

MONTEREY NEWS

January 2024 Est. 1970
Vol. LIII · Number 1



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



The Monterey Church needs new owners. See page 2. —Drawing by Bob Horvath

In an effort to create a lot of festive cheer in town hall, Melissa Noe proposed an idea to have a contest for holiday door decorations.

Holiday Door Decorations pages 18-19

“Cheese is Proof That God Loves Us.” Embrace your inner turophile and get your ideas hooping.

Monday Night Supper Club page 11

We would like to hear from anyone who would like to become involved by February 20.

Changes at the Monterey News page 20

I had absolutely no intention of buying a house. The first place we saw was the Brewer House. I didn’t even get inside before I knew I was in the best kind of deep trouble.

Who’s Who- Kevin West page 12

What a Panic’s in thy Breastie!

Tim’rous Beastie page 21

Now that the holiday gatherings are over, it is a good time to check out the library’s museum passes.

Monterey Library page 11



A thorough recruitment and interview process will help the board select the town administrator who is best fit to serve the evolving needs of the town.

TA Position pages 2-7

Efficiently manage all municipal departments, commissions, boards, and officers.

TA Job Description pages 22-23

Not in Monterey! But it will happen here if we, the citizens of Monterey, don’t step up to the plate called “service,” and help with the work.

Monterey Short of Volunteers page 8

The town clerk’s office is in need of election workers—specifically people to count votes after the polls have closed.

Election Workers page 3

It is the deepest hope of the MUCC that a person or group of people will come forward to take ownership with the goal of keeping it open in the public spirit for which the congregation has long striven.

Monterey Church for Sale page 2

Are you a quilter? Or are you interested in learning to quilt?

Quilting Group Starting page 9



Maisie is hoping for snow along with most of us!

Monterey Church for Sale

On December 10, the members of the church voted unanimously to put our building—the one on the corner of Ty-
ringham and Main—up for sale. With no small measure of sorrow, we'll do this in the new year.

This vote follows from a long series of conversations about the current state of the church, its membership, and its building. These had us realize we simply aren't able to live up to the responsibility of property ownership anymore, and our particular property is too important to let fall into disrepair.

It bears saying that the church, which is the people, will remain intact. We are an incorporated 501(c)(3) registered with the state of Massachusetts. More importantly, we, as a congregation, are a member of the United Church of Christ and have been practicing our faith together since 1750. It's hardly integral to the mission that churches should become caretakers of historic buildings, though that has become a cultural assumption—this though congregations tend to have few internal resources available for such an important task.

No doubt this news will have members of the wider community wondering what this will mean, both for endeavors that are housed in the church (the pick-up pantry, the coffee and the supper clubs) and for all stake-holders in Monterey.



—George Emmons, February 2010

That meaning isn't clear at this point. A sale could happen quickly or could be slow in coming. It could be smooth or unsettling. It is the deepest hope of the members of the MUCC that a person or group of people will come forward to take ownership with the goal of keeping it open in the public spirit for which the congregation has long striven. Ideally, the church might even be able to rent the space for our Sunday morning worship, a practice which has taken place in this sanctuary since 1850.

So, readers, if this unfortunate news sparks ideas for anyone out there, tend to those sparks until they become a warm, sustaining flame. Then, reach out to us.

—Pastor Liz Goodman

The Parish Council of the Monterey United Church of Christ: Liz Goodman, Pastor; Hannah Fries, Moderator; Sheela Clary, Treasurer; Jenny Daily, Clerk.

In My View Town Administrator Position



I have been on the Monterey Select Board for two and a half years, serving as the chair for a year and a half. There has been a full-time town

administrator the whole time. Appointing and managing the town administrator is arguably the most important function of the select board as the board relies on the town administrator to oversee the daily operations of the town, bring topics to the board that it needs to address, and offer guidance and advice to the board on those same matters.

The current town administrator's employment agreement expires in February 2024. Last August, the select board unanimously voted not to renew that employment agreement (as a six-month notice of non-renewal was called for in the contract). The board spent September and October reviewing the job description and updating it to fit the town's current and future needs. In November, the board completed a performance evaluation of the town administrator, which was summarized by town counsel and approved by the board as a composite evaluation at a board meeting. During its last meeting in November, the board unanimously voted to post this position and to recruit applicants for interview and evaluation.

Getting the Monterey News

Pick up in several locations in town.

Have it mailed free of charge.

Receive it via email.

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

Contact the *News* at

MontereyNews9@gmail.com.

P.O. Box 9, Monterey, MA 01245

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

Get IT Solutions
Software
Hardware
Networking
Smart Home Systems

support@bfcma.com 413.429.4555
bfcma.com

In December, the board weighed options for how to post and recruit for the position, and chose to utilize the Collins Center as a resource to advise the board throughout the recruitment process. The Center was hired by the select board in December as a general human resource consultant to fill the hole left by the town's departing HR director. According to the organization's own website, "The Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management is dedicated to improving efficiency, effectiveness, governance, and accountability at all levels of government, with a particular focus on state and local government. Since its establishment by the state legislature in July 2008, the talented staff of practitioners in this UMass Boston-based center have provided a comprehensive set of services to scores of the Commonwealth's cities, towns, school districts, and state agencies, as well as to a growing number of municipalities in other states."

With direction and guidance from the board, the Collins Center will be doing the initial posting and recruitment. The Center will then complete screening and initial interviews of applicants before submitting a short list of candidates to the board for further interview and consideration.

Throughout the past two-and-a-half years I have had first-hand experience with the town administrator position as it was designed and recruited by the 2020-2021 select board. It is clear to me that the town's best interest is to complete a search for candidates with the updated and re-envisioned town administrator position.

I believe that going forward it is crucial to have a town administrator who exhibits excellent leadership, impartial management, great judgment and accountability, skillful de-escalation of interpersonal conflict, the ability to tactfully deal with disgruntled employees and residents, and the tendency to unite town employees and residents over common goals. These skills and abilities were not emphasized in the job description and recruitment process that was developed by the select board in 2020-2021.

Due to the constraints of the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law and the essential nature of a select board, combined with the always changing expectations of municipal government, I think it is vital that the board be able to delegate a significant amount of its traditional authority and work to the town's administrator. This transfer of authority is essential for the smooth and efficient functioning of the town. This is not what has been achieved during the previous and current town administrator efforts. It is important to the town's future that the select board can confidently place great trust and responsibility into a town administrator. The best way to begin that process is to recruit for a candidate who will best serve the town in this re-envisioned role.

I think the select board intends to evaluate and interview eligible applicants, including the current town administrator, based on their individual merits and their strengths and weaknesses. After a recruitment process, it may be the case that the select board determines the current town administrator is the most well equipped to fit the redefined needs of the town. A thorough recruitment and interview process will help the Board select the town administrator who is best fit to serve the evolving needs of the town.

—Justin Makuc, chair
Monterey Select Board



The Town Needs Election Workers

Hello citizens of Monterey,

In 2024 federal, state, and local elections will occur (four in total). The town clerk's office is in need of election workers—specifically people to count votes after the polls have closed. By law, all ballots cast in an election must be counted without interruption immediately after the polls have closed. For federal and state elections polls are required to be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., and ballot counting cannot begin before the polls have closed.

Because we have no automated vote tabulator in Monterey all ballots must be sorted and counted by hand.

Massachusetts law requires an election worker to be registered to vote in the state, but not specifically in the community where he or she is an election worker. If you're interested in learning more, please contact me in the town clerk's office at:

Phone: (413) 528-1443, ext. 113

Email: clerk@montereyma.gov

In person: (office hours/days can be found at www.montereyma.gov under the "Town Clerk" tab)

Thank You,

—Christopher Andrews
Monterey Town Clerk



Here's to a pollinator-friendly New Year!

Stay tuned for Backyard Ecologist events

Pollinators01245@gmail.com

GLOW

A Community Exhibition

THROUGH JANUARY 20

Featuring over 30 local artists representing multiple artistic disciplines

KNOX GALLERY
Monterey Library

Knox Gallery is supported by Friends of the Monterey Library

In My View

Role of the Town Administrator



In my year and a half on the select board, it has become a bit of a trope that I am always most interested in the facts.

As a scientist, I am trained to be data driven, and I try to make sure I carefully consider all of the information before me. At this point, I think it may be critical that I share with Monterey residents some of the information that is crucial to decisions before the board regarding the town administrator position.

What is the current condition of the town?

A lot has changed in town since I became more actively involved in town politics. During my tenure on the select board, the board has worked to create a more stable and robust administrative foundation for an already pretty darn fortunate town. The town as a whole is in very good shape. We are financially solid, with a lot of attention being paid to how we can stay that way. We have a group of remarkably capable people contributing to the smooth operation of the town. And we have a town administrator, whose job is to manage the day to day business of the town.

Given the complex nature of town management, previous select boards felt the town would benefit from having someone at the management helm on a day to day

basis. The town tried hiring a part time TA. I participated on the selection committee for that first search. The hope at the time was that there would be a skilled, experienced retired TA that would be willing to serve. After all, a salary in the \$40K range was not to be sneezed at. To be kind, the applicant pool was thin. That cycle of searches repeated several times, with one person being hired and subsequently exiting the position abruptly, and another turning down the position. In the end, the select board crafted a combined full-time position of daily administrative duties and broader executive ones.

Why is the role of town administrator increasingly important?

The current board, in crafting its most recent TA job description, considered how the world around us is changing. While we continue to have a rich social atmosphere in Monterey, our population is aging with an average age of sixty-five. People value their time, and are often less willing to commit to essentially volunteer positions, especially ones which carry the weight of serious decisions. Consider our lack of applicants for the conservation commission. This is *not* just about Monterey—the decline in volunteerism is nationwide and affects every aspect of our lives. Think fire department and ambulance services. If we cannot always depend on volunteers in critical positions, then we need to have a town administrator with the wealth of skills required to keep the town on an even keel. Administrative skills are vital, as is a strong working knowledge of Massachusetts General Laws and municipal finance, but an ideal TA would also have strong financial skills and excellent people and communication skills.

What factors influenced the board's decision to advertise the position of town administrator?

I think Justin Makuc's December 5 description of the ideal qualities for a TA is a near perfect list of desirable qualities: "A town administrator who exhibits excellent leadership, impartial management, meticulous attention to detail, great judgement and accountability, skillful de-escalation of interpersonal conflict, the ability to tactfully deal with disgruntled employees and residents, and the tendency to unite town employees and residents over common goals." We have a TA who served for years as the administrative assistant to many previous boards and has a great deal of institutional knowledge about the town. In her annual review, there was significant agreement, not only between board members, but also in Ms. Noe's self-assessment, regarding both her strengths and the areas which could use improvement. There was recognition that her interpersonal skills are improving. Yet in updating the job description, the board also recognizes that we place increased importance on personnel management and interpersonal skills. And these skills can be difficult to build without consistent, positive mentorship. By advertising, we would be opening the possibility for the town of finding someone with the management training and experience to meet our evolving expectations.


