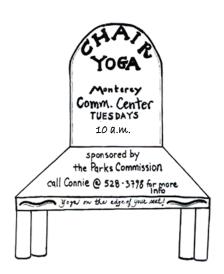
What strikes me most about the recent rants visited upon the "dear readers" of the *Monterey News* by Mr. Weingold is the amount of free time one must have to go on so.

And to produce such vile sentences! An assault on the mind. Has our great national bully given the green light to what could be described as hate speech? While Mr. Weingold is apparently free to reveal himself as he pleases. I hope the editor will set out some guidance. Is there no space limitation? Are scatological references

permitted? Are libelous unsubstantiated musings à la "birtherism" the norm? Is this the proper forum for a witch hunt?

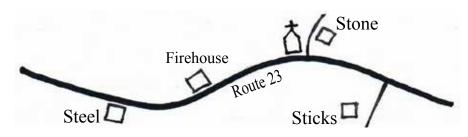
As he made clear at the annual town meeting, Mr Weingold is more interested in the show than the work. The essential functions of the town are unglamorous and necessary work and we know we are well served by those who spend time doing it. None of the complainers would drive the snowplow or firetruck for any money. While we may disagree on details, we are all caretakers of Monterey.

—Michele Miller Former Select Board member



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Holiday Open Studios

Much has changed for all of us this year, and although we'll be missing the Monterey Makers Show at the Community Center, we have decided to open our studios in a small village way. The Blacksmith, the Basketmaker and the Potter will be opening their studios for visitors.

Covid protocols will be followed.



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A Tale of Two Parties: Reflections on Democracy

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way..."

To the reader who perceives elements of the foregoing lines in current affairs, it may come as a surprise—if not a reminder—that they were penned by Charles Dickens in 1859 in his *Tale of Two Cities* portraying events leading up to the French revolution. I hesitate to include this last fact for while it is not uncommon to hear folks invoke the idea of revolution as a possible culmination of the antagonisms that plague our social discourse, I believe we are as far from seeing muskets and pitchforks in the streets as liberal democracy differs from the rule of eighteenth-century kings and queens.

And yet the intensity, acrimony, cognitive dissonance, and antithetical

views of reality that seem to infuse much of our debate about government large and small can be alarming, even scary, sending many of us in search of understanding.

While I can't pretend to have an answer as to whether our current era is more dysfunctional than the past, nor how civility may be guaranteed, I do find some history and ideas instructive.

For one, it can be argued that the polemic and hard feelings we encounter in current debates of policy are not so much a dysfunction but a healthy function of learning to accept more and more voices into the process of government by the people.

The poet Theodore Roethke wrote in his poem "The Waking," "We think by feeling. What is there to know?" This observation mirrors psychological research showing that despite our assumptions about how rational and logical we all are, we interpret reality through the lens of emotion including bias, prejudice, delusion, much more than most of us would want to believe.

It is also helpful to observe that while most of us may not always know what is true, we usually know what is kind.

-Steve Snyder

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Submissions for the "Monterey News"

As the editor for this publication, I generally don't know what people are going to send in for the next issue. Obviously there are regular contributors, but oftentimes the unexpected arrives as well. It is like opening a treasure box each month.

And truthfully, I find almost all the treasures in the box to be interesting, to be good things to have people read and think about. The quality of the writing varies, which is to be expected, but truthfully the range is typically from good to excellent. A few contributors send me information that they would like me to format and write, and I'm happy to do that.

There are minimal restrictions on content. Generally there is not a restrictive word count. I suggest that people "write what people need to read." I infrequently will make suggestions to shorten long submissions, but rarely impose them. (And I may respond with questions or ideas for additions to the text.) There are some decency standards... inappropriate words, personal character attacks (ad hominem), and any kind of "hate" speech.

The November issue definitely "encouraged community conversations." I've heard directly and indirectly that people were upset with some of the content, felt it reflected poorly on the News, and questioned the inclusion of certain text. I hope people understand that just because some content makes them uncomfortable, or makes me, as the editor feel uncomfortable when considering publication, this is not a reason to not include text that makes very opinionated statements. Outside of personal character attacks, I cannot be the one to judge or modulate what some might feel are slanderous or wildly inaccurate statements about others. To a great extent I have to rely on the writers to be truthful. Special consideration is made for elected town officials as they are public figures and received support from the voters. And it should be understood that everything published represents the views and opinions of the authors, not the News.

Council on Aging

On November 14, the Council on Aging (CoA) surprised Gene Bounous with the presentation of the Boston Post Cane for the oldest citizen of Monterey (See page 16.) Due to Covid-19, it was a small family affair at his lovely home on Main Road overlooking Lake Buel.

Starting January 1, 2021, Monterey's elderly and disabled medical transportation and shopping needs will be served by the Great Barrington CoA vans. Please call 528-1881. Until then, we are still being served by the Sheffield CoA, 229-7037, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The council has been very supportive of the Monterey Community Partnership which is running the Pantry Pickup on Saturday mornings from 10 to 11:30 a.m., at the Monterey United Church of Christ in the village. Please call 413-528-1443, ext. 247, for any questions about the Pantry Pickup.

The Berkshire Visiting Nurse held a second flu clinic on November 12. She vaccinated three people which was great because she had only three doses with her. If you *still* have not gotten your flu shot, call the CoA at 413-528-1443, ext 247, and let us know. Nancy Slattery, RN from Berkshire Visiting Nurse, said she could save some for Monterey, but we need to

With all of that said, I have on occasion declined to publish submissions, and will continue to do so if they are inappropriate or really out of the bounds of our small town paper.

To submit content to the paper, you can email me at MontereyNews9@gmail. com. Attachments in almost any format for documents or images are fine, and text can simply be sent in the email window. (Original photo files are preferred.) If you wish to submit via the mail, you can mail to *Monterey News*, PO Box 9, Monterey, MA 01245. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 413-528-4007.

This is a community paper, with largely community-friendly articles, essays, poems, and photos. It is open to anyone in the larger Monterey community. Please consider participating for everyone's benefit.

— Stephen Moore Editor, *Monterey News*

Monterey Library

Our emergency generator has finally been installed. Over the past few months there have been power outages to parts of Monterey. We know who is without power because they have been parked at the library using the WiFi (thank you Fiber Connect), and charging their devices. So far we have been fortunate not to lose power, but one of these days it is bound to happen. Now you will still be able to come to the library 24/7. Thanks to the Friends of the Library for helping to fund this project.

It is hard to predict how exactly Covid will continue to affect us as this surge sends the virus everywhere. As of right now we are open. We will be following the Governor's orders as we have been, following the CDC and OSHA guidelines with the approval of the Monterey Board of Health. Please respect the safety of the library staff

reserve a specific number—the vaccine is hard to come by. Nancy will be here on Thursday, December 10, from 2 to 3 p.m., at the Monterey Community Center.

Lin Saberski has joined the Monterey Council on Aging Board. She has a background in adult protective services, so she fits in perfectly with our mission. Welcome, Lin!

Foot nurse Beverly Dunn has been making home visits to our elderly clients in Monterey since just after the advent of Covid-19. Call her at 413-446-2469. She may be able to see clients at the Monterey Community Center in the future.

Happy holidays to all, and we're all hoping for Covid-19 vaccinations soon!

—Kyle Pierce Chair, Council on Aging and expect that there may be changes to our Covid procedures at a moment's notice. We have a lot of advantages with our new building but there may be a point when we have to further restrict how we can provide services. Thank you for your patience. Please remember that there are alternatives to coming into the library. At the moment we still will place your orders outside in the lockers so you don't have to come in. There are also lots of media that can be downloaded, as many of you learned last spring. Feel free to call during open hours or email (montereylibrary@gmail.com) anytime with questions.

During the holidays we will be closed December 24 and 25, and December 31 and January 1 as well. All other hours will be open as usual.

> — Mark Makuc Library Director MontereyMassLibrary.org



Susan M. Smith Attorney At Law

38 Mahaiwe St., Suite 1 Great Barrington Massachusetts 01230 Telephone: (413) 229-7080 Facsimile: (413) 229-7085

Reports on Monterey Government

There has been much written about town government operations over the past five years or so, and various select boards have reached outside of Monterey for considered evaluations to help improve town management, as well as having pursued a "Town Restructuring Committee" to do a self-evaluation.

What follows is an overview of the two most recent reports conducted at the request of the select board. The first one, by the Collins Center for Public Management at the University of Massachusetts/Boston, is the second such study they've conducted in the past five years in Monterey. The current report was requested during the spring of 2020. The second report is the result of work by Mark Webber, a retired town administrator from Stockbridge. The select board sought his participation in evaluating town operations this summer.

The reports were comprehensive reviews of all aspects of town governance, noting many improvements that have been made over the years, strengths of our current situation, and recommendations for the future.

Read Them Yourself

Rather than try to summarize either of these reports, I refer interested readers to the actual reports, which are available on the town website, montereyma.org. On the home page simply search for "Collins Center report," and/or "Webber report."

Collins Center Report Findings

The findings are in-depth con-siderations of the tasks and challenges in each of the following areas, including assessments of efforts by the town in each of these areas.