What can we learn from Blandford's recent experience?

Now come the critical and worrisome details. The Town of Blandford, population 1,200 and about eighteen miles away, has some recent experience that is rather infor-



Solstice morning

—Bonsai Cox



I'm happy to do the small jobs!
(413) 528-9323

CORASHIRE CARPENTRY and HOME IMPROVEMENT

A Lifetime of Experience - Professional Results

**Repairs • Sheds • Coops • Decks • Windows
Doors • Storms • Drywall • Taping • Painting**

Monterey, MA — David Brown, Owner **HIC #199222**

mative. They too tried to find a part-time TA and found that to be an unsuccessful model. They were without a TA for approximately eighteen months, and things got rather difficult. They hired a solid candidate for close to our current TA salary. He cleaned up the mess left from the vacancy, got them onto a solid footing, and found a more lucrative position with greater advancement opportunities. Good for him. They advertised the TA position with a salary of up to \$85,000. According to my last conversation with him before he left for his new job and also before they interviewed the candidates, they had eight applicants, only one of whom had any actual Massachusetts TA experience.

The employment market is VERY different from what we have known for most of our working lives. I cannot stress this enough. And the current housing market (not just here, but throughout the United States) makes things even more difficult. At the direction of the select board, I discussed our situation and options with Mary Aicardi of the Collins Center (Umass Amherst), the town's new HR consultant. She believes that for \$100,000 we could probably get a candidate fresh out of graduate school, but probably not one with any significant experience. Our town is lovely and bucolic, but frankly, someone with the ambition to attend graduate school for a degree in management or finance (not to mention the monetary investment they made to get it), probably also has the ambition to use this as a stepping stone to a more prominent position with a still higher salary (see previous paragraph). Nationally, job tenure is generally eighteen months to two years.

How much would we have to offer someone with significant experience and both fiscal and management skills to work in a small town with expensive housing in order to earn their long-term commitment?

If we want any hope of hiring that outstanding candidate, we have to start by coming together as a town in a special town meeting to commit to a significantly higher salary. We cannot in good conscience hire someone at that higher salary unless we get town approval first, and anything less is very likely to fail. During my tenure on the select board, we have worked very hard to improve the regulatory structure of the town, and to do it in a very open and above-board way, to do it thoughtfully and respectfully. We have tried to heal some of the division in town. If the current board wishes to make a substantial change in how we envision the running of town hall, and those changes will significantly affect both the operations of the town (presumably for the better) and town finances for years to come, then we should present that to the Town for their consideration.

What can we do to increase our chances of keeping a strong candidate and maintaining vital institutional knowledge?

I prefer to be positive about moving forward, but I confess that I have less optimism than my fellow select board members about finding an outstanding candidate with that complete list of skills, and foundational administrative ones as well, who will commit to working long-term in Monterey for a salary we can afford. My biggest concern is that the job will become a

revolving door, a stepping stone for people looking to advance their careers, with no roots in the area and no commitment to the town. I think we can take thoughtful steps to craft the position to encourage longevity, as well as to make the town more resilient to administrative change, but we ignore these realities at the town's peril. For example, we could be flexible about how many days the TA will work in town hall or even how many work days are required to fulfill their work week. And I think we must seriously consider creating a second position in town governance, call it a town secretary or executive assistant, to deepen our bench and allow for the maintenance of institutional knowledge in town hall, and allow the TA to focus on those higher level managerial, team-building and financial responsibilities we believe are important.

Perhaps most importantly, no matter who ends up as our town administrator, we need to commit to supporting that individual as a town, both personally and professionally. We need to make sure that they can grow in the position, because this will serve the town as well. And we need to do that as a community.

—Susan Cooper, member
Monterey Select Board

Editor's Note: In My View provides individual board members an opportunity 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 board.

Thai Yoga Bodywork

Local
References



Sliding
Scale

with

KIT PATTEN

Lotus Palm School Certified

*"The best massage I ever had." – E.D.,
Monterey*

413-528-3798

Karen Shreefter Landscape Design

*Working with clients to create
captivating landscapes & gardens*



413.528.1387

karen@kslandscapedesign.com
www.kslandscapedesign.com

Letters

Keep Noe as Town Administrator

Recently, the select board declined to renew our town administrator contract with Melissa Noe. Instead, it asked her to stay on as an at-will employee while it considered seeking a possible replacement. When this issue came on the agenda, many citizens petitioned the select board to reject that course of action. And at the meeting, the posting of Melissa's job was strongly opposed by almost all of the town department heads and numerous citizens.

Nevertheless, after a brief and unenlightening discussion by the select board, its members voted to conduct the search. Subsequently, it hired the Collins Institute to perform secret interviews and recommend candidates for the job. The Collins Institute indicated that the process could cost the town as much as six to ten thousand dollars and that in this market the proposed town administrator salary would have to be increased substantially.

Why is the select board pursuing this course? That is really hard to say. It most certainly is not because the TA's conduct provides cause for firing under the Monterey Town Employees' Manual, and it is not because she has failed to perform any of her duties. Indeed, all that can be gleaned from the select board members' public remarks is that there might be someone else out there who might be better.

That is a dangerous principle on which to base replacement of an employee. Why? Because it sends a message to all town employees that no matter how hard and well they work, they may be replaced on their boss's whim. That principle is a morale killer. And, to say the least, it is contrary to the spirit of Monterey.

What is the condition of Monterey's government? One of Berkshire County's most admired town administrators, Mark Webber, thoroughly studied the issue in 2020. He reported: "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."

And what of Ms. Noe's role? Mr. Webber, as requested, focused much of his attention on the performance of her duties. He described Noe as "dedicated, knowledgeable in the myriad of town government functions and fully appropriate in her interactions with staff, officials and the public." He noted that Mark Pruhenski, Great Barrington's Town Manager, wrote "that Melissa can handle the day to day operations of the town, and I think she's your best bet for longevity too. She's clearly committed to the town and has the skills and ability to be successful."

After also reviewing a 2017 report from the highly respected former Williamstown Town Manager, Peter Fohlin, who wrote very approvingly of Noe's administrative skills, Mr. Webber concluded: "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."

Select boards have never posted a well-functioning department head's job simply because there might be someone better out there. The town administrator is entitled to the same treatment and respect.

The decision to make Melissa Noe town administrator was submitted to the regular town meeting three years ago. We, the people, voted nearly unanimously in her favor. Nothing has changed since then, and the select board should accept the people's judgment on this issue. (See note #2.)

Stop the posting, with all its divisiveness, and let's continue with a stable government.

—Don Coburn

Former select board member

Editor's Notes:

1. Coburn's letter references a report on town hall functioning written by Mark Webber. This report, along with other reports, is available on the select board page of the town website.

2. In Coburn's letter he states near the end: "The decision to make Melissa Noe town administrator was submitted to the regular town meeting three years ago. We, the people, voted nearly unanimously in her favor."

At town meetings there is no voting for any individuals to hold any position within the town, and in any case, the town administrator position is not elected. Coburn was asked for clarification. It must be noted that at the time of that town meeting Noe was already months into her three-year contract as town administrator.

Coburn's response recounted from the May 1, 2021 annual town meeting budget discussion concerning the town administrator salary line item, and concluded with this statement:

"But the bottom line is that the town meeting approved the \$75,000 and deleting the \$54,194. While the town meeting did not vote on Melissa's name, it certainly knew that it was approving her as TA with the new salary. So I stand by my statement."



Fine Garden Care | (413) 207-1281
Embracing the Native Beauty of the Berkshires
WWW.BERKSHIREGREENSCAPES.COM

Editor's Note: Don Coburn's letter asks a number of questions that can only be answered by current select board members. As the search process for filling the town administrator position is to get underway soon, I asked Coburn for permission to circulate his letter to the select board members for an opportunity to respond to his questions. He agreed, providing he can make a brief response to their responses.

Board members Justin Makuc and Susan Cooper had previously submitted their "In My View" columns, so chose not to reply to Coburn. Board member Frank Abbott did respond.

In My View Response to Coburn Letter



In response to Mr. Coburn's opinion piece, I want to reassure the residents that there has been nothing rushed or secretive about this process. This SB is striving for transparency.

It is important to not jump to conclusions or rush to judgement based on one opinion piece.

The TA position is the most important paid position in the town and should not be compared to a department head. As the top ranking employee in the organizational chart they are very much like a chief operating officer or chief executive officer.

In August, on the advice of legal counsel, the SB voted unanimously to give the TA six months' notice that the town would not be renewing the contract as written.

The SB took this end of a first-time contract, with no renewal clause, as an opportunity to review the contract, the job description, and most importantly, the evolving needs of the town.

In September and October the SB rewrote the job description. The new job description is considerably different and much more detailed from the old job description, and reflects the changing needs of the town.

The SB's responsibility is to ensure the town has the right leadership, financial acumen, and staffing needs to meet both our current needs and the future.

In early October the part-time human resource employee announced she was

leaving at the end of the month and the SB spent the month discussing in which direction to go, settling on an HR consultant. Interviews were held on November 7 during a SB meeting and a decision was made to hire Mary Aicardia from The Collins Group who will work on an as-needed basis. There was nothing secretive about hiring The Collins Group.

In November, each SB member completed a multi-page appraisal of the TA's job performance and met with her individually to discuss it. The form was very detailed and covered much more than day to day tasks, many of which the TA does very well. Town counsel took the three evaluations and created a composite. The SB reviewed the composite and, in my opinion, the composite reflected the same areas of weaknesses, strengths, and concerns. On November 28 the SB went into executive session and after an hour and forty seven minutes (not brief) of discussion, the SB voted unanimously to proceed with posting the position. This decision was made after great thought and deliberation about what is best for Monterey both now and as we move forward, not "because there might be someone better out there."

As our HR consultant, Mary Aicardia will lead the effort to post the position, screen applicants, and recommend candidates to the SB for interviews. This is in no way secretive; it is standard operating procedure for the HR person to screen applicants, and provides confidentiality for those who apply until they are considered finalists.

The only goal of this process is to do what is best for the town in meeting its future needs.

If you have any questions about any of this process, watch the SB meetings, read the minutes, and ask questions.

—Frank Abbott
Select board member

Editor's Note: To read an abbreviated version of the TA job description, see pages 22-23.

Rebuttal to Abbott's Response

Frank Abbott, the only select board member to comment, mostly describes at length how transparent the select board has been during its consideration of possibly replacing Melissa. In doing so, he answers "charges" of lack of transparency which I did not make, with the sole exception of my criticizing the decision to let Collins Institute review candidates outside of public view, which means without involvement of a citizens' committee.