- Day-to-Day Management
- Management of Major Projects
- Financial Management
- Human Resource Management
- Information Technology Management
- Procurement and Purchasing
- · Town Hall Culture

Recommendations

They provide extensive support for each of the following recommendations for the town.

- 1. Hire a skilled, professional town administrator.
- 2. Formally define the responsibilities and authority of the Town Administrator position in a by-law.
- 3. Create a job profile to attract potential candidates; work with a search consultant.
- 4. Consider negotiating an employ-ment contract with the chosen candidate.
- 5. Finalize and adopt financial policies; consider the need to document financial procedures.
- 6. Change the Tax Collector position from elected to appointed, and combine the Collector and Treasurer positions.
- 7. Complete a Human Management review with a qualified consultant.
- 8. Create a classification and compensation plan.
- 9. Complete an IT review through services provided by the Commonwealth's Office of Municipal and School Technology or with a qualified consultant.

- 10. Use the resources of the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration or another external organization as needed to address conflict between and among staff and elected and appointed officials.
- 11. Consider expanding the Select Board from three to five members.
- 12. Consider the benefits of enacting a Town Charter.

Background

The report concludes with some reflections on how the town has arrived at this point, and the challenges small Massachusetts towns face.

Relevant Recent Background in Monterey

Leading up to this study, various efforts on the part of the town to direct and improve town governance.

History of Evolution to Professional Town Administration in MA

What has led towns to hiring professional management.



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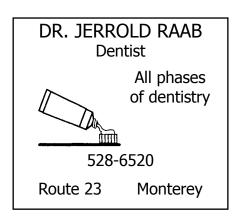
Mark Webber's Report

Mr. Webber's report is much shorter at just four pages of relevant text.

He begins with a list of seventeen people involved in Monterey town government operations plus two other town managers with whom he spoke. He documented the forty-eight hours he spent in interviews and interactions in town hall. He also lists his qualifications.

- Introduction: The request by the three current select board members to assist the board, to review past reports, and to observe current operations.
- Process: He describes in detail the materials he reviewed and others he consulted.
- Observations: He lists in brief his observations on the operations of public works, police department, fire department, town library, and town hall. In this section he reflects on the overall "enviable" situation the town experiences with tax rate, property values, financial situation, and infrastructure. He also comments on the "tensions, accusations, and bickering among and between some town officials."
- Recommendations: He provides lengthy recommendations on human resources, mediation services, town administration, and the prospect of being able to find a qualified outside person as town administrator. He makes an argument for continuing with Melissa Noe, who, as he writes, "Is now performing the day-to-day functions commonly associated with a professional small town administrative officer," and notes that his recommendation matches with the assessment of the two other experienced town managers with whom he spoke.

-Stephen Moore



In My View



In May 2015, the town meeting voted overwhelmingly for the creation of the position of town administrator. Three times the select board tried to imple-

ment that decision. The first administrator lasted three months, and the next two offers were declined.

In 2018, I ran for the select board in part because I believed we should try again to fill that position with a professional outsider. In March 2020, the Collins Center for Public Management recommended that the position be filled, while asserting that would not be an easy task if we tried to hire an outsider.

Experience is a great teacher. During my over two years of service on the select board, I became increasingly convinced that our administrative assistant, Melissa Noe, was skillfully performing almost all the tasks of a town administrator, as I understood them. But because my background is law, and not public administration, I questioned whether I knew enough to fairly judge whether Melissa had the professional know-how required for the job. That led me to consult with Great Barrington's town manager and to propose that we hire Mark Webber for his advice on the matter.

The town now has the benefit of Mr. Webber's report, which you can read on the Town of Monterey website. (See Reports on Monterey Government, page 6.) Unlike the young folks from the Collins Center, he brought to this task thirty-three years as a town administrator in three Berkshire towns, seven years as an elected select board member, and a master's in public administration.

Mr. Webber found Melissa "to be dedicated, knowledgeable in the myriad of town government functions and fully appropriate in her interactions with staff, officials, and the public." And as he further concluded, given the 2017 opinion of Peter Fohlin, the retired Williamstown town manager, whom he described as "the dean of Berkshire administrators… held in universally high regard by his

peers," and the 2020 opinion of Mark Pruhenski, Great Barrington's Town Manager, "there is consensus among three highly credentialed Berkshire County administrators that Monterey is now and would continue to be well served by Melissa Noe in an administrative capacity."

I am well aware of the small faction, now largely led by the newest member on the select board, who see conspiracy everywhere and who are dead set on believing that the town government is dystopian and that Melissa is a cause of that dysfunction. America has always suffered from such conspiracy theorists, and New England, in particular, from small factions believing that misdemeanors, if not witchcraft, must be afoot. Don't be fooled by their vengeful nonsense.

The government of Monterey is doing its job and doing it well. You have more than my word for that. Listen to Mr. Webber, who said, "I've observed only appropriate and often admirable performance and delivery of services by Town employees and Departments. All of which are provided within the enviable setting of a single digit tax rate, healthy and steadily increasing property values, ample available funds in both free cash and stabilization, nearly \$600,000 in excess taxing capacity, comparatively low education costs and a well maintained infrastructure." (In 2020, only fifteen municipalities in the commonwealth had a tax rate lower than ours.)

The simple truth is that Melissa Noe has served this town admirably for well over a decade, and I firmly believe that, given the opportunity, she will be a fine town administrator for many years to come.

—Don Coburn Chair, Monterey Select Board

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

Employees' Corner

Editor's Note: This feature was initiated by town employees.

In an effort to move past all the recent negativity both locally and nationally, we have decided to post a positive piece in the December issue of the *Monterey News*. Our hope is more employees will contribute to this quarterly update.

Police Department

The police department reports that the drug take-back program has been very successful. Anyone who has any unused or expired medications that they would like to properly dispose of should call the Monterey Police Department at 528-3211 to schedule an appointment for drop-off. The police department is working with the highway department to get two new permanent speed signs installed (on Main Road in front of town hall and on Blue Hill Road).

The Executive Office of Public Safety and Security's Office of Grants and Research (OGR) has awarded the department \$39,987.42 in Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) funds. The Byrne JAG Local Law Enforcement Opportunity is intended for local police departments to address their law enforcement and criminal justice related needs. The grant will be used to purchase Motorola ALL-Band P25 mobile base, and portable radios. These "ALL Band" radios provide for interoperable communications with all local, state, and federal agencies and departments that may respond to assist with a disaster or just a routine stop. The



grant was a joint collaboration between our grant writer Terri Walker and Chief Gareth Backhaus.

Highway Department

The highway crew has repaired a failing culvert on Tyringham Road which has addressed the previous water issues while continuing to allow for the safe passage of our wildlife. This upgrade has a projected life span of seventy-five years. The crew has also been finishing paving projects on parts of Tyringham, Beartown Mountain, Curtis, and Gould Roads, as well as the 2.2-mile paving project on Sandisfield Road.

Fire Department

The fire department has responded to over seventy-five incidents since July (approximately 60% fire calls and 40%

medical). In August, eight of the core group of firemen participated in a drill with the towns of Great Barrington and Egremont to train in RIT (Rapid Intervention Teams). The primary task of this training is to respond to firefighters reported in distress and these teams are a critical fireground function. ("Fireground" refers to the whole situation of a fire response.)

The fire company had a very successful first-of-its-kind drive-through steak roast in July.

Grant Success

The administrative assistant Melissa Noe, along with assistance from the director of operations and fire chief Shawn Tryon, have been busy applying for multiple grants and are pleased to report that in the last few months we have received the following:

- \$3,150 from MassDEP for continued recycling efforts (thanks to Kenn Basler for his help on this one)
- \$24,119.35 from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security to purchase PPE (personal protective equipment) for the fire department
- \$15,000 from the Southern Berkshire Volunteer Ambulance Service to purchase the fire department rescue boat
- \$6,662.91 from federal emergency management agency for various Covidrelated expenses
- \$5,000 from our insurer for an employee wellness incentive program
- \$35,862 from the CARES program for Covid-related expenses
- In addition to that we have another \$122,500 in pending grants for which we should have a final answer in the next month or two.

A big thank you for the continued dedication of all our regularly attending members of the fire department, police department, and administrative staff in town hall and the library for their commitment to the town during these trying times.

Respectfully,

— Shawn Tryon, Director of
Operations and Fire Chief
— Gareth Backhaus, Police Chief
— Melissa Noe, Administrative Assistant



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The Town of Monterey Wants You!

Has the pandemic left you with extra time on your hands? Want to make new friends and influence the town? Would you like to experience a greater sense of purpose? Opportunities abound in Monterey for those who are willing to serve.

Mark Webber's recent report pondered the seeming contradiction between the town of Monterey's fairly smooth functioning and the vitriol that sometimes, especially of late, emanates from town hall and spills out into the pages of this newspaper, the Monterey-Community Google group, or town meetings. The consultant, Mark Webber, credited our able and committed town employees for much of the town's success.

I have no doubt that is true. But in researching this article, I came to the conclusion that the hard work and service of many others also contributes to Monterey's vitality, efficacy, and low taxes. (Only 15 communities of the 350 municipalities in the state have lower rates.)

It takes a village to run a village, I have discovered.

In fact, trying to figure out how many people are actively engaged in making this town work proved to be a rather complex task.