Abbott's claim that the old and new job descriptions are "considerably different," with the new one being "much more detailed" doesn't hold water. The new one is better organized but it is otherwise indistinguishable from the old one. And it certainly doesn't reflect what he calls "the changing needs of the town," a concept which he fails entirely to explain.

The select board's entire approach to this critical issue is contrary, I say again, to the spirit of Monterey.

— Don Coburn

Former select board member

KWIK^{Color} PRINT
INCORPORATED
EXPERIENCE • SPEED • QUALITY

- Full Color Digital Printing
- Full Color Envelope Printing
- Large Format Printing
- High Speed Copying
- Laminating
- Inline Bookletmaking
- Perfect Binding
- Folding
- Perforating
- Mailing Services
- Graphic Design Services

35 Bridge Street
Great Barrington, MA 01230
Ph: 413.528.2885 Fx: 413.528.9220
typesetting@kwikprintinc.com
www.kwikprintinc.com

Monterey Short of Volunteers

Not in Monterey! But it will happen here if we, the citizens of Monterey, don't step up to the plate called "service," and help with the work.

I quote entirely from an essay I like:

We received a letter from the Writers' War Board the other day asking for a statement on "The Meaning of Democracy." It presumably is our duty to comply with such a request, and it is certainly our pleasure.

Surely the Board knows what democracy is. It is the line that forms on the right. It is the don't in don't shove. It is the hole in the stuffed shirt through which the sawdust slowly trickles; it is the dent in the high hat. Democracy is the recurrent suspicion that more than half of the people are right more than half of the time. It is the feeling of privacy in the voting booths, the feeling of communion in the libraries, the feeling of vitality everywhere. Democracy is a letter to the editor. Democracy is the score at the beginning of the ninth. It is an idea which hasn't been disproved yet, a song the words of which have not gone bad. It's the mustard on the hot dog and the cream in the rationed coffee. Democracy is a request from a War Board, in the middle of a morning in the middle of a war, wanting to know what democracy is.

E. B. White on "The Meaning of Democracy"

The New Yorker, July 3, 1943

This is all by way of asking about service. Service to our town. I don't become too involved in national politics by knocking on doors in Kansas City or Toledo as the federal election approaches. I prefer to see and hear the wheels turning closer to home. Service to our country was part of my growing up. Helping a parent in the curtained voting booth; being inspired by a President or two; the nation asking citizens for service in the Peace Corps.

It seems that Monterey is once again having difficulty getting its work done. It's not a difficulty with dissent, rather a lack of participants. The work of many boards and committees are in a large sense unfunded mandates by the state. They are not up for discussion. The wording is something like "a Town or City *shall* appoint a conservation commission." The word "shall" doesn't

leave much room for wiggle on Monterey's part. If there is no conservation commission then the select board *shall* carry out the duties of the commission. Let's see how well that might work.

There are elected offices and board positions as well as appointed seats on other active commissions or committees. Monterey needs more of you to engage and help get the business of the day done. It's a chance to engage with other citizens, your neighbors here. It's a chance to take some classes the town is able to pay for. It's also a opportunity to shape the future of Monterey.

My experience of shaping the future was made easier as we had a town-wide survey in the 1990s by the town of the issues and actions that appealed to our citizens.

The other thing to remember is that sitting on a board or commission is not a lifetime commitment. It is important to understand a term of service exists and then work on the issues at hand. Who knows, as the period ends you may feel interested enough to re-up your service and commit to another period.

Have a discussion with the select board or with the town administrator or with a board or commission member or chair. Find out what's needed and see if you'd like to participate, to join the work of town hall.

Thank you.

—Chris Blair

Editor's Note: For the range of town service opportunities, see the list below. You can begin to learn about them by going to Montereyma.gov. From the "About" tab on the home page, click on "Appointed & Elected Town Officials" to see the full list, who is currently serving, and the terms of service. You can also learn more specifically about the roles by looking under "Boards & Committees." (#) refers to the number needed in each position.

Appointed Service Opportunities

(not including employees)

- Care of Soldiers' Graves
- Civil Defense Coordinator
- Conservation Commission (7)
- Council on Aging (7)
- Cultural Council (8)
- Election Warden
- Election Workers (13)
- Fence Viewer

- Field Driver
- Fire Department volunteers
- Historical Commission (7)
- Lake Garfield Working Group (7)
- Materials Recycling Facility Rep-

resentative

- Memorial Day Parade Committee (5)
- Monterey Community Center Committee (13)
- Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee (9)
- Registrar of Voters (4)
- Renewable Energy Working Group (5)
- Town Clerk
- Transfer Station Committee (3)
- Transportation Advisory Committee
- Veterans Memorial Committee (2)
- Veterans Service Officer
- Veterans Agent

Elected Service Opportunities

- Board of Appeals (5)
- Board of Assessors (3)
- Board of Health (3)
- Bylaw Review Committee (5)
- Cemetery Committee (3)
- Constable
- Finance Committee (3)
- Library Trustee (6)
- Moderator
- Parks Commission (5)
- Planning Board (7)
- Select Board (3)
- SBRSD School Committee Representative
- Tax Collector
- Tree Warden

Jerrold N. Raab, DDS PC

**Dentistry For
The Entire Family**

**New Patients
Welcome**

Emergencies Welcome

549 ROUTE 23
MONTEREY

All Phases of Dentistry

528-6520

Monterey Community Center Calendar

Weekly, bi-weekly and monthly activities:

Mondays:

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

Simple meditation, all are welcome, 3:30 to 4:45 p.m.

Monday, January 22: Cookbook club, 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. Fourth Monday of the month. Register by emailing WendyGJ@gmail.com. See page 27.

Tuesdays:

Chair yoga, 10 to 11 a.m.

Singing with Vikki True, 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

Bridge and pitch, 1 to 4 p.m.

Mahjong, 7 to 9 p.m.

Wednesdays:

January 24: Council on aging's "GameTime!" 2 to 4:30 p.m. Board games with coffee, tea and snacks.

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

January 31: Transformational breathwork, 6 to 7:30 p.m. Suggested fee \$30.

Thursdays:

January 4: Darn yarners at 1 p.m. First Thursday of the month.

January 11 and 25: Chorus with Oren Rosenthal, 4:15 p.m.

January 18: Wellness check, 2 to 3 p.m., third Thursday of the month, with Tritown Health nurses. Flu vaccines and checkups including blood pressure, pulse, and blood oxygen levels. No charge for Monterey residents. Please RSVP to Jill at 413-717-7209. *Minimum of five people required.*

January 18 and 25: Open Studio with Beth Hoffman, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Please bring your own art supplies. See at right.

Fridays:

Super gentle yoga, 10 to 11 a.m. Please register by emailing james-boneparth76@gmail.com.

Bridge, 1 to 4 p.m.

Saturdays:

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

Ping-pong, 2:30 p.m.

Sundays:

AlAnon family group meeting, 9 a.m.

January 14 and 28: Music jam sessions with Mark Andrews, 6 to 8 p.m. All skill levels are welcome, instruments and singers. If you are interested, please contact Mark Andrews at mcccjamgroup@gmail.com.

Special Events

Saturday, January 13: Pie Crust 101: "It's Basically Crust" Introductory pie crust workshop with Hanna Jensen, church basement, 1 to 4 p.m. \$40. Limited to eight people. Pre-registration and deposit required. Please email monterey-communitycenter@gmail.com for more details and to sign up.

Wednesday, January 17: Monterey Quilters, 1:30 to 3 p.m. See at right.

Saturday, January 20: Pie Crust 2.0: "Pastries in a Pinch: Pie crust isn't just for Pie," with Hanna Jensen. From 12 to 3 (ish) p.m., church basement. \$40. Limited to eight people. Pre-registration and deposit required. Please email montereycommunitycenter@gmail.com for more details and to sign up.

Wednesday, January 31: Grief support, 2 p.m., in the Monterey Library. Co-sponsored by the Council on aging. Refreshments will be provided.

You can find more information on events at our website ccmonterey.org, by calling (413) 528-3600, or emailing monterey-communitycenter@gmail.com.

—R.J. Supa, MCC Director,
and Nancy Kleban

Open studio at the Community Center

Drop in to draw, paint, or collage in the company of others. All skill levels welcome to these friendly gatherings. Specific help on technique, if desired, is available from those attending. Still life subjects, and refreshments, provided for you to use as motivation. Please bring your own art supplies and personalities.

We will meet the last two Thursdays of the month, so January 18 and 25, 10 a.m. to noon. For questions, email me at bhainteriors@gmail.com.

Thanks so much!

—Beth Hoffman

Quilting Group Startup

Are you a quilter? Or are you interested in learning to quilt? A few of us would like to start a new monthly quilting group at the Monterey Community Center. Each month members could bring a quilt to show and share any special techniques they used. Members could take turns teaching a quilting skill to others. Experienced quilters could teach beginning quilting methods to members who already have some sewing skills. The group would mostly be informal—no officers, no committees, no money involved.

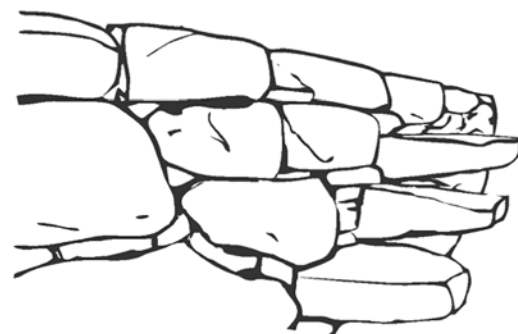
If this sounds like your idea of a good time, please e-mail Linda Neilson at lindarneilson@gmail.com and let me know your thoughts.

—Linda Neilson

MERCIER STONE

FINE STONE MASONRY
BRICK OVEN
FIREPLACE
HARDSCAPE
RESTORATION

508.560.7844
MERCIERSTONE.COM



Catching up with the Council on Aging

Happy new year to all! The Monterey Council on Aging board thanks the generous individuals who have donated their time and ideas to the CoA over the last year. We are also so grateful to those in our community who have attended our events. We were finally able to return to normal activity in 2023 which felt wonderful. But we are always looking for ways to increase attendance and to try trips and events. With that in mind, stay tuned for an email announcement of a planning meeting, which will include discussion of forming a "Neighbor Brigade" if people are interested.

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

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

—Kathryn Roberts
Outreach Coordinator/
Administrative Assistant

Coming Events

Saturday, January 6: Verdi's Opera "Nabucco" at the Mahaiwe, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Come with friends and enjoy some beautiful music and gorgeous sets with this high-definition performance from the Metropolitan Opera in New York City. \$25 at the door. And maybe we'll have time for coffee after in Great Barrington.

Monday, January 8: Monthly council board meeting at town hall, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. The agenda is posted on the town website, montereyma.gov, under "Boards & Commissions." All are welcome.