There are numerous compensated positions, including the select board members, town administrator, clerks, assessors, building inspector, lawyer, library staff, tree warden, community center coordinator, police force, transfer station and road crews—and undoubtedly others that I am forgetting.

Beyond the fact that the compensation for many of these positions is little more than a stipend, it is the amount of volunteer work that so impresses. The Town of Monterey website lists eighteen boards or committees—ranging from the board of health to the cemetery commission—comprising sixty-or-so people. These mostly volunteer groups, which typically meet once or twice monthly, manage a wide variety of town functions, from arranging affordable transport and flu shots for seniors to ordering more boat racks

and managing lifeguards. They study the water quality and invasive plants of Lake Garfield, negotiate broadband build out, oversee the library, and decide what local cultural events receive funding.

And they make consequential and autonomous decisions about what can be built, and where. Variances and special permits require review by no fewer than four committees: the planning board, the conservation commission, the board of health, and the zoning board of appeals. Some of those decisions can and do wind up in court.

Other functions are listed on the website under "Departments." This includes the two boards that oversee the Monterey Community Center (one for the buildings and infrastructure, another for programming), the private water company (which essentially acts as a public utility in the village area) and the recently formed regional school district planning board. A new historic district committee is being initiated.

And then there are the two dozen or so fire department volunteers we rely on for protection and emergency assistance. A board of registrars, along with many volunteers, are needed to support the town clerk in conducting elections.

Further, many residents step up on an ad hoc basis to help out with various activities. "Monterey can really pull together," remarked longtime resident (and the wearer of many volunteer hats) Wendy Germain in the context of the recent effort to dispel the winter gloom with the Monterey Lights the Holidays project. The food pantry, Memorial Day parades, and other initiatives all demand participation.

In addition, a number of the independent organizations that liven up this little town rely on volunteers: the Bidwell House Museum has nearly twenty board members and is assisted by volunteers, as is the library and the community center. This newspaper recently celebrated fifty years of monthly issues supported by voluntary submissions and local advertisers. It is produced by a very modestly paid editor, a board of seven people, and a squad of thirty to forty contributors each month. "That's a lot of cats to herd," said editor Stephen Moore.

Altogether it adds up to a lot of civic engagement—by my count, upwards of 150 people taking on significant responsibilities. That's quite impressive for a town of some 751 people (according to the latest available US Census data, 2018). Still, more hands are needed on deck.

In fact, this column was prompted by concerns raised at a recent online meeting of "All Boards," an assembly convened regularly by the select board. At last month's meeting, the need for more participation was the main item of business.

cont. on page 10



cont. from page 9-Monterey Wants You!

Many of the boards operate with the bare minimum of members and sometimes cancel for lack of a quorum. The planning board is down two members from its full complement of seven. The zoning board is looking for an alternate. While the members of many boards are elected, those positions are rarely challenged. In our last election, only one seat, on the select board, was also uncontested.

This need for more hands on deck came up a few years ago at a special town meeting (another form of participatory civic engagement). One resident stood up and said, "Many of us have already done our bit." And it's true. There are a lot of residents who've already served for six to eight years on one board, or several. They feel like they've done their part and would like to see others step up.

One problem is that more than half of the town residences are second homes, which means their owners cannot serve in most elected or appointed positions. And our population is getting smaller and older, having shrunk by around two hundred people since 2010, even as the number of town positions has increased. About 28% of residents are seventy or older. While this group may have a lot of talents to share, they also may have less energy, more caregiving

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Original Board Member, Monterey Preservation Land Trust responsibilities, or a different vision entirely for their "golden years." Less than a quarter of the town's residents are in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, a time when many are drawn to outside engagement.

One of the recommendations from the meeting of all the boards was to continue virtual meetings after the pandemic restrictions are lifted. Somewhat counterintuitively, as we have seen, the Covid pandemic simplifies participation in local governance. "It's so much easier now," said Michele Miller, who served on the select board a couple of decades ago and was elected last June to the finance committee. "All the meetings are posted. You can listen in and see how people behave and what's going on, even while you iron shirts or bake bread or whatever." While it is tempting to hang out in the meetings more or less invisibly, Miller considers it appropriate that those who have something to say turn on their cameras while speaking.

Miller said she ran for her current position on the finance committee after taking umbrage at an article suggesting that increases in the tax rate are inevitable. "I like thinking about how to spend money and wanted to be helpful," she said, adding that she thought her tendency toward thrift might serve the town and its taxpayers. In fact, our tax rate has declined slightly even as services have improved.

Tom Sawyer, who now chairs the planning board, started thinking about serving after reading that more members were needed and recognizing that his engineering background could be useful. "I wanted to be closer to what's going on, to gain more insight into the inner workings of the town," he said, and spoke about the shift from being an observer to participant in the mechanics of town governance.

With two meetings most months, and some background research and additional work as the chair, Sawyer estimates that he spends from six to ten hours each month on board responsibilities. He seems satisfied with that tradeoff. "I've found that through being on the planning board I've met so many more people. I've become more a *part* of the town than just residing here," he said.

The main qualifications for service, beyond residency, include passing a statemandated online ethics course, an interest in a particular area, and a willingness to take on some responsibility. If you're up for significant responsibility, and some remuneration, consider the select board election coming up next May. Don Coburn will be bowing out after almost a half century in public service, in one form or another, from law clerk, prosecutor and judge, to councilman and mayor for Livingston, NJ.

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"I would not want to run for an office of such importance to the town unless I was sure I could complete the three-year term in good health, which is a tad hard to say starting at 82," he said by email. Of his long career in public service, he wrote: I've loved every minute of it, and I am deeply grateful to the people of Monterey for giving me one last chance to pitch in. But now I really want to spend more time with my wife, children, and grandchildren."

In short, if you've ever given some thought to getting more involved with local governance, opportunities are out there. It's certainly not mandatory. Indeed, the idea of choice is at root of volunteerism. But as Plato recognized more than two millennia ago, the heaviest penalty that good men (or women) bear for declining to participate in their own governance is to be ruled by inferiors.

So what's the problem with Monterey?

A recent report commissioned by our select board described Monterey's overall functioning in fairly glowing terms: "I've observed only appropriate and often admirable performance and delivery of services by Town employees and Departments," wrote the author, Mark Webber. "All of which are provided within the enviable setting of a single digit tax rate, healthy and steadily increasing property values, ample available funds in both free cash and stabilization...comparatively low education costs and a well-maintained infrastructure. They physical beauty of your Town puts you into bonus territory."

Webber, a retired town administrator who has served in three Berkshire communities for a total of thirty-three years, spent forty-eight hours on the project and interviewed nineteen people (all listed in the report). But he did not charge Monterey for the work, which he said he did out of an appreciation for the town.

Why, then, all the squabbling we hear about, in this newspaper, during town meetings and on the community list serve? The report placed the "tensions, accusations and bickering" that "cloud much of what is good about Monterey," pretty squarely on the shoulders of town officials. "Town employees largely appear to be dedicated and productive despite the

sometimes unpleasant behavior exhibited from above,"Webber wrote. "When layered over an apparent institutional reluctance to move on from past personnel conflicts and objectionable (to some) individual style, some seem to have lost focus of the basic responsibilities of town government."

One of the issues the report addressed was whether or not the town should hire a professional town administrator, something that has long been debated and tried unsuccessfully. Webber outlined the problems the town would likely face in recruiting a suitable candidate. He recommended instead hiring a part-time human resources professional and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of administrative assistant Melissa Noe, who, by all accounts, is competently carrying out the basic functions of an administrator. He noted that other consultants have reached the same conclusion: "The Town has now been told three times by a collective seventy years of professional Berkshire County municipal administration service that you would be best served by your incumbent."

Webber also said the town should consider using a conflict resolution specialist to address what he sees as "an unusual level of discord among and between town officials and employees in the recent past and seemingly increasing today."

The full report is posted on the Montereyma.gov website. It was discussed briefly at the November 23 meeting of the select board and will be considered in greater depth at a future meeting.

-Janet Jensen

Monterey Election Results November 3

Electors of President and Vice President

- Biden and Harris, Democratic 481 (MA-65.7%)
- Hawkins and Walker, Green-Rainbow 2 (MA-0.5%)
- Jorgensen and Cohen, Libertarian
 6 (MA 1.3%)
- Trump and Pence, Republicans 102 (MA 32.5%)
- Blank 5

Senator in Congress

- Markey, Democratic 463 (MA 66.5%)
- O'Connor, Republican 115 (MA 33.5%)

Representative in Congress

• Neal, Democratic 490

Councillor

• Hurley, Democratic 481

Senator in General Court

• Hinds, Democratic 502

Representative in General Court

• Pignatelli, Democratic 515

Register of Probabe

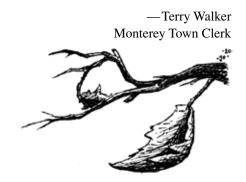
• Patella, Democratic 481

Regional School Committee

• Monterey's Hannah Bracken, 435

Proposed by Initiative Petition

- Question 1:Amend Right-to-Repair Monterey: Yes-418, No-130 (MA Yes-74.9%, No-25.1%)
- Question 2: Ranked-Choice Voting Monterey: Yes-307, No-245 (MA Yes-54.8%, No-45.2%)



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Simpler Ways to be Involved

When thinking about town involvement in the ways that Janet Jensen wrote about (pages 9 to 11), one could have the impression that offering yourself to serve on a board or commission or committee, either as an elected official or appointed, is the only way.

Citizen input is important, and not just in an official capacity. All the public meetings are now held online, either through phones or on a video platform, which makes these meetings very accessible and convenient. There is always an opportunity for those attending to have a voice, to ask questions, to offer opinions.

If you're curious about what the planning board does, or the conservation commission, or the Lake Garfield working group, or any others, you can listen in and contribute.

On the home page of the town website, lower on the left is a "Citizen Action Center" offering simple ways to find out about the town and get information. At the bottom of the right column is "Subscribe to E-Alerts."

From there you can sign up for your choices from a long list of options. At the top of the options are "Urgent Alerts" from the town and "Town News and Announcements." These alone are highly useful to receive. Below these is a list of thirteen public bodies that conduct open meetings. You can opt to receive agendas

and/or minutes from these meetings, as well as minutes from a few other bodies.

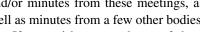
If you wish to attend one of these meetings, you can find the connection information listed in the individual agendas. As Michele Miller was quoted on page 10, "You can listen in and see how people behave and what's going on, even while you iron shirts or bake bread or whatever."

Who Serves the Town?

You may very well know some of the people who contribute their time to town affairs. On the town website, under "Departments" and "Boards and Committees" are individual pages for each body, with the names of the elected or appointed members. Many have email contact information. Get in touch and ask about what is addressed by that body.

Inform the Town

Another form of civic involvement is communicating with the town about what you learned at any of these meetings. You might wish to share your perspective on issues or actions being taken. You might actually have the next "best idea." Any of the public bodies are pleased to accept letters of comment, which are generally read into the minutes. Letters for publication in the Monterey News are always welcome. As editor, I'm surprised at the relative lack of opinions offered through letters in the paper.



Vote

As we learn every election cycle, voting is privilege, and a responsibility. While it may be easiest to just "let someone else do it" when it comes to various meetings, etc., no one else can vote on your behalf. Monterey currently has 712 registered voters. In the past national election, over 80% of our voters voted. At our town meetings and elections, that percentage drops to 25% to 30%.

Learn about the town and help steer its direction. And even if you don't know some of the folks who are offering themselves to serve the town, we can all at least voice our support for their efforts by casting a ballot. As Michele Miller wrote on page 3, "We are all caretakers of Monterey."

-Stephen Moore





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Veterans Day

Gathering on November 11, at 11 a.m., a small group of veterans and those who care about them in particular or in general honored all veterans with a prayer, some flowers placed near the monument outside the library, and eleven rings of the church bell. While keeping our social distance from one another as an expression of our care for one another, we held in mind the use of American power and force in the world, that we as a country might exercise such things with wisdom and restraint.

Following an election week that was fraught, it felt especially important that we remember our aspiration as a country to build an ever more perfect union both at home and with people all over the world, and that we deploy those who will one day become veterans (if all goes well in their deployment) with a sense of reverence.

This is a complicated world, and some people bear those complications



more than others. Thanks be to those whom we put in the position to witness and deal with "complication." God grant them humility, courage, and a desire to do what's right.

Thanks to Julio Rodriguez for his planning and officiating, and thanks to all who came out to honor and appreciate.

-Rev. Liz Goodman

Editor's Note: In the November issue was a notice of the Veterans Day ceremony from Julio Rodriquez in which he asked people not to attend due to Covid-19 risks. So no inference should be made at the modest attendance on November 11.





Picking up the "Monterey News" **Location changes**

It is just amazing all the ways that Covid-19 has changed even the smallest details of our lives. Finding free copies of the Monterey News is just another changing detail.

With town buildings closed beginning this spring, the *News* lost inside the town hall and library, the church foyer, and the church basement as places to pick up copies in the village. The store has been closed for a long time now, and the news is that it won't be until late spring or early summer next year that it'll be reopened. So a pickup spot was arranged in the firehouse pavilion.

The pavilion might not be a reliable place once we get into winter. The driveway into the space won't be cleared, there's the risk of ice off the roof, so another place needed to be found. The sign on the pavilion indicating that papers are available there will be removed when it is no longer safe. (The location may be used again beginning next spring depending on our public health situation.)

During the month of November a new box was installed outside the street-side entry door to the town hall. The outside box at the library, and inside on the library counter are still available, as well as at the transfer station.

The board of the Monterey News would like to thank the town and the fire company for permission to place signs to help folks find the paper, and for use of the pavilion all these months.

-Stephen Moore, Editor



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Here's a Thought Navigating This Year's Year-End Traditions

Last spring, *stay at home, take care*, was still ... what? I don't quite remember how it felt to me then. Stay at home meant tending my newly created herb garden, creating and bottling tinctures, missing people and events, and slow driving. I'd gotten used to moving at the pace of walking, Route 23 was even more sparsely traveled than usual. Forty miles an hour all the way to Great Barrington felt like Goldilocks speed, just right.

Since then, most of us, even all of us, even here in South Berkshire County, have had friends, family members, and/ or acquaintances exposed to, and some diagnosed with, the virus. Some of us have attended funeral services online, whether the death was Covid-related, or not. If the weather's the same as when I started writing this, we're back to cold-enough-to-snow, which means something different than it did last December when we were only concerned about having our driveways plowed, getting snow tires on, and making sure our heating systems worked well.

This December we're anticipating Hanukkah, Christmas, Solstice, and, bless us all, New Year's Eve. And we've never been down this road before. It's sort of, over the river and through the woods to Grandmother's house we don't go...

Even if all the people we know and love are healthy, there's plenty to grieve this December. Can we bear to let go of cherished forms of sharing our family, cultural, and spiritual traditions? The hearts of the traditions are still there. What will we do about them?

We'll each make our own decisions. I'll honor Hanukkah, December 10 through 18, with notes to friends who celebrate the season. When I was a primary school art teacher on Long Island, one of the joys of the year for me was to create inclusive, fun, December art lessons for five-to-eight year-olds in a school that was almost exactly 50% Jewish and 50% Christian. One year an experiment for the younger kids included distributing a paper shape to decorate. With the pointed end up, it was a Christmas tree and, pointed end down, a driedel. I still grin when I remember the



In times like these we have to look a little deeper to find what joy might be under the surface, beneath our habitual responses to the here and now.

earnest first-grader who looked up at me while she worked on it and asked, "Are you a Christmas or a Hanukkah?"

For years I've had my own riff on my family's year-end bayberry candle tradition. Their more mainstream burn-that-bayberry habit pattern looks like this old verse:

"These bayberry candles come from a friend. So on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve burn it down to the end. For a bayberry candle burned to the socket will bring joy to the heart and gold to the pocket."

My usual bayberry gambit has been casual: get the bayberry candles completely burned between Christmas and the end of the year. But this year I started burning them on Thanksgiving, although I'm still sticking to my end-of-year end game.

Early this month we'll buy and decorate a Christmas tree. We've cancelled our thirty-fourth annual Christmas party but the thirty-fourth annual tree will grace the living room anyway. For Solstice, I'll gather with friends on Zoom to honor the return of longer daylight with simple ritual. On December 23 and 24, I'll have more scheduled Zoom time (and/or spontaneous phone time) with loved ones to ease the gotto-reach-him-and-her on Christmas Day.

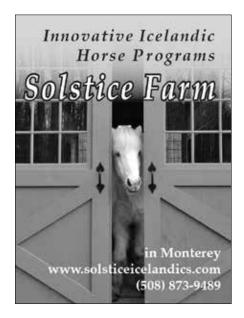
My December 25 plans include opening gifts, some from my brother. Later in the day? Dinner for our Monterey household of two; time outdoors; and time indoors nestled with Bonsai near the Christmas tree with a cozy fire in the wood stove. Delicious day. And at the same time, I'll miss being with that brother, whose Christmas tree I'd be sitting near during a more usual holiday season.

I don't know how many years we've watched reruns of the mid-twentieth century version of *A Christmas Carol* and *It's a Wonderful Life*. We joke about it. One movie was made the year I was born, and the other made the year he was born. This year we'll enjoy them apart.

I sound casual about missing all that. I'm not. I'm not casual about missing our traditional Christmas dinner with five cousins, their spouses, their collective seventeen children and their various friends and fiances. Their nuclear family matriarch and patriarch, my aunt and uncle whose wedding I attended when I was ten years old, won't be there either. They both passed away this year. This will be the first Christmas dinner any of us have missed for the last eleven years. It's painful.

In other words, I'm going to celebrate small but open; adapting and staying heartfelt; happy, too, to spend Christmas here at home. And, although this is a "winter of our discontent," here's your holiday invitation to, each in your own way, do the same. This year, less is more. May we make room for both grief and joy. And, following the December 29 full moon, may we all enjoy a peaceful, low-key introduction to the new year.

-Mary Kate Jordan



The Path Ahead

The path ahead Shared memories, The path ahead Ambition gone, The path ahead Life unmoored.

—Sam Estreicher 10/31/20

The Limits of the Political

The personal is not the political. The political not the personal. Assent can only be given freely. If not given, cannot be taken.