Wednesday, January 10: Movie night at the Monterey Library at 7 p.m., showing *Barbie*, which needs no introduction. Come for a fun time and to see what all the hubbub is about! The council will serve light refreshments.

Thursday, January 18: Monthly lunch at Pleasant and Main, 1063 Main Street in Housatonic at noon. Call Kathryn at the number above to save your seat at the table.

Wednesday, January 24: Game Time! at the community center from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Bring your favorite games or play one that's new to you. Fun for all ages and a great way to spend an afternoon with friends or make new ones. The council will serve light refreshments.

Ongoing Services

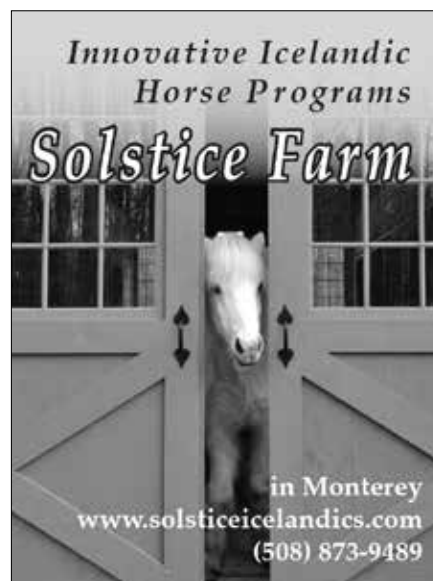
Parkinson's Support Group: This month's meeting is on Thursday, January 4, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., at the Monterey Library. Caregivers are encouraged to attend. Call Kathryn at the number above if you'd like more information.

Transportation: For trips to Great Barrington, Sheffield, Egremont, Stockbridge, and Pittsfield (Pittsfield is for medical only, Monday and Wednesday), call (413) 591-3826. The hours are Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Priority is given to seniors and people with disabilities.

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

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

—Lin Saberski, chair
Council on Aging



Burning Permits in Monterey

This year the Monterey Fire Department will be using an online application for burning permits. *The online route for getting a permit is much more effective.*

To obtain a permit go to bcburnpermits.com, read the regulations, and follow the section titled "How to obtain a permit." If you cannot obtain a permit online, you can call (413) 445-4550 (Berkshire County Sheriff's office) and follow the prompts. This is also only available from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Make sure you print out your permit and keep it with you when burning.

Permits will be available from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. daily, because of DEP regulations, when weather conditions allow for open burning. The DEP requires fires to be started after 10 a.m. and be extinguished by 4 p.m. for air quality purposes. Open burning season is from January 15 to May 1.

Rules

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

People should visit: mass.gov/, and search for "open burning safety" for more detailed information.

—Shawn Tryon, chief
Monterey Fire Department



Monterey Library

Books, Museums, and Things

Museum Passes

Now that the holiday gatherings are over, it is a good time to check out the library's museum passes. Not all the museums are open in the winter, but some are and the passes will get you in for free or at a discount. We only have a limited number of passes and there are varying numbers of people per pass for each venue, so please call or stop by to see which ones are available. Museums open in the winter include the Berkshire Museum, The Clark Art Institute, Mass MOCA, Norman Rockwell, and the Springfield museums which include the Dr. Seuss Museum, Art Museum, and the Springfield Science Museum.

Things

The library has slowly been working on its library of "things" collection. We have added some of these "things" occasionally, but hope to expand. In addition to visiting museums, another way to pass the winter is to take out a jigsaw puzzle. We have a number of them to lend. If you always wanted to learn how to play the ukulele, we also lend those out. In the library's strategic plan survey, many of you expressed a desire to be able to borrow "things" that you would use, but don't want to own. It is similar to borrowing a book. Think about what things you would borrow, whether it be to complete a once-a-year cleaning project or recreational equipment when family visits, or anything else you might imagine. Feel free to add to our current suggestion list that we started from the survey. The Friends of the Library will be helping us acquire these "things" which we hope our patrons will be able to use. What "things" would you like to be able to borrow? Let us know; montereylibrary@gmail.com.

Libraries were founded on the principle that everyone does not need to own a copy of every book, and many libraries take that to mean that everyone should have access to the collection. Libraries reduce waste. If you only read a book once, and don't want to keep the copy, why not borrow it from the library? While libraries



Hanna Jensen

Monday Night Supper Club

Godt nyttår (Happy New Year)!

"Brupper" last month was truly spectacular, it was by far my favorite theme yet—the melding of breakfast, lunch, and dinner was *chef's kiss.* We had just over thirty diners, all contributing tasty & tastefully prepared delectables from frittatas to french toast, lox to latkes, strata to stollen, and banana bread to blintz. A great name for this month's theme would've been "The Blitz of the Blintz" but I didn't want it to seem too exclusive.

With exclusivity in mind, I'd like to slap a disclaimer on the name for this month's theme. It has "God" in it, and—I one-hundred percent do not intend to offend—by "God" I mean any kind of higher power or spiritual force which one may believe. I encourage inclusivity and deflect intolerance.

Speaking of intolerance, I let the idea for next month's theme digest for more than a hot minute before I decided to go with it. Lactose is something that is intolerable to some for obvious reasons, there

were founded for books, they have grown to have collections of many types of media. Why not add "things" to the collection?

—Mark Makuc

Monterey Library director



Hanna Jensen

are also allergies and those who simply do not consume animal products. However, with my knowledge of the amount of meat, eggs, and fromage at our last dinner came the justification for our theme this month: "Cheese is Proof That God Loves Us." Embrace your inner turophile and get your ideas hooping, because this dinner will take place in the church basement on Monday, January 8, at 6 p.m. Godspeed, and let the culture be with you!

If you would like to attend, please RSVP to supperclubmonterey@gmail.com by Sunday, January 7.

—Hanna Jensen

Who's Who Kevin West

Kevin West is a man who wears many hats and somehow seems to balance them all with a buoyant ease. He's an author, journalist, travel writer, photographer, avid cook, and gardener. Most fortunately for Monterey, he's now added tree warden and pig farmer to the resume. Kevin has figured out how to make a career—and a good life—from his passions. He sat down recently for a chat with Laura Litwin, his friend and neighbor.

Laura: Let's start this back at the beginning. You grew up on a farm in eastern Tennessee.

Kevin: The farm was in rural Blount County, about an hour's drive from Knoxville. My dad's parents, Gran & Papa, had the farm. My mom's family were hillbillies from the Chilhowee mountains. My mom raised me by herself, working for IBM, and we moved around a lot. The joke at that time was IBM stands for "I've been moved." Summers we would get to go home, and by that we always meant the farm in Tennessee.

Laura: Can you give us a sense of how the farm and your family helped form who you are?

Kevin: Everything was put in place for me there. My interests, vocation, ethics, even my sense of our place in the cosmos. My grandparents were more religious than I am now but they instilled in me a sense of a larger creator. Being on the farm with them, at the table with them, in the woods with them, and at church with them absolutely informed who I am. As an adult, I've lived in some very exciting cit-



Laura Litwin

ies—New York, Paris, Los Angeles—but it's here in the Berkshires that I've truly found my footing. Here I can try to bring my everyday life in line with the values of my upbringing.

Laura: Tell us how you came to live in Monterey.

Kevin: In the fall of 2015, I was visiting friends who live in Cheshire. At this point I had been living in LA for close to twelve years and had spent maybe a total of sixteen hours in the Berkshires. Nothing. But it was October and the leaves were changing and the first snow flurries were coming through, and if you don't fall in love with the Berkshires then you either don't have eyes or a heart.

My friends live in an antique house which they knew I loved and they asked if I wanted to go see some other old homes on the market. I had absolutely no intention of buying a house. The first place

we saw was the Brewer House. I didn't even get inside before I knew I was in the best kind of deep trouble. The antique house, the maple trees, the pastures, it all reminded me so much of our family's part of Tennessee. There is something so familiar about the lay of the land here. It felt immediately like home. I've never had another experience like this before. I was completely done for!

Laura: Almost three hundred years of storied history in your home. Any ghosts?

Kevin: Maybe just one thing. From the start, the house felt so happy and full of life, but the back bedroom seemed different. It felt private, as if it were a room that wasn't yet mine to claim. In Paris, I had lived in an old apartment and learned about a ritual that was supposed to help with asserting yourself in a space. You put a bowl of salt in the corner and an image of an angel somewhere else in the room. You burn a candle and respectfully, but firmly, you occupy the area. Well I did all that and very quickly the sense that the room belonged to someone else vanished.

My sensitivity to the home's former occupants is more literal than spiritual. The longer I live in the house the more



SunBug Solar

Ned Wilson · New Marlborough, MA

NABCEP PV Technical Sales # TS-102415-004308

NABCEP PV Installation # PV-041115-004308

413 854 1453

ned.wilson@sunbugsolar.com

www.sunbugsolar.com



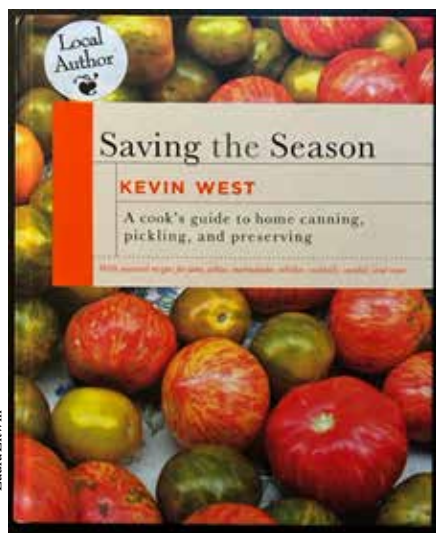
We are a detail-oriented, full-service, hands-on contracting and building company located in Monterey, MA. From foundation to finish, we provide the know-how to 'exceed your expectations.' Whether you want a built-in bookcase, a new sunroom, family room, or your new country home, our crew delivers the craftsmanship and courtesy you expect and deserve.



PO Box 567
155 Main Road
Monterey, MA 01245
(413) 528-1260

bottomlinebuilders.com
Scott Jensen

scott@bottomlinebuilders.net
Massachusetts CSL 62673 - Massachusetts HIC 133864



grateful I am to be one of its many caretakers. Being part of a living history that has unfolded over 270 years is now one of the things I love most about it.

Laura: Three years before you moved here, your cookbook was published to real praise. Dedicated to your farming grandparents, *Saving the Season: A cook's guide to home canning, pickling, and preserving tells rich stories alongside its recipes*. The reader learns about your family's food traditions, supported by serious research and stunning photographs. Tell us a bit about the journey here.

Kevin: I was working in Los Angeles for W Magazine, which meant interviewing celebrities and reviewing five-star hotels. That probably sounds glamorous and of course it was at times, but I was feeling pretty empty about it. I wasn't living up to the values of my grandparents.