—Sam Estreicher 11/1/20

The Pharisees

A knowledge/inaction elite. They kept our religion alive without a temple,

Without a state,

Without neighbors who would allow us to be armed,

Religion is all we had.

-Sam Estreicher 11/16/20



A misty November morning over Stevens Lake. — Photo by Bonsai Cox

Computer Woes

C Computer

O On the brain

M Making me crazy

P Playing games I can't

U Undo...

T Throwing out commands I don't understand

E "Experiment!" they say, "you'll get it"

R Right now all I've got's a headache!

—Judy Hayes

When I wrote this in 1995, I was struggling to get to know my first computer. Things haven't changed much—I'm still struggling with trying to do every-day computer "chores"—with Windows 10—with frustration!

Transformations

Transformations

Changing seasons

Nature in action

Cycles of life

Epitomized

Continue.

Through each season

Nothing's stagnant

In this world.

Changing seasons

Spirals of growth

Repeated.

Sing of winter

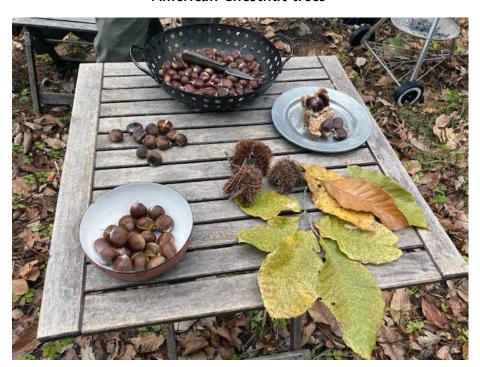
A world of white

Arriving soon

—Judy Hayes

Judy has been going through older things and is unearthing poems she wrote twenty-plus years ago. More in the coming months.

American Chestnut trees



Native American Heritage Day (November 27)

The hybrid American Chestnut trees that Mark Makuc planted on Eaton Road some thirty years ago bore five pounds of delicious nuts this year. Kevin West roasted and shared them after a Zoom presentation on the legendary tree and efforts to restore its place in our forests. This is just one of thousands of efforts ongoing to restore the legendary tree to its native range.

The chestnut roast may become an annual affair.

-Janet Jensen

Boston Post Cane Eugene Bounous

On Saturday, November 14, Eugene Bounous was honored in a small ceremony for being the oldest resident of Monterey. Eugene, 92, was born on Valentine's Day in 1928.

He snuck into the Navy at age 16 and became an aerial photographer for naval guns during World War II. The warships were firing at targets over the horizon. His small seaplane was catapulted off the St. Paul, a heavy cruiser. On his return to his ship he had to land along side the stern, on a net, that was then lifted by crane back on to the deck.



Since World War II Eugene has worked as a contractor, an electrician, and manager of a substation for Metro North. He lives at 31 Main Road, just east of the intersection of Route 23 and Route 57. He bought the property in the late 1960s which at the time had a small cabin. Over the years he added a Lindall home, decks, and other structures. His driveway makes a considerable climb up the hill that affords a lovely view of Lake Buel. Just this year he finished building a private six-hole



golf course with the fairways running up or down the slope and plenty of trees to make it interesting.

Joining Eugene for the surprise ceremony were his three daughters Eleanor Rochman of Monterey, Christine Bounous from Armonk, New York, and Candice Meshil, with her husband Scott and daughter Hannah, from Somers, New York. Kyle Pierce brought the wrapped up cane, which Julio Rodriquez presented to Eugene. Julio spoke some about Eugene's service to our country, and gave him a "Soldier for Life" pin which is given by the Army, but Julio wanted him to have it even as a Navy veteran.

Everyone anticipates that Eugene will have the cane in his possession for a long time. The cane was first presented this past February to Dick Tryon, who passed away in late August.

—Stephen Moore

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Community Center News

As the pandemic continues, and surges in many places, our focus has been on virtual programs. In February Karen Shreefter will be doing a talk on Zoom about gardening. See the January *Monterey News* for more information. So tune into Karen's talk, and keep dreaming about your flower gardens for next spring, summer, and fall, while we get through this dormant time period.

Thank you to Stephanie Sloane of Tyringham Road who shared her poetry reading with us on November 17. Almost fifty people attended the Zoom session, half from Monterey and half from New York City. The audience represented Stephanie's life. Kudos to her and her friends. We appreciated your honesty and candor, Stephanie, when writing about becoming a new widow in the midst of the lockdown in New York, coping with your loss, and grief, and beginning to sense hope with your move back to Monterey. We are looking forward to your next production.

If anyone wants the link to join Connie Wilson's Chair Yoga class on Tuesday mornings at 10 a.m., please call 528-3600 by the Monday before, or email calendar@ccmonterey.org. Please leave a message with your name, phone number, and email.

Also Elizabeth Maschmeyer is encouraging everyone to join her on her Zoom talk on Saturday, January 30, at 11 a.m. Please call (528-3600) or email calendar@ccmonterey.org, and leave me a message to get the Zoom link for her interactive show in the end of January.

Liz states, "Join me in a discussion of dehydrating fruits and vegetables for winter storage. I have been experimenting for years with the Berkshires' great bounty, and hope to inspire you to do the same. There is something in our produce that lends itself to the simple drying process. A few of the things that we will cover are pears, apples, snacks, soup mixes, and herb teas."

-Mary Makuc

Having a Good Day

- There was no reason to talk about the pandemic.
- You skipped the news for a full two days and feeling relieved.

Community Center Volunteers Dennis and Elaine Lynch

The Monterey Community Center would not be here now if it were not for many volunteers in the past and the present. We have decided to highlight one or two volunteers each month in the *Monterey News* and on our website. This month Nancy Kleban interviewed our stalwart MCC volunteers, Dennis and Elaine Lynch.

Some of our readers may remember the movie *Brigadoon*. It's a 1950's musical, set in an enchanted village in Scotland, and one of its featured songs is "Almost Like Being in Love." Brigadoon came up during our conversation about when and how Dennis and Elaine Lynch came to live in Monterey.

Dennis and Elaine fell in love with Monterey when they were beginning to plan their retirement and were looking around for a good spot. Monterey's General Store was an open and welcoming community gathering place at the time, with people, music and good food. They loved the hilly terrain of Monterey, coming from the flat land of Long Island, where Elaine was working as a reading teacher and Dennis in environmental activities for the public and private sectors.

The Lynches had friends living nearby. On one of their weekend visits, out



for a walk, they asked a group of young women for the name of a local real estate agent "whose door we could knock on." It was the end of the work day, but Linda Hebert answered the knock and graciously invited them in. Monterey became the Lynches' part-time home in 2004 and full-time residence in 2016. During this time they watched the renovation of the Wilson McLaughlin House and became eager to help with the new Monterey Community Center. (The MCC opened in 2017 after many years of renovations to the house.)

They have both served on the community center town committee for two years and Dennis is also on the board of the Friends of Wilson McLaughlin House. They help with the MCC programs from conception to cleanup: They like to come up with ideas for programs, communicate with prospective presenters, keep in touch with current and potential participants, and show up for the programs. Before the Covid restrictions, they were running game nights (and bringing cookies). Dennis now sets up the ping-pong table outside, and is looking into possibilities for an outdoor table as well as other outdoor activities. Elaine is eager to support the new student page in the Monterey News with a writing gathering at MCC as soon as guidelines allow.

Funding is an ongoing effort, says Dennis, and grants have supported some of the MCC activities. Elaine and Wendy Jensen wrote a grant for the wonderful Coffee House events, featuring local musicians and refreshments. There was, sadly, only one evening for this event series before Covid hit. We are looking forward to the opportunity to present the next three. Dennis and Wendy Germain have reached out to the Parks and Recreation Commission for further funding of outdoor activities (and are grateful to Hy and Myrna Rosen for their generous donation of the ping-pong table and equipment). Dennis also organized the October Mushroom Hike with Tom Ryan, DCR Service Forester.

In addition to their volunteer time at MCC, Dennis and Elaine are helping with the Town's newly launched Pantry Pickup and this winter's holiday BrightLights, as well as working in environmental activities protecting Lake Garfield and the Konkapot River.

Dennis and Elaine say they do all of this because they enjoy being part of the town community, getting to know people, and doing things that contribute. As the Brigadoon song says, "And there's a smile on my face / For the whole human race / Well it's almost like being in love." The Monterey Community Center is grateful for the help of these dedicated volunteers. They keep smiles on the faces of our committee members, presenters, participants, and visitors.

—Nancy Kleban

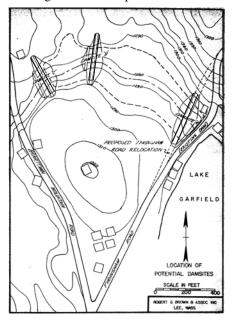




Lake Garfield Dam Part 4 - A New Dam

In last month's issue, the story left off with the dam under stress from high snowmelt and an existing leak becoming worse. The county engineer and then the Army Corp of Engineers recommended the lowering of the lake at once. Large pumps were brought in, evacuation plans were made for the village, and a twenty-four-hour watch was put in place. Once the water level was brought down, the dam continued to be inspected every four hours.

Thus began, in 1968, the arduous task of planning for the present-day dam and creation of Brewer Pond out of a swamp, which would not culminate until 1973. Plans were to include straightening the roadway to remove a dangerous curve and creating a new and improved beach area.



Three locations for the new dam were considered. The western location shown on the map above was chosen. The eastern location, where the Tyringham Road is currently located, and a center location were also studied.

Robert Brown, doing business as Robert G. Brown Associates, was assigned the task of geological tests and determining the best location for a new dam by Massachusetts Department of Public Works, Division of Waterways (see map above).

Progress was slow. From 1969 through 1970 many meetings were held



This construction photo shows the curved wall of the old dam and the old Tyringham Road. The roadbed for the rerouted Tyringham Road, and causeway over the equalizer pipes, is being built at the right.

both locally and in Boston, by many departments and committees.

All this was not done without great concern on the part of our downstream neighbors in New Marlborough, particularly Hartsville. About fifteen residents of Hartsville went to their selectmen asking that something be done for their safety. A committee of nine was appointed and a delegation appeared at our next selectmen's meeting. Selectman Howard Wells updated the delegation on the steps being taken to correct the problem. These included repairing the spillway and keeping truck traffic off through April and probably until all work was completed. He said that the town had

been trying to get funding for the last two years. And that a twenty-four-hour vigil was being maintained.

Emergency legislation was passed in 1969 for reconstruction of the dam. Monterey voted to appropriate \$30,000 to start the process of purchasing the five parcels of land that would be needed to build the new dam. In 1970 the legislature passed an appropriation of \$350,000 for the project.

The original plan included protection for a water well on the Arnold Pratt property. But because of the landtaking and slight changes in the project boundaries, a decision was made to purchase the Pratt property. A special town





Brewer Pond as seen from the northwestern end of the new dam. At right above, the 350-foot dam, with the emergency spillway beyond. At right below is the outflow pipe at the base of the dam and a dry hydrant for fire protection along Beartown Mountain Road.

meeting had to be called to add money for the appraisals of the properties, including the Pratt property.

With the land acquisitions, final plans in place, contracts out to bid and awarded, and funds available as of July 1, 1970, construction was anticipated to start in the spring of 1971 with a projected completion date of six to eight months.

Work commenced on the project in April 1972. Midway through the construction, in August of 1972, a petition with approximately one hundred signatures of primarily summer residents at the lake was presented requesting that the design elevation of the new lake level be raised six inches above the old normal lake level. After much discussion with many individuals and groups, the selectmen agreed to a four-inch increase. This was approved on September 6, 1972 and instructions relayed to the designer and contractor to proceed to construct the facility to the new elevation. This change added an additional impoundment capacity of over thirty million gallons to the lake.

Some interesting facts in connection with the project are that approximately 55,000 cubic yards of material were incorporated into the project, and approximately 40,000 cubic yards of various materials were excavated from the area. This fill was deposited in an area just to the left as one turns onto Beartown Mountain Road. The area was covered and leveled at the end of the project. This represents about 8,000 truckloads of materials. Sand and

gravel were trucked in from a new gravel bank just below the lower pond of the US Fish Hatchery on Hatchery Road in Hartsville. The new dam was constructed of earth taken from the land where the emergency spillway now is at the south end of the dam. The control spillway itself is constructed of concrete with an iron gate, and three-foot concrete tube at the bottom running under the earthen dam. The overflow at the spillway was built four inches higher than the old one. so the two lakes have a new elevation at 1286 feet. Five-hundred-thirty feet of seven-foot-diameter pipe were used as equalizers between the new and old lakes underneath Tyringham Road. Seventeen acres of land were cleared, including all the stumps from the new pond area, so



Photos on this page by Stephen Moore.



the bottom is free of hazards and potential decaying materials. The Tyringham Road was relocated slightly to the west up "Scott Hill" to eliminate a hazardous curve (near Amidon's cottage at the north end of the current town beach park). In addition, a new well was drilled to replace one that had been in the construction area and had supplied several cottages.

—Linda Thorpe

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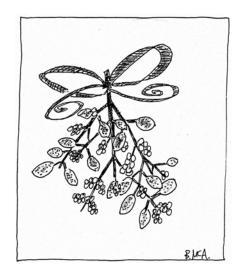
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Mistletoe: an Obligate Hemiparasite Inspires Kissing

This is solstice time, when all sorts of traditional celebrations are rolled into one short, dark time. Some sensible creatures find a sheltered place and settle down for a long winter's sleep, some of us party like mad. In earlier Celtic times we understood we must "drive the cold winter away" with music, revelry, and beverage. We even dragged a very small bird through the town calling him the King of Winter and beat the life out of him. Or maybe we made a sort of model of this king of the birds (a wren!) and carried that through town to celebrate the solstice and to make sure the sun came stronger and longer every day from now on.

In our houses we put up green garlands, whole trees even. We light these up, with little light bulbs, also tinsel and other shiny things. Some of us hang a sprig of mistletoe from a place on the ceiling or in a doorway. Then we go creeping around hoping to ambush someone who passes right under the mistletoe because now we get to kiss that person! In case we were waiting for this excuse. Or if we are that person, maybe we linger under the



mistletoe, batting eyelashes, humming a tune that goes like this: "Here I am \dots unsuspecting old me \dots "

Where do we get these notions? And what on earth is mistletoe?

The plant came first. It doesn't grow tall, but it does find its way into very tall trees and then grows there. The leaves and twigs are green, as are the tiny flowers. The berries are white and sticky. Birds like to eat these but when their bills get gummed up they fly off and wipe them on some other branch where the seeds stick and germinate and start to grow. At first the little green plant is self-supporting with

its own photosynthesis, then it sends little root-like structures called haustoria into the bark of the host to get nourishment. The clump of mistletoe grows bigger and denser. Some birds find these clumps good places to nest and find shelter. The Northern Spotted Owl sometimes does this.

At this time of year, if you are lucky and so inclined, you can buy mistletoe to hang in your house. It can be a little tired looking, having been disconnected from its host in order to get to your place. Still works for the kissing, though. The oldenday druids understood mistletoe to have miraculous powers of healing, and the Romans found it to be a useful symbol of peace. When armies met under the mistletoe they discarded their weapons and declared a truce.

If you are a bird, like our Phainopepla of the southwest deserts, you will love to eat mistletoe. If you are a good medical practitioner, you know how to use this plant to treat arthritis, epilepsy, infertility, and high blood pressure. If you just eat it with no guidance you risk blurred vision, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, seizures, and cardiac arrest. No matter who you are, you can hang it up to celebrate Saturnalia for about a week of December's dark days. Saturn was a god of agriculture in Roman mythology, in an age of plenty and of peace. His festival is a party time with all kinds of joking around and silly gifts, also role reversal games.

One of our old friends came from Texas and often went back to family there. She knew we hung a little mistletoe for the house here in Massachusetts each December, so one year she sent us a box with assorted botanical wonders from Texas, including some ragged-looking mistletoe. Ellen explained that in Texas, where the mistletoe grows way up high in the sycamores in the creek bottoms, her family heads out there and shoots it down. Ah, Texas! Mistletoe blasted out of the trees so we can kiss. Those were some kisses, as I recall.

There is power in these small plants and peace in the big trees. Once we have got the mistletoe down, we put aside our arms in the dark days of the winter solstice. And then we party and sing.

-Bonner McAllester



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Remembrance Jack Ryder

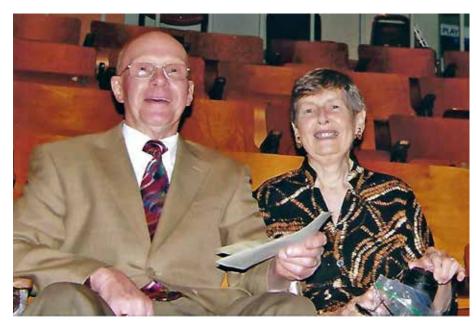
John "Jack" Alan Ryder, 89, formerly of Monterey, died November 7, 2020, of complications due to old age. He was born to Tom and Clara (McAvoy) Ryder, January 13, 1931, in Pittsfield, MA, and grew up in the city during its boom years.

Within a few of years of marrying Lois Kisselbrock in 1952, they built a one-of-a-kind house in Monterey, from the ground up, where they raised their five children and he lived until 2014. He was a selectman and a school board member: helped to maintain the town's parks and numerous (and well-hidden) cemeteries, and for many years hoisted and lowered the US flag at the Monterey Veterans Memorial Park. He began his career as a machinist at General Electric immediately after graduating from Pittsfield High School. Two years later he moved to Clark Aiken in Lee, but spent most of his working career at Lenox Machine in Lenox Dale. He was known to be a fair supervisor, an exacting machinist, a perpetual problem solver, and a tough negotiator.

He built beautiful and intricate pieces of furniture, such as a grandfather clock and a dining room table, that his children now proudly own. He enjoyed concerts at Tanglewood and the latest exhibits at the Norman Rockwell Museum and Clark Museum. He never lost his love of dancing or the thrill of taking a road trip; he and Lois visited forty-nine states over their many years of vacationing. He taught his grandchildren to shoot and they all would compete at the annual turkey shoots. And he took great care and pride in having the nicest looking lawn in the area.