Cooking for friends was one of the main things giving me joy then and I'd shop at the phenomenal farmers' market in Santa Monica. One day I bought a flat of strawberries, vaguely thinking I'd make shortcake for dessert. I was walking back to my car, balancing the flat on my shoulders and realizing wow, I have a lot of strawberries. And I thought about my Gran's strawberry jam. Gran was gone by then so I couldn't discuss it with her, but I was a confident cook, how hard could it be to make jam?

Well, no surprise, my jam was horrible and it made me miss my Gran even more. But it got me started down the rabbit hole of mastering home canning and preserving. First there was a blog and then that

became a book. For the first time in my life I was writing for myself, and best of all, about my family too. The day I learned Knopf would publish the book was one of the best days of my life.

Laura: You've travelled all over the world, often on writing assignments for magazines. What have been some of the more transformative experiences for you?

Kevin: I was sent on a safari in Tanzania and traveled with an incredible character named Peter Jones. He's an archaeologist who had worked with the Leakeys when they discovered the hominid fossil footprints. He took us for ten days into "the back of beyond," as he called it. One morning the ground shook as if it were an earthquake. In fact, it was thousands of wildebeest in stampede, tearing across the plain. Just the most fantastic encounter.

I was able also to join a research expedition to Disko Bay, off the west coast of Greenland. The scientists were studying ice melt and we went on an ice breaker to places that were essentially impassable otherwise. If something had gone wrong, no one could have reached us. It was such an intense contrast of our insignificance as individuals, compared to the enormous collective damage we humans are doing to the ice.

Laura: Closer to home, your report in the October issue of the *Monterey News* really confirmed you are all-in on the re-

sponsibilities of tree warden. It's a serious position in a town like ours.

Kevin: I had been looking for meaningful volunteer work in town that I could do despite my travel schedule. A role that might not involve meetings I would invariably have to miss. Tree warden felt like a great opportunity. The job inevitably involves cutting down hazardous trees, but on the flip side, there's so much good stuff. I really want to focus on encouraging new planting, and what's more, protecting existing saplings along our roadways. Oak trees in particular. They're a little more salt tolerant than maples, they don't have the disease and climate change issues associated with other trees, and they're beautiful native plants.

Laura: So one last question for you. How about that chubby polka-dotted couple you're raising on your land?

Kevin: Aha yes, they are Gloucestershire Old Spot pigs and they are indeed very chubby. All summer they were so busy working on their patch and digging things up. Now that it's colder, they're sleeping a lot and staying nestled together. Nature has a way of showing us all how to slow down.

Laura: Slowing down for a spell is always good advice—but maybe also getting some pickling going on in the kitchen.

Thank you Kevin.

—Laura Litwin

BIZEN

備前

Freshest Sushi Quality Fish • Organic Vegetables
Japanese Estate Sakes • Unfiltered Dessert Sakes

On the Cutting Edge

"Where to Eat Sushi" in the Berkshires.

The New York Times

Gourmet Japanese Cuisine & Sushi Bar

17 Railroad Street, Great Barrington, Mass.

413-528-4343

Lunch Mon.-Fri. 12:00-2:30; Sat. & Sun. 12-3:00 • Dinner 7 Days 5-10

Monterey Historical Society News

Happy New Year!

As we celebrate the beginning of 2024, it is interesting to reflect back on 2023. After all, that's what history is about—reflecting the past, recent or distant, and how it affects our present and future.

Thanks to the members, the Monterey Historical Society has had an active, interesting year. We hosted twelve programs at the Monterey Library with over 250 participants. A few highlights: Barbara Swann's two talks about Montereyans in the Revolutionary War and the Civil War; Bob Rausch's talk about Will and Agnes Gould and the founding of Gould Farm; Bernie Drew's talk about the Amherst War Road aka Knox Trail; and Charlie Flint's 'What's-It?' show and tell; as well as Rob Hoogs' talks featuring old photos of Monterey, mills, and Native Americans. A special event was the Housatonic Heritage Hike in September exploring the foundations of the many mills along the Konkapot River behind the Library.

We also published monthly historical articles in the *Monterey News*.

We are looking forward to another year exploring Monterey's history and the people who have made it the town we love. Let us know if you have a topic you'd like to learn about. Or—do you have a story, photographs, or artifacts about your family's connections to Monterey? We'd love to hear about them. Please contact me or one of the other directors if you have something that you'd like to share.



George Emmons in 2015.

—Still photo from video filmed by Wendy Germain.

Coming up on Thursday, January 18, we will have a program and open house beginning at 6 p.m. in the multipurpose room of the library. People are invited to visit the historical society archives room in the basement of the Library.

At 6:30, we will play a video of an oral history interview of George Emmons from 2015. It will run about thirty-five minutes.

(Note: The Monterey Oral History project is one that the Monterey Library has been working on, headed by Mark Makuc and Wendy Germain. The historical society is hoping to work with the library to tape some additional oral histories this year.)

After the oral history film, we will convene the society's annual meeting beginning about 7 p.m. in the multipurpose

room. All interested people are invited to attend.

A few other programs we are working on for 2024: Whip factories of Westfield; Monterey camps; Lake Buel history, and more. In March, we are co-sponsoring a talk by Otis author (and sculptor) Gail Gelburd with the fascinating story about Sue Moody White, a poet and journalist in Paris during Hitler's occupation; Sue later lived and wrote in West Otis and Monterey. Stay tuned for more details.

We also are working with the library and parks commission to prepare and install a series of interpretive signs about the "Mills of Monterey" along trails on both sides of the Konkapot River on the properties of the library and Bidwell Park. We're hoping to complete the history walk this year.

We welcome everyone to participate in our programs. Our monthly talks and events are usually free, although we hope you will become a member or make a donation to support the historical society.

Thank you for your interest in Monterey's history.

—Rob Hoogs, President

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

**BERKSHIRE
PROPERTY
AGENTS.COM**

REPRESENTING BUYERS AND
SELLERS OF REAL ESTATE
IN MA, NY & CT

413 528 6800

**BUY IN THE BERKSHIRES
TO PADDLE WITH FRIENDS**



Kateri Kosek's Reading

I'd been anticipating the poetry reading Kateri Kosek gave in November at the Monterey Library since I'd first heard about it. When she came into the gallery herself, present but reserved and subtly shimmering with poetic intensity, I felt an unexpected lift to my heart. If that lift had spoken in English, it would have said, "This is going to be even better than I thought." And it was.

At first Kateri didn't seem particularly delighted to move to center stage, perhaps more comfortable with her usual-to-us background role as the *Monterey News* copy editor. But she anchored herself in the then-current display of Marilyn Orner's nature paintings that surrounded us all and literally had her back as she faced us and began.

First she read from her newer of the two books, *Vernal*, an extended, multi-layered poem about spring in a number of its guises. Then she offered us a potpourri from her longer book, *American Eclipse*. It explores eclipses of various sorts, solar, lunar, personal, political.

At the end of her reading, I bought both of Kateri's books and I've been spending time with them at home. You can enjoy the same indulgence, too. Contact her online at katerikosek.com. And give the essay linked to her site a read, too. It's the perfect way to start another winter.

—MaryKate Jordan

The Song

(*Psalm 90*: "Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom.")

Old man still trying to get down the song
of your life, searching bright stars for transcendence,
it's not by waiting in perfect silence
to hear that harmony for which you long

nor by the flight of years that you'll ascend
unbound into the open sky—to gain
a heart of wisdom—feel the seasons wane,
let youth quiet—love deeply songs that must end.

Hush, go deeper into your listening heart
where awe and wonder dwell. Don't fear to seek—
feel love's depths. Rustling trees wait for you to wake—
winds whispering songs beckoning to be heard.

It's not too late to wake to life's hushed grace,
arise, soar free into the dawn's embrace.

—Amos Neufeld

("The Song" first appeared in "arc30 2023 anthology")





Knox Gallery Opening for *Glow*

Saturday night, December 9, the Knox Gallery filled with artists, friends, and families for the opening of the gallery's annual community show, which anyone from Monterey can enter. This year's theme, *Glow*, was announced in October, and artists began to apply for the opportunity to show original work.

The energy at the opening was palpable. Many of the artists interviewed said they enjoy being a part of this particular show because they see their friends and neighbors; also, they are delighted to receive responses to their own work. Seeing how other local artists are exploring their own imaginations is an added benefit.

When asked about her interpretation of the topic *Glow*, Pauline Nault replied, "I had a painting I'd called "BLING" because of the silver streak across it." It does indeed shine!

In contrast, Grace Yen, whose "Meditation" is made from watercolor and acrylic, brought a typed statement she could share. English is an unfamiliar language for her, yet here she was, at the opening, reaching out to connect.

The community center's new manager, R.J. Supa, whose career in the art world goes deep, contributed a work in acrylic, gold leaf, and found object. He calls the piece "Untitled (Black and Without Eyes)." He quips that "It's an old cook-stove door that I found in the yard behind my house. The gold leaf is the

"gold" around the frame of the door. The acrylic is the glow-in-the-dark paint that reads "Black and Without Eyes."

Maggie Barkin, a novice applicant to art exhibitions, took the plunge with a photograph she had taken looking down the Konkapot at sunrise. She used découpage to cover the frame in order to suggest that the picture continued over the frame.

Connor Simeone submitted "Hester," a digital photograph of a horse who has been rescued.

Simone also created the poster for the show, which features one of her photographs. A new step for us: The poster features a QR code, which any aspiring entrant could snap, then easily complete the specified process in order to participate. We hope this was a successful system, as we continue to explore ways to simplify the process of assembling group shows.

Glow will be on view through January 20, and the gallery will then be closed to be repainted. *Shany Porass: Abstract Harmony:Dissonance*, opens February 2, and will be on view through March 9.

Monterey thanks Julie Shapiro, MaryPaul Yates, and Mark Makuc for keeping Knox Gallery and the winter community exhibit tradition alive. It takes the effort of numerous people to keep the Gallery going. To name a few: Kit Patton paints beautiful announcement signs for our shows; of late, Paul DePreter has been a huge help with opening receptions and other details; Cheryl Zellman has helped with several events this year; Maggie Barkin interviewed artists for comments

on *Glow*; while Connor Simone set up our twenty-first century sign-in. MaryPaul Yates writes a monthly article for the *Monterey News* and coordinates publicity for the gallery. Michael Banner and Julie Shapiro do all our installations. Most of all, we are fortunate to have many talented artists in our area. *GLOW* features the work of thirty-eight artists!

—Knox Gallery Community

Christopher J. Tryon & Associates



Perc Testing

Septic Design

Sewer & Water System Design

Residential & Commercial Site Design

Drainage Design

Structural Evaluation & Design

Retaining Wall Design

Foundation Design

Construction Layout

Driveway Design & Permitting

Scenic Mountain Act Permitting

Wetland Permitting

Field & Laboratory Testing of Construction
Materials (Concrete & Soils)

441 Main Road
P.O. Box 61
Monterey, MA 01245
413-429-4888
berkshiregeotech@gmail.com

Here's A Thought Winter Sunlight in Monterey

Seven Rays of Light to Start the New Year

What if Juana Ines De La Cruz is right? I first heard her name in conversation with a friend from Australia. "Look her up. Read her," she said. I did, and Juana Ines wrote, "Everything that you receive is not measured by its actual size, but by the size of the receiver."

Let's each ask ourselves about that. How large is my heart? How broad is my mind? How deep is my gratitude? Let your heart dwell on all that. Let your heart open to it.

And if you're not moved by Juana, maybe Einstein will open your heart. $E=mc^2$ may not look like much as literature, but it made an impact on the world of arts as well as in physics. Energy is matter speeded up; matter is energy slowed down. Everything is different forms with essentially the same essence. Let's open our hearts to that for a minute, too.



Mary Kate Jordan

Maybe you'd prefer Rilke ("Perhaps everything that frightens us is, in its deepest essence, something that wants our love.") or Ram Dass ("If you think you're enlightened, go spend a week with your family.") or Abraham Joshua Heschel ("Knowledge—like the sky—is never private property.")

How about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.? Almost anyone heading into brutality, probable incarceration, and possible death

for the nominal crime of crossing a bridge with integrity, never mind the actual motive for the simmering brutality, would probably try to gather every single bit of physical support anyone would give him during the event. But he didn't do that.

"If you can't love the people on the other side of the bridge, don't walk with me," he said. "Stay home and pray for us."

Sit with that for a moment. What do you guess you might say, speaking to people under the same circumstances? Would you make the same demand: Don't come if you can't love your enemy?

And—here it comes—in the same circumstances, what would Jesus say? There's something written down that might answer that question. It's said that, facing the most extreme moments of his life, what Jesus asked of those around him was to stay awake, even if just for an hour.

And before that, Jesus said something about the only ones with a free pass to throw stones at others are those who love the creator of everything and everyone with their whole hearts, minds and spirits. And who love their neighbors as themselves. Not "instead" of themselves. As themselves. Not just "equal to," either. Identical. At-one with.

The words aren't really intended for an abstract "themselves," either. It means ourselves: love our neighbors as much as we love ourselves. Let's allow that little bit in, too.

—Mary Kate Jordan

SUMMER CAMPS · WINTER CAMPS · WEEKEND RETREATS

Open Year Round

Sharing The Gospel Of Jesus Christ

HUME NEW ENGLAND CHRISTIAN CAMPS

413.528.3604 • hume.org/newengland
73 Chestnut Hill Road • Monterey MA, 01245

W

WEBSTER

design landscape horticulture

websterlandscapes.com 413-229-8124 Sheffield, MA

CHAIR YOGA

Monterey Community Ctr
Tuesdays
10-11 am

Receive all the benefits of yoga without getting down on the floor!

Free to Monterey residents
\$7 for those from neighboring towns
sponsored by the Monterey Com Ctr

For more information, call Connie at 928-3198

Yoga on the edge of your seat!

Holiday Door Decorations

Something was different in the first week of December in Town Hall.

In an effort to create a lot of festive cheer in town hall, Melissa Noe proposed an idea to have a contest for holiday door decorations. The goal was for doors that showed the most festive decor, or very creative, or just a classic look. The doors were judged by our select board members, Justin Makuc, Susan Cooper, and Frank Abbott.

A Tour of Town Doors

Melissa Noe's welcome window and office door were beautiful with twinkling lights and precise design. Turning around, there's the police department office with a tree topped with a police hat and stunning police badges, pine scented air, candy cane blinking LED lights on an exquisite snowflake patterned cover door design and garland circling the door. ("Over the top," says this writer!) December would never be drab again in our Monterey town offices.

The next doors to show their holiday beauty were the assessor's and clerk's office. Snowmen and a big welcome sign made the assessor's door feel warm and fuzzy. Our town clerk has a little boy and a little girl so they insisted on being part of the fun and his door had the only hand-made wreath and lovely handmade designs.

The council on aging called on two Monterey artists to bring their wrapping paper



and ribbons to make a joyful addition. Michael and Maureen Banner also decorated Melissa's hallway door to inspire our building inspector and tax office located further down the hall to get decorating. Both Don Torrico and Mari Enoch were thinking and planning. More time allowed creative imaginative designs to emerge...definitely well thought-out, more Monterey-centered doors. Don called out all the town departments on his door with graceful design. Mari, the final door to complete, shared her creative vision of the twelve days of a Monterey Christmas. She actually drove around Monterey counting things. Don't miss seeing this creative door!



Tax Collector Mari Enoch's "Gifts of Monterey" door.

The highway department was designed to look like a piece of Caterpillar tractor equipment decorated for the season. Take a peek at this on your way to the transfer station.

The community center was a sight to behold in the evening hours of darkness. LED lights abound with hand-cut snowflakes inside the entry.

The big winner was the police department, with the building commissioner's door, and the highway garage door coming right in behind in the voting. The winners each won a \$25 gift certificate to Great Barrington Bagel shop.

Enjoy seeing these home spun Monterey pieces of folk art.

—Kathryn Roberts



Left: Building Department
 Above: Assessor's office
 Right: Town administrator's hallway door
 Below: Community center inside and outside the entry.
 Photos by Maureen Banner, Kathryn Roberts, and R.J. Supa.



Providing safe, efficient, and reliable PV systems since 1985!

BPVS

60 Roberts Drive, Suite 109,
 N. Adams, MA 01247
 Tel: 413-664-0152 Email: info@bpvs.com
 www.bpvs.com
 MA CSL #73150, HIC #131996

DESIGN AND PLANNING	Christopher Blair
Residential Design Kitchen/Bath Design	Construction Management Project Representation
413.528.4960	623 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230

Changes at the Monterey News

Stephen Moore, editor and all-around manager of this paper, will be stepping down, he told the *Monterey News* Board of Directors in August. But not for a while, thank goodness. He said that his last issue will be no later than July 2024.

The board wishes to publicly acknowledge and thank Steve for his editorial and personal contributions, organizational prowess, and commitment to getting out an interesting and readable paper month after month over an amazing nearly ten-year stint. Throughout his tenure, he has tended to a myriad of details (editing, recruitment, layout, ads, calendar items, graphics, statistics, archives) while keeping an eye on the rich editorial content of each issue. He took on the job with little experience in journalism but with a broad skill set and an abiding interest in Monterey and what makes it tick.

We think the results have been extraordinary. We consider the *Monterey News* to be a gem of a community paper that gives voice to a chorus of local views, ideas, and creative expressions. Steve has amply fulfilled the vision he set for the paper: Encouraging community conversations.

Though we will miss Steve at the helm (and hope he will remain engaged in some capacity), we are exploring ways to move forward. This may require a restructuring of the paper, an expansion of the editorial team, a reshuffling of priorities—we're really not sure at this point. With the benefit of Steve's ample notice, we have some time to figure it out. We welcome your thoughts and are on the lookout for Monterey folk who share our interest in keeping our town well-informed.

The *Monterey News* has been published nearly every month for the last fifty-four years. Our aim is that it continue to serve the community for another half century—or more.

Wanted: People with a Passion for Community Journalism

The paper's board of directors intends that the character of the paper remain much as it is: inclusive, and wide-ranging, but with a focus on our community.

The process of getting out the paper month after month and its organizational structure are likely to change. Few people would want to wear all of Moore's many hats. For this reason, and because it will be good to involve more people, the board is looking for Montereyans to join our editorial team to help with the paper's production and to support its next editor.

What's important is a deep interest in the people, problems, and prospects of Monterey, an understanding of the power and potential of community journalism, and the dedication required to publish the paper month after month. There is a stipend for the editor.

Although Moore has laid out the paper and edited photos, those functions could be handled by others. Much will depend on who wants to be involved.

We would like to hear from anyone who would like to be considered by February 20. If you are interested in becoming editor or have ideas about other ways you could participate, send a note to Monterey-News9@gmail.com. Steve Moore will help a new editor learn the ropes.

—The *Monterey News* Board of Directors

Kyle Pierce, President, Cindy Hoogs,
Bonner McAllester, Steve Snyder,
Dennis Lynch, Roz Halberstadter,
Janet Jensen, and Rob Hoogs

Contributions in December

Many thanks to all these readers who responded to our fund appeal, and get the tax deduction for such a charitable contribution.

Post Office Box 9, Monterey, MA 01245 is always open for donations.

Margery & Cos Spagnoletti
Julie & Frank Kern
Lis & Virgil Stucker
Stephanie Grotz
Louise Amstead
Michael Zisser & Marsha Morton
Carol & Don Welsch
Alan & Kathryn Klingenstein
Dennis & Elaine Lynch
Susan & George Cain
Brinberg/Lundy Family
Karen Allen
Michael & Maureen Banner
Alan Zablosky & Joyce Vandemark
Steve & Linda Graves
Jeffrey Macklis & Carol Levin
Ronald Langner & Colette Bement
Monterey Coffee Club
Elaine Abrams & Jeffrey Zitsman
Michael & Laura Arnow
Meryl & Ken Blackman
Warren & Eileen Feldman
Donna Conforti & Paul Rissman
Stephen & Sharon Singer
Lynn & John Seirup
Erica & Don Stern
Marshall Messer & Rebecca Saletan
Suzanne & Tom Sawyer
Gary & Linda Rosenberg
Anna & Peter Poirier
Robert & Luanne Treado
Gary & Laurie Shaw
Michael Wilcox
Dorene Beller
Aicha Woods & David Coon
Nadine Cohen
Natalie Manzino
Janet & Hillel Maximon
Beth Hoffman & Tim Spitzer
Nancy Kleban
Andrew Somers
Anonymous

SUSAN M. SMITH

Attorney At Law

38 Mahaiwe St., Suite 1
Great Barrington
Massachusetts 01230

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



Tim'rous Beastie

What a Panic's in thy Breastie!