He is survived by his younger sister, Marion Jennings, and five children: Sharon Ordeman (Erik), Karen Consolati (Jim), Charlene Keilty (Victor), Shawn Ryder (Shannon), and Scott Ryder (Maria) along with four grandchildren (Benjamin, Austin, Darren, and Evan) and several nieces and nephews. Lois, his wife of sixty years, passed in 2012, and his older sister, Doris Hockridge, died in 2019.

Due to the continuing Covid-19 health concerns, a memorial service will be held at



a future date. He will be buried next to Lois in Monterey. Please make memorial donations to his favorite charity, The American Red Cross, in care of Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home, 426 Main St, Great Barrington, MA 01230. To send remembrances and condolences to his family please go to finnertyandstevens.com.



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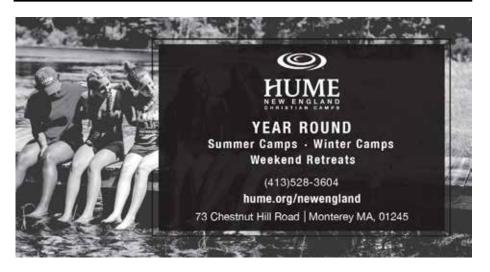
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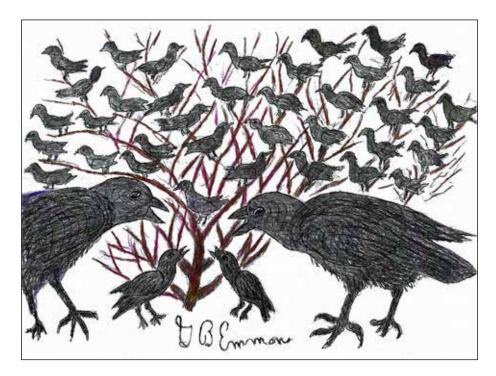


Crows Gathering in Flocks for Winter

When the curtain of darkness begins to fall for the last act of afternoon bird watching upon the coastal stage of Little Bay in Fairhaven, from the front row seat of our seaside terrace, my wife Jan and I have witnessed a string of crows moving inland to roost for the night. Crows know that in the fading light of autumn it is almost time to congregate in large numbers for safety from night owls, and company for peace of mind, while moving for warmth into warmer zones of urban neighborhoods. The gathering of crows is sometimes referred to as a "murder of crows," as illustrated. It may begin with a few birds, but as nights get colder and longer, the clamoring assembly may soon number hundreds or so, until, migrating into a large city, they become several thousand, making a lasting impression for bird watching.

The crow is a very social, congenial, and communal member of the Corvid family of very intelligent birds: crows, jays, magpies, and especially the raven. Studies have shown that crows can count, solve puzzles, learn symbols, recognize people, and retain information. Some crows, if not all, are capable of producing unusual, tuneful, or pleasing sounds with superior vocal aptitude. A few have a varied assortments of sounds, like imitations of a child crying, a hen squawking, or a rooster crowing. Many similar sounds are uttered by the male in courtship, while talking to the female in flight, as they both do acrobatics and somersaults. Henry Ward Beecher once remarked that if men wore feathers and wings, only a very few of them would be clever enough to perform like a crow.

The crow has unfortunately earned a bad reputation among humans as a thief and robber—stealing eggs, young chickens, corn, and baby songbirds straight from their nests. And yet when it sees a hawk or an owl about to do the same, it calls together more of its kind to dive loudly from above and, catching up with it, drive it out of the area. Each crow is a different character, and is well known in children's literature, as well as in Aesop's fables. In Native American legends, it ranks with



the coyote, fox, and hare in tribal tales of supernatural powers in stories of the creation of mother earth. It is portrayed as crafty and scheming, like a character of many personalities, acting on behalf of its own importance in the worldly pecking order. Today the crow still rises up early in the morning to pursue its own interests.

Naturalists believe that there are more crows in this country than there were when the pilgrims landed. They take care of their young and defend them valiantly against their enemies. Even though they grow

up to be a serious menace to crops and poultry, which is used to justify reducing their numbers, we are not likely to take advantage of any weakness such that they become endangered. Henry David Thoreau said that this bird observed the white man coming, and the Indian population declining, but the crows did not pass away. The natural sound of its untamed calling will always be heard, and should remind us that our civilization also had an aboriginal beginning.

-George B. Emmons





Ann Getsinger's art installed in the Monterey Library. —Photos by Julie Shapiro

Knox Gallery News

We hope that you've been able to visit New Marlborough artist Ann Getsinger's *Trace Your Hand*, currently on view at the Knox Gallery through January 16, 2021. The exhibit features tonal, line, and mixed-media drawings—Getsinger's signature "Stillscape" style (a blend of still-life integrated in a specific place).

Some of her compelling drawings spring from her imagination, while some are from life. Some are finished pieces; some are studies; some are thumbnails. Even her sketchbook pages and "doodles" make an appearance.

The artist refers to drawing as both primal and modern. "We humans do it all the time. We drag our finger through dust, or stir the soup in a figure eight, form a heart with our hands—even driving a car or dancing involves a kind of drawing. Drawing involves taking an idea from our mind and expressing it in active lines or forms."



We claim Getsinger as a "local artist," as she settled permanently in this area many years ago, but she, since childhood, has split her time between the Berkshires and the mid-coast of Maine. The contrast of landscape features and light surely adds to the richness of her work.

In addition to being included in many private collections, Getsinger's paintings have been exhibited in museums and galleries in New York and New England. Her work can be seen locally at the Stockbridge Station Gallery, Stockbridge, MA.

All Knox Gallery events are admission free. Exhibits can be viewed during library hours (see back page of this issue). Please visit the library website for current Covid-19 restrictions such as admission scheduling. Knox Gallery, Monterey Library, 452 Main Road, Monterey, MA, 413-528-3795; MontereyMassLibrary. org/Knox-Gallery; Facebook.com/KnoxGallery.

-MaryPaul Yates



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Notice of Passing

It is with the deepest sorrow that Greg and Shannon Carnese, and Dawn Hellier, and Christopher Carnese, announce that their dear son and brother, Tyler, 26, passed away unexpectedly on October 18 in New Haven, CT.

A full remembrance will follow in the January issue.

Notice of Passing

Etta Dugan, 94, passed away in late November. Etta lived in Monterey for over fifty years.

Her full obituary will follow in the January issue.



Our post office received a fresh coat of paint in November.

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Remembrance Elliot Small

Elliot Small of Newton and Monterey, Massachusetts passed away on October 10, 2020 from cancer after a short illness.

Born in 1945, Elliot grew up in Baltimore, MD and settled in Boston, MA after graduating from Boston University (BU) in 1967. At BU, he was active in the movement against the Vietnam War and later devoted his career to the labor movement. During his over forty-year career in labor, he worked for the International Union of Ladies Garment Workers (IL-GWU), the National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees (1199), the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Amalgamated Clothing and Textiles Workers Union (ACTWU), the Massachusetts Nursing Association (MNA), and finally, the Massachusetts Teacher Association (MTA), from where he retired.

In addition to his commitment to labor, Elliot was a man of many passions and wonderful humor. He loved music of all types and had a special place for his favorite, Bob Dylan. Elliot never missed a day at the piano, and after retirement achieved his lifelong dream of joining a band, The Circuit Breakers, where he sang and played the keyboard. He remarked that the fans looked a little different at his age and would often joke that he was waiting for the day when someone would throw Depends on stage. Elliot was also a fierce Scrabble player and at any given time had multiple games going. A part-time resident of Monterey for the last twenty-two years, Elliot was happiest out on the lake, and one of his favorite ways to spend an afternoon was on the boat playing Scrabble.

Other passions included reading, hiking, biking, skiing, traveling, and enjoying the arts, such as Tanglewood,





Elliot and Ika with grandkids Mina and Moshe Reif-Caplan on Elliot's birthday in 2018.

museums, and plays. He always found time for his friends and enjoyed many close, long friendships, and his community in the Berkshires in particular was a source of great joy and support. Elliot began an active spiritual quest in the early 1990s and followed a Buddhist path of daily meditation, sangha participation, and commitment to engaging in right behavior.

Last, and most of all, Elliot loved his family and deeply enjoyed his role as "Grandpa." He leaves behind a loving family and friends, including his wife, Friderika (Ika); daughters Rachel DellaCroce and Rebecca Small, and husband Steve Aldeus; stepdaughter Jessica and husband Benjamin Reif-Caplan; sister Carolyn Shargel and her husband Martin; and grandchildren Jake and Nick DellaCroce, Marcus Aldeus, and Mina and Moshe Reif-Caplan.

—Jessica Reif-Caplan



Berkshire Children's Chorus Annual Appeal

For thirty years you have known us for our voices. What you might not know quite as well is what happens "behind the scenes," where the children in the chorus develop confidence, leadership, and cooperation skills, as well as friendships and mentoring relationships.

This fall, with our voices temporarily quiet due to the pandemic, we have brought this aspect of our work to the forefront by developing a series of virtual events called "Take the Lead!" that connects our current chorus members with accomplished chorus alumnae such as Dani Dillon, a leader in the NYC food world, and Rory Hammond, an education artist at Shakespeare & Company.

Choristers who participated in Rory's public speaking workshop memorized a famous speech and recited it twice during the workshop, the first time with no instruction and the second time after learning a series of warm-ups from the Linklater Voice Method.