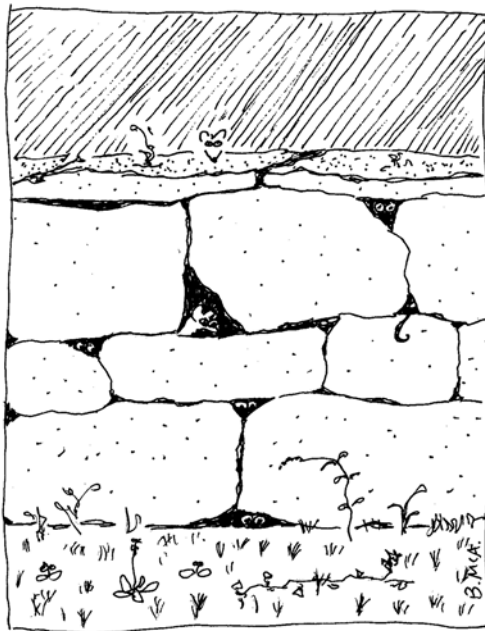
—Robert Burns, "To a Mouse"

I was tidying up the toolshed, moving a stack of wooden bushel baskets out to the sheltered place where I store the wheelbarrow and Garden Way cart for winter. I set those baskets down in the cart, which is under cover of an old pickup bed cap, a roof for our garden garage.

All set, turning away, when out scampers the panic. She is a small mouse, one we call a deer mouse, tan above and snowy white on her belly. Her Latin name is *Peromyscus leucopus*, and some folks call her a white-footed mouse. Either way, she was a mouse in big trouble thanks to me. Somewhere in that stack of baskets she had made a good warm nest for the winter, probably shredding up strings and rags and all sorts of grasses.

In his poem, Burns describes a nest: *That wee bit heap o'leaves an' stubble, Has cost thee mony a weary nibble: Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble But house or hald, To thole the winter's sleety dribble, An' cranreuch cauld!*

We live closely with these deer mice, and they get into our attics, houses, woodsheds, and any place good for shelter. Then they may find their way into the cupboards, which has led us to store everything in glass jars. We also have a cat, and when he comes rushing in the cat door with a "Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie," in his jaws we become philosophical. This comes easier if the little critter is dead, no longer in a panic or even in pain. Now it becomes catfood and



we start thinking "the law of the jungle," when actually it is our kitchen floor.

The poet has been plowing a field and turned up a mouse nest. He tells the mouse not to be dashing off in such alarm because he won't be chasing after it, also he is most sorry that "nature's social union" has been broken by "man's dominion." He wants to tell the mouse he is a fellow mortal, and in fact suffers even more than she does because the mouse is only living in the present while the man looks back at troubles and even forward to what he cannot see but does "guess and fear!"

There is much to ponder in this poem, but also in this mouse. She is perfect, I love how she moves, what she looks like, and I know she is not thinking about me. She is no poet, rather living in what we around here call "the eternal now." Or at least that's how we imagine her. The truth is, we don't know, until we perfect

our shape-shifting and spend some time in her shoes. Her white boots.

In T.S. White's *The Sword in the Stone*, young King Arthur, then known as "the Wart," gets his education from Merlin the magician. Merlin gives the Wart the lesson of spending some time as a fish in the moat of the castle, and a hawk in the mews. We may get close to this in our lives with animals, as we come to know our household familiars and even to identify with them. We also can come to know the wild animals, the birds, the insects even. This way we can be our own best teachers, by paying attention. Donald Kroodsma wrote *The Backyard Birdsong Guide*. In his introduction he writes he hopes the reader will learn to recognize birds by their sounds, to identify them, but much more than that: "to identify with birds. . ."

We used to trap our household deer mice in a live trap and carry them off to a stone wall a long walk from our house. I let them go there, gave them a little birdseed and pieces of old wool socks in case this was any help. Honestly, I don't think they lived happily ever after in that wall. I hope the one who ran for cover up by the garden went back into the tool shed nearby and made a new nest. She is welcome in there.

—Bonner McAllester

Daytime Book Group January and February

Our January meeting will be on Wednesday, January 10, at 1:30 p.m., in the Monterey Library. Our book for this month is *Tom Lake*, by Ann Patchett.

On Wednesday, February 14, at 1:30 p.m., we will be talking about *The Memoirs of Stockholm Sven*, by Nataniel Ian Miller.

—Beth Hoffman



2024 Town Administrator Job Description

Editor's Note: The Monterey Select Board has spent time over the previous few months developing a new job description for a town administrator. Helping with this has included our human resource people and the town counsel. What follows is an edited version of the actual text for the purpose of brevity, but still giving residents a sense of the job description. For a full reading, go to Montereyma.gov, and request a copy.

Position Overview

Under the direction and leadership of the Select Board of the Town, the TA is entrusted with daily oversight of Town department activities and staff, and coordination with all the departments and committees not in direct control of the SB.

The TA keeps the SB informed about departmental activities and initiatives; identifies problems and policies that require SB action. Advises the SB on recommended actions and policies; researches, analyzes, and recommends changes in Town policies, personnel, systems and procedures, and generally works in partnership with the SB toward a goal of effective professional management. On occasion, either as requested or proactively, the TA supports and advises various boards and committees in matters of activities, initiatives, or policy formulation. As the senior member of the Town's professional staff, the TA leads and facilitates the work of the Town's operating activities to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of Town services.

Supervision Required: The TA is appointed by the SB and functions under its jurisdiction and policy direction in accordance with town bylaws, policies and procedures, state and federal statutes.

Confidentiality: Employee has complete access to all municipal confidential information in accordance with the State Public Records Law. The position is entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring the strict confidentiality of all municipal information, as mandated by the State Public Records Law, and must exercise the utmost discretion and care when handling such sensitive data.

Supervisory Responsibility: The employee is accountable on a Town-wide basis for the success of programs accomplished through others under their supervision. Analyzes program objectives, reviews work operations, estimates and allocates the financial and staff resources required, including recommendations to the SB in collaboration with the HR Director, for the hiring, training, disciplining and termination of employees. Employee provides direct supervision of SB staff, department heads, and individual staff outlined in the SB approved, Town's Organizational Chart. Recruits, screens and recommends personnel to SB for appointment.

Essential Functions Leadership

Efficiently manage all municipal departments, commissions, boards, and officers.

Demonstrate above-average interpersonal skills, clear written and verbal communication, and cultivate a collaborative environment for effective

cross-departmental cooperation within the organization, emphasize thorough and timely follow-up.

Establish an environment that prioritizes transparency while respecting confidentiality. Use proper discretion when omitting information to avoid the perception of not being transparent.

Acknowledge the possibility of disagreements with Town officials and staff, and consistently uphold a neutral position when engaging in discussions as needed.

Stay up-to-date on rapidly evolving federal, state, insurance regulations, and regularly educate oneself on various subjects including but not limited to laws, bylaws, and regulations to provide well-informed recommendations to the Board. Seek third party advisement when necessary.

Embody accountability by readily acknowledging mistakes, learning from them, and demonstrating the ability to move forward.

The TA diligently oversees and ensures compliance, either through direct management or by delegating to designated personnel, with all pertinent provisions of general and special laws governing the town, upholding town



JOHN FIELD
TREE SERVICE, INC.

QUALITY TREE CARE...SAFELY DELIVERED

fieldtreeservice.com 413-329-6519





Barnbrook
www.BarnbrookRealty.com



DAGMAR KUBES
BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY
Home Services
Licensed Real Estate Broker

★
*Superior Real-Estate Service
tailored to your needs.*

★
413 528-6485
E-mail: dagmarrealty@verizon.net

SELL * BUY * RENT

22

bylaws, respecting Town Meeting votes, and enforcing policies and direction set forth by the SB.

Seek input from the SB for professional development, encompassing all facets of the TA position.

Recommend to the SB policies, best practices, and actions that enhance the professionalism, legal compliance, effectiveness, and efficiency of the Town.

Administrative Responsibilities:

The TA responds to and handles public inquiries, requests, and complaints.

Oversee the use and maintenance of Town-owned property, under the jurisdiction of the SB, in cooperation with the Director of Operations.

Manage permit and license procedures for the SB.

Prepare a draft of Annual and Special Town Meeting warrants. Oversee coordination of Annual Town Reports. Attend and actively participate in SB meetings, Town Meetings, and relevant community events.

Management of the town website.

Basic building maintenance in the absence of janitorial staff to ensure a safe and functional work environment. Coordinates the replenishment of Town Hall supplies.

Serve as the IT coordinator and liaison for various departments, ensuring smooth communication and support for technology-related needs. Provides some IT troubleshooting.

Performs administrative tasks on behalf of other departments and delegates tasks as needed to other staff.

OSHA tracking; maintain accurate records of all OSHA-related documentation, including safety reports, training records, incident reports, and compliance audits.

Onboarding new staff, including training to some positions. Administer town insurances, including health, life, dental, disability, property, casualty, liability, and worker's compensation.

Finance

The TA collaborates with the Town Accountant, Department Heads, SB, and Finance Committee to meticulously craft both operating and capital improvement budgets.

Monitor town spending and revenue throughout the fiscal year. Works with the finance committee to run reports as requested and approved by the SB. Collaborate with the Town Accountant and the Town Treasurer on budget preparation, spending monitoring, and financial forecasting as necessary.

The TA collaborates with the Accountant and Treasurer in formulating strategic financial objectives/goals for the Town. Recommendations on financial policies and practices are presented to the Select Board and Finance Committee for their consideration.

Efficiently input invoices directly into the VADAR accounting system for the SB, TA and other departments as needed, maintaining an accurate record of financial transactions.

Act as the primary point of contact for internal inquiries from the Accountant and Treasurer, facilitating effective communication and collaboration within the financial team that includes the TA, SB, Accountant, and Treasurer.

Committees and Boards

The TA assumes responsibility for effectively collaborating with the Town's multi-member bodies and officials to ensure the efficient functioning of these critical municipal bodies. The TA provides accessible and responsive consultation to Town multi-member bodies and officials.

The TA diligently manages the appointment process for offices, multi-member bodies, and Town employment positions that fall under the purview of the SB and SB's appointing authority.

The TA serves as a readily accessible and responsive resource for the Town's multi-membered bodies. Timely

assistance is provided upon their request to facilitate their operations effectively.

On occasion, the TA actively participates in committee events and meetings, fostering productive engagement and promoting an understanding of their respective roles within the Town's governance framework.

Other Roles

Acts as Notary Public for all residents; town's purchasing agent and chief procurement officer; one of the Town's Record Access Officers; Zoning Board Secretary; Board of Health Secretary; Town's grant coordinator.

Skills and Ability

Exceptional oral and written communication skills to represent the Town effectively, including with media. Above average organizational ability to manage multiple projects and tasks. Proficient in technology use. Professional in customer service. Skilled in directing and evaluating department heads, including office staff. Strategic planning, report preparation, problem analysis, and recommendation skills. Expertise in uniting diverse individuals and community groups towards complex goals. Superior interpersonal skills for productive relationships with all stakeholders. Effective multitasking and delegation. Proficient in contract negotiation with Town counsel, agreement development, and timely results. Tactful handling of all public and staff concerns.

Editor's Note: The balance of the job description lists Recommended Qualifications; Work Environment; Skills and Ability; Physical and Cognitive Requirements.



The Farm New Marlborough

Open 7 days a week from dawn to dusk at our Self-Serve Farm Store!

Shop Online 24/7 for next day Farm Pickup or Home delivery!

Find out more at www.thefarmnm.com

343 New Marlborough-Southfield Road

December Wildlife

Hooded mergansers are in these parts, where they find open water thanks to the warm weeks so far. Liza Catino sent in a photo (below) from Lake Buel, and I have seen these striking birds on open beaver ponds in the neighborhood. They are diving ducks. Both males and females have feathered crests. On the males they are a striking white, bordered with black. Crests on the females and the younger birds are brownish. They dive for small fish, also crayfish, aquatic insects, and frogs, and nest in hollow trees or on the ground in a hole under a stump. Some occupy the boxes folks put out for wood ducks. As long as the water is open around here, we will see them in these parts.



Also happy with the open water are the local beavers on Lake Buel, still hauling branches to add to the winter food supply. Liza got another great photo (at right) of this enterprise.



We did have some cold days in the past month and got some ice on Royal Pond where I used to love to watch the otters come up through their “blow-holes” to eat their fish on top of the ice. Sure enough, I was lucky enough to see one in the middle of December.



Carol Edelman down the road from us reports that she has not seen the number of visiting foxes she got used to last winter, but the one with the scrawny tail has been by. Back from a recent trip, Carol says the wildlife in Hawaii are marvelous, from monk seals and green sea turtles to many colorful free range chickens.

We have birds here, too, including a bald eagle late in the month down Hupi Road near Tyringham Road. Roger MacDonald and Gillian Ryan saw one up in a tree and took a photograph. Wendy Jensen went for a walk on Wellman Road and had a “fantastic sighting of an immature red-tailed hawk on a low branch near where she stood,” writes Steve Moore. Even when she moved around, the bird sat still undisturbed. This was one of those rare, rewarding moments we sometimes get in the wild.

Monterey Softball Open Call

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

UNTAMED GARDENS

Specializing in low-maintenance,
native designs that bridge the gap
between gardens and habitat.
Practicing organic landscape
management.

413-591-0040

www.untamedgardens.com

Landscaping for living things
Monterey MA



At the feeders, the Banners hosted four bluebirds at once on the suet one cold day (left), and Steve Moore and Wendy Jensen have bluebirds flying by at their place. Here at our feeders we are happy to be hosting the small familiars once again: chickadees, white-breasted nuthatches, goldfinches, and a titmouse or two. So far we have no bears coming by, just squirrels, both the black and the grey varieties.

At her house near Stevens Pond, Bon-sai Cox is enjoying the indoor company of that creature we know from Kipling's *Just So Stories*. As Cow, Dog, and Horse leave their wild freedom to become domestic creatures, to be tame and well-fed, the cat says, "I am not a friend and I am not a servant. I am the Cat who walks by himself and all places are alike to me." Woman makes a deal with the cat and he comes to sit by the fire and drink milk, but he chooses to keep his freedom, "walking by his lone in the wild wet woods and waving his wild tail."

We can imagine Tally, the cat in the photo (at top), waving his wild tail. Once he wakes up.

As for the big bobcat out by Karen Schulze's (top left), his waving tail may be shorter than Tally's, but we can be sure he "walks by himself and all places are alike to him."

—Bonner McAllester



The Godwit Wonder Bird

The godwit is a remarkable member of the sandpiper family whose plumage includes a long black tail and underwings, a long pinkish colored bill that towards the tip turns up to the sky perhaps explaining why they are called "wonder birds." But there is another reason to regard them as "wonder" birds. Most godwits breed within the northern-most boreal woodland habitat of the Arctic. It is called "the wonder bird" for annually migrating of thousands miles from northern Alaska all the way south past the equator to the distant regions of Chile in South America, or to New Zealand.

The Arctic tern flies a longer round-trip distance, as much as 19,000 miles, from the Arctic circle to the Antarctic circle every year, but the godwits' incredible journey of nearly 7,000 miles is made without stopping at all for such a long distance. The godwits' pre-flight preparation is much more intensive. They double their weight by adding body fat from gorging on worms and dime_size clams. Fat provides twice the energy of carbohydrates or proteins. During these long distance flights they do not stop to rest or take in food. Scientists believe they shut down part of their brain to "sleep" while continuing flight.

Medical research, by studying the super powers of migratory birds may

lead to breakthroughs for human application. Migratory birds can sleep while they fly by getting shut-eye on one side of the brain while the other stays awake and alert, and then switching sides, a process called "slow wave switching hemisphere sides." Dolphins and whales can take a nap this way as well. Godwits can also somehow store air after it passes through their lungs and then breathe with it again.

The godwits face challenges for such epic journeys crossing continents and huge ocean distances as well as tests that laie ahead such as changing weather and difficult topography. They navigate according to the sun during the daytime, star positions at night, and a sense of the Earth's magnetic field, homing in to the same destination areas year after year. They fly at high elevations where the air is less dense and headwinds are minimal. Their feathers are not fully waterproofed with oils so landing in water would be deadly.

The godwit's impressive migrations between the two coldest regions on the globe bring us to wonder what secrets they and other species have that might benefit all mankind.

—George B. Emmons



MontereyMA.gov

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

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

Police Emergency Contacts

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

Hockey Rink Setup

Thanks to a strong showing of volunteers and the leadership of Peter Poirier, the Monterey ice skating rink at the pavilion behind the firehouse has been assembled. Weather permitting, the rink historically opens in early January once daytime temperatures remain below freezing.

—Steve Graves, photo by Colleen Johnson



Get Outside at the Bidwell House Museum in January

While the house is slumbering for the winter, we wanted to remind you that the gardens and grounds at the museum are open year-round. Trail maps can be found on the museum porch and on the trails page of our website, and we encourage everyone in Monterey to come by to hike the trails, walk your dog, or even snowshoe (if we ever get any snow!). There is no charge to enjoy the museum grounds so come by any time between dawn and dusk!

If you prefer your January programs indoors, then join the museum on Wednesday, January 10, at 7 p.m., for a winter Zoom talk with educator and performer Tammy Denease (above right). In this



program, “Tea with Tammy: A Conversation About Enslaved Women and Their Stories,” we invite you to enjoy a warm cup of tea or a glass of wine while listening to a discussion between Tammy and Bidwell House Director Heather Kowalski. This conversation will explore the work Denease has done to showcase the lives of enslaved women in New England and share their often hidden stories with the wider public. The museum hopes to follow this talk with performances by Ms. Denease later in the winter. Registration is required and can be done on the Museum website at bidwellhousemuseum.org, under “Events.” The Zoom details for the event will be sent via email a few days in advance.

Happy new year from the Bidwell House Museum.

—Heather Kowalski,
Executive Director



Happy New Year Cookbook Club

We hope to start the New Year with a few new delicious recipes at our next meeting. The meeting will be on Monday, January 22, at 11:45 a.m., at the community center. The featured cookbook will be *Smitten Kitchen—Every Day*, by Deb Perelman. Copies will be available at the library. Please mark the recipe you have chosen with your name on a Post-it, available at the library desk.

Please email wendygj@gmail.com to let us know so we can set a place at the table for you.

—Wendy Jensen

Calendar

MCC events page 9
Council on Aging events page 10

Monday, January 8: Monday night supper club, 6 p.m., church basement. See page 11.

Wednesday, January 10: Movie night at the Monterey Library at 7 p.m., showing *Barbie*. See page 10.

Thursday, January 18:

Monthly council on aging lunch at Pleasant and Main at 1063 Main Street in Housatonic at noon. See page 10.

Monterey Historical society program and open house, 6 p.m. See page 14.

Wednesday, January 24: Game Time! at the community center from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. See page 10.



More evidence of breakfasts and lunches coming our way! Mark Andrews joined a group for a tour of the inside of the Roadside 2.0, including the heart of the operation.

Monterey News

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

Town Contact Information

Emergency! 911

Town Administrator:

528-1443 x111

admin@montereyma.gov

(for town boards and misc. questions)

Assessor: 528-1443 x115

assessors@montereyma.gov

Building Department: 528-1443

x118 buildingsafety@montereyma.gov

Community Center: 528-3600

calendar@ccmonterey.org

Fire Department (non-emergency):

528-3136

chief@montereyma.gov

Highway Department: 528-1734

dpw1@montereyma.gov

Library: 528-3795

montereylibrary@gmail.com

Police Department (non-emergency):

528-3211, Alt./Emergency 528-3211

mpdchief@montereyma.gov

Post Office: 528-4670

SBRSD (Schools): (413) 229-8778

Tax Collector: 528-1443 x117

montereytax@yahoo.com

(for questions about your tax bill)

Town Clerk: 528-1443 x113

clerk@montereyma.gov

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

Your Local Family Owned Propane Company for over 65 years

We provide friendly, prompt & reliable service for all your propane needs



839 Mill River-Southfield Rd.
New Marlborough, MA

413-229-2800

Low Prices

Budget Plans

**Bulk & Cylinder
Deliveries**



Please call to join our family of satisfied customers!

MONTEREY NEWS

PO Box 9

MONTEREY, MA 01245-0009

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
GREAT BARRINGTON MA
PERMIT NO 95

Change Service Requested

Transfer Station

Fall thru Spring Hours

(Until Memorial Day weekend)

Sunday 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Wednesday 8 a.m.-1 p.m.
Saturday 8 a.m.-1 p.m.

MONTEREY LIBRARY

Monday.....7-9 p.m.
Tuesday.....9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Wednesday.....9 a.m.-1 p.m.
.....& 1:30-5 p.m.
Thursday.....9 a.m.-1 p.m.
.....& 4-8 p.m.
Friday.....4-8 p.m.
Saturday.....9 a.m.-1 p.m.
.....& 7-9 p.m.

Phone 528-3795

MontereyMassLibrary.org

Rick Mielke

Seasonal Caretaking

Professional Year-Round Maintenance
of Your House and Grounds

(413) 329-0331

• Fully Insured

roadmaster333@yahoo.com

P. O. Box 211, Monterey, MA 01245

Copyright © Monterey News 2024
email: montereynews9@gmail.com

Editor.....Stephen Moore
Copy Editor.....Kateri Kosek
Mailing Labels.....Joe Baker
Treasurer.....Cindy Hoogs

*Contributions from local artists this month:
Maureen Banner, p.3; George Emmons, p. 25;
Bonner McAllester, p. 21.*

Corashire Realty

Assisting Buyers & Sellers since 1966



Deborah D. Mielke
(C) 413-329-8000
corashirerealty@gmail.com



Nancy Dinan, founder

215 State Road, Great Barrington, MA
Call for an appointment to see our Monterey listings
Member of MLS.

WAKE UP TO



**Blazing Fast Internet
Sign Up: bfcma.com**

413.429.4109