Bella, who is in 6th grade, described her experience this way: "The first time I delivered the speech I was trying to build up confidence in myself and look really confident, but I was actually so nervous. The second time I really felt that there was confidence."

In January, chorus members will explore theater games for teamwork, leadership, and fun with Madeleine Maggio, a 2008 graduate of the chorus.

These experiences are helping to sustain our chorus community, expanding our young

Contributions for November

Julie & Jim Johnston
Jane Allen
Sam Estreicher
Lee Myers
Melinda Olds
Stephanie & Michael Sloane
Roberta & Peter Weiss
Kevin West

Contributions can be sent to Monterey News, PO Box 9, Monterey, MA 01245.

singers' horizons, creating new connections, and sparking quite a bit of laughter.

To learn more about the Berkshire Children's Chorus, to watch a video or listen to some audio tracks ("Hear Us Sing"), go to Berkshire Childrens Chorus.org.

Your tax-deductible donation this holiday season will help us continue the momentum of Take the Lead! into 2021. But more importantly, it will secure the future of the chorus for when the pandemic is over. Donations by check can be sent to: Berkshire Children's Chorus, PO Box 18, Sheffield, MA 01257, or you can make donations online by credit card or Paypal by selecting "Donate."

We cannot wait to sing for you again. It will be such a sweet reunion.

—Alice Maggio
The Berkshire Children's Chorus

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Remembrance Mattia "Tee" Henley-Zwirz, 94

Mattia passed away in Vero Beach, Florida on Tuesday, November 10 at the age of 94.

She was born and raised in Bridgeport, CT. She was a secretary at Remington Arms, White Consolidated, and later worked for her brother Tony Ferrigno. In the midseventies, she married her second husband, Wilfred Henley, and moved to Monterey. After Wilfred died in the 90s she moved to Florida where she met and married John Zwirz. He passed away in 2008.

She was predeceased by her brother Anthony Ferrigno and Sister Marie Imbimbo. She leaves behind her son Richard (Karen), brother Robert Ferrigno (Grace), and several nieces and nephews and grand nieces and nephews, as well as special cousins and friends.

Wildlife in November and Late October

This has been a month for bird and bear sightings around Monterey, also many a black squirrel, including here at our house. They are coming for birdseed, and so are the birds. In recent days and weeks we have seen that the Red-Bellied Woodpeckers remember us well, despite a summer of our not putting out the seeds. They are noisy squawkers, handsome birds, with a big red patch on their grey heads. Some feel they should be called "Red-Headed Woodpeckers," but that name has been assigned to a different (also red-headed) species. And our big handsome grey birds do have red bellies, but these are hard to notice and subtle even when you do. The birds hold close to a vertical perch, folding up their legs so the belly is hard to see.



Over on Steven's Pond, Bonsai Cox has seen a Carolina Wren on the deck, perched on a chair, and got a good photo (above) of this lovely bird, with its characteristic eye-stripe. In the last hundred years in Massachusetts these wrens have mostly been seen over on the southeast coast, but my book (*Birds of Massachusetts*, Veit and Petersen, 1993) says breeding pairs have slowly but steadily increased in our Connecticut River valley. And here on the Hunger Mountain hillside, on a weedy bank near the front door path, we saw one ourselves in the middle of November.

Cindy and Rob Hoogs keep an eye on the waterfowl of Brewer Pond just across the road from the Lake Garfield town beach, also on the feeders and birdbath by their house on Main Road. Over there across from the beach they report Hooded Mergansers, Black Ducks, an American Wigeon, and Green-winged Teals, as well as Canada Geese and mallards, which could be called "the usual suspects."

Around home, the Hoogses have had bluebirds all month, taking baths "very entertaining," in the birdbath, and other sorts of usual suspects plus a Red-breasted Nuthatch at the feeder.



Early in November, Ron Goldfinger spotted a Barred Owl up in the trees along the Tyringham Road (above). We have been hearing these big birds around here, with their remarkable vocalizations, full of variety: moaning and groaning, soprano to basso, trills and burbles, and often the signature: "Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you."

A rare sighting came from Susie Crofut of Sandisfield who spotted an odd bird like a "scruffy-looking Rose-breasted Grosbeak," which turns out to be a Black-headed Grosbeak. I only know them thanks to having lived in Wyoming and Arizona earlier in my life, but the book (above) lists a few sightings in Massachusetts, "approximately twenty records" between 1970 and 1993. One was in Pittsfield earlier on, in 1953, and one in Stockbridge, 1972. Now we can add our own neighborhood, Sandisfield. Susie also has Evening Grosbeaks at her feeder, and folks have been writing in about these to the Berkshire Eagle's "Naturewatch." We used to have mobs of them here at our house, but not lately.

The Pileated Woodpeckers are mining the standing dead trees for insect protein, probably mainly Carpenter Ants. Ellen Coburn has seen the birds and their major excavations on trees along Beartown Mountain Road, and Michael and Maureen Banner



took a great photograph of a pileated-sculpted tree (above). Besides this, the Banners have had a bear visiting their bird feeder, which is an ingeniously-designed model that can tip over without needing to be torn to pieces, and can then be stood up again. They made it themselves, involving cement and a big plastic pot or bucket, sitting out on the lawn. The pole holding the platform feeder is set in the cement. You can stand it up again and put more seeds in, no harm done.

The Banners' neighbors on Griswold Road have told of a bear that goes high up in a tree and naps there. And up on Cronk Road (Chestnut Hill neighborhood), Julie Johnston is happy to see again her bear family of four, coming to the yard for a drink at the birdbath. The babies are growing up. Julie has a good camera and got several great photographs (below) of these old friends.



Thank you for your sightings, your news, your love of the wild.

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

Bidwell House Museum

For the Bidwell House Museum, 2020 has been a year like no other. Despite the difficulties, we have adapted as best we can and sometimes challenges can send one down new and exciting avenues. Even though the museum was unable to open for guided tours this year we have worked hard to reach the community in other ways. A new outside-the-house tour introduces the Bidwell story to anyone who visits the grounds and adds richness to a hike on the trails. Zoom talks, an admittedly intimidating prospect in March, are now a regular part of the museum's programming and have allowed us to continue history talks into the winter and to reach friends both near and far. The expansion this summer of the museum's Heritage garden, with the hard work of Ruth Green, Joe Makuc, Nadia Makuc and Marya Makuc, resulted in the harvest of close to eighty pounds of vegetables that were donated to local food banks.

As winter quiet settles onto the museum, inside the staff and board are hard at work planning for all possible 2021 scenarios. However, to continue that work throughout the winter, we need your help. In late November we sent out our annual appeal campaign letter with an update on the museum and images from the year. Please consider donating to this fundraising campaign so we can keep sharing our trails, the Bidwell story and history education with the community. In addition to our annual appeal we are also in the middle of our "12 Days of Bidwell Bidding" online auction. Running from December 1 through 12, and filled with a wonderful collection of gifts, experiences, and museum programs you can bid on, this auction will help the museum in planning for a fun-filled 2021 season. There are beautiful items for young and old, and gift certificates to local businesses, or you can donate to a museum program in someone's name, a gift that keeps on giving all year long. To donate to our annual appeal or to view the auction, go to the homepage of our website and click on the "Annual Appeal" and "Auction" links found there.

In January and February we will continue our winter history talk series

"Hidden in Plain Sight: Native Peoples and the Struggle to Recover Their History in New England," with talks on Wednesday, January 13, with Bonney Hartley, the Historic Preservation Manager for the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of the Mohicans, and on Wednesday, February 24, with Rose Miron, the Director of the D'Arcy McNickle Center for American Indian and Indigenous Studies. Head to the Events page of our website for details and to register.

As always, don't forget that the museum gardens and trails are open year round for hiking, walking your dog or even snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. We have all spent a lot of time indoors this year and winter is a wonderful time to experience the beautiful Bidwell property.

Heather KowalskiExecutive Director

Monterey News

The Monterey News is an independent nonprofit corporation dedicated to fostering communication in the Monterey community. We invite signed letters, articles, drawings, poetry, and photographs. Submissions may be sent via email to montereynews 9@gmail.com or to PO Box 9, Monterey, MA, 01245. For advertising rates or other information, contact the Editor at 413-528-4007 or email.

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How often are we told that what we're experiencing is totally without precedent? We are witnessing, it is asserted, something altogether unique. Nothing like it has ever occurred before. So noteworthy, it is destined, therefore, to "go down in history" for this very reason.

That kind of talk is all too common. The greatest scandal in history—the most powerful army assembled since the beginning of time—the most sinister conspiracy ever hatched—the worst atrocity of all time—the most impressive list of achievements ever. Everyone invokes "history" to sound serious, to add

substance to their remarks. But do they ever offer any proof, any specific evidence from the past? Do they ever consult with historians? Are they even interested in learning about those parallels the past might actually offer?

"History," when so invoked, stands mute, takes no steps to engage with the issues raised. "History" is wise for doing so, understands that such glib references to the past are merely verbal devices, argumentative ornaments, not in any way considered judgements. History is, after all, about meticulous research and considered interpretation, not overheated evidence-free rhetoric.

—Richard Skolnik

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Editor	Stephen Moore
Copy Editor	Kateri Kosek
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