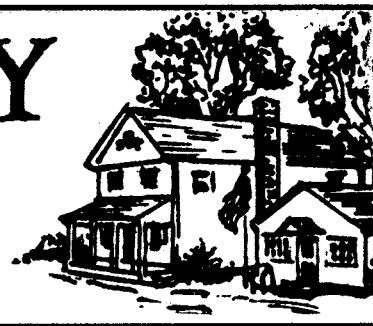


MONTEREY NEWS

September 2023 Est. 1970
Vol. LIII · Number 9



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



—Photo by John Touwsman

Sounded like a sprinkle of rain pitter-pattering near me—it was the jewelweeds, the touch-me-nots, the snapweeds, audibly and spontaneously leaping into seed-dispersal action.
Jewelweed page 24

How can we conquer the aggressive plants that endanger our native plants and animals?
Uprooting Invasive Plants page 15



Kids Beach Party page 16

This falls into the category of “no matter how good a decision is—it can still go south.”
Report about Town page 4

The online application cycle for cultural council grants closes on October 16.
Monterey Cultural Council page 13

Although a flourishing press is a pillar of democracy, local newspapers are in trouble across the nation.
Local Journalism page 12

We come to our last supper club, so the moment has come to say “That’s a Wrap!”
Monday Supper Club page 15

Together, we can create a vibrant space where people can enjoy delicious meals, connect with one another, and support our guests’ journey to recovery.
Help Equip the Roadside 2.0 page 22

The LEED certification allowed the MBLC to award us a \$100,000 bonus towards construction costs in August.
Library page 2

We have a new tree warden, Kevin West, and he has jumped in with both feet.
Our Town Trees page 5

Should I vote for or against the proposed school districts merger? That will be the issue for each of us at a special town meeting this fall.
School Districts Merger pages 8 to 11

I felt disappointed seeing the light blocking out the stars. I hope that people in Monterey turn their lights off to protect our dark skies.
Defending the Dark Skies page 18

The top three reasons for living in Monterey were discussed. They are “Nature, wildlife, scenic beauty,” “Peace and quiet,” and “Small town atmosphere.”
Planning Board Survey page 2

The police department has begun taking orders for simple green number signs with reflective numbers to put at the end of your driveway.
House number signs page 3

Having gotten the MCC off to a wonderful start, Mary Makuc has decided to leave her position as director.
MCC Director Search page 7

The structure will increase the opening from the current ten-foot culvert span to a twenty-five-foot span bridge with pedestrian walkway.
Main Road Culvert page 3

Planning Board Master Plan Survey Results and Report

Editor's Note: The following is taken from the planning board minutes for their August 10 meeting. The full minutes are available on the town website under the "Boards & Committees" tab.

The planning board held a public meeting to present the master plan summary. Included in the discussion was a report on the survey the townspeople were asked to fill out. There were 385 responses. The top three reasons that respondents indicated were their reasons for living in Monterey were discussed. They are "Nature, wild-life, scenic beauty," "Peace and quiet," and "Small-town atmosphere." (To see the survey results, see navigation below.)

The stated goals for the master plan were reviewed:

- Promote Environmental Resilience and Sustainability;
- Promote open space projects throughout the town;
- Enhance business opportunities in the downtown;
- Enhance facilities and transportation in the town.

Tom Sawyer, chair, informed the audience that they could email any questions to the planning board. (There is an email link on planning board page.) The next step is the thirty-day review after which the planning board will sign off on the master plan and present it to the select board. The review period goes until the second week in September.

The full draft and other documents of the master plan project are available on the town website. From the montereyma.gov home page, go to "Master Plan" and then "Master Plan 8-11-23." The survey results are listed there as well.

—Stephen Moore

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Monterey Library LEED Certification

When the library construction process was still in the design stage, there were many decisions to make about function and form. Of course part of the function concern included how efficient the building would be considering today's energy prices and climate issues. Many of the building codes require these efficiencies to begin with, but there always is just a little more that can be done. The US Green Building Council runs a program called LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) which promotes energy efficient and environmentally friendly construction. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners construction program included a bonus to any library that attained LEED certification.

The library design team made a decision to include sustainable practices in the design. We knew it would be really hard to know if the bonus would cover all the extra costs, but it was the right thing to do. LEED certification is gained by a point system. The points are awarded by building materials and methods, as well as many other factors. For instance, materials sourced from less than five hundred miles away count. If you have a public transportation stop at your location, you get the highest amount of points possible of all the different items listed. The Monterey bus line does not stop here, unfortunately.

Somehow the architects navigated through all this, and thanks to their persistence we got the points needed for certification and the bonus. We did not have the most water-efficient aerators on the end of our bathroom faucets. We changed those. We adopted a no smoking policy. Between the pandemic and the back and forth over subtle distinctions of qualification points, the process took four years. We finally were awarded a certificate and are officially LEED Certified.

This allowed the MBLC to award us a \$100,000 bonus towards construction costs in August. We have earmarked this money to help pay down the library loan. This early payment will save the town the interest on that amount every year until the loan is fully paid. Did the bonus pay for the extra cost and effort? Likely not. But the Monterey Library design team took the time to make sure the building project incorporated as much as we could to be environmentally responsible.

Strategic Planning

The library strategic planning committee would like to thank the over two hundred people that took the time to fill out our survey. We will be meeting in September to look over that data.

On Saturday, October 7, at 10:30 a.m., a consultant from the Massachusetts Library Systems will be in Monterey to facilitate a forum. We will discuss the results of the survey and what the committee has been looking at so far. Most importantly we will be looking for more ideas and directions for the future of the library. We are hoping to have a good representation of people of all ages help us figure out what directions to take. We are also especially interested in those who would use the library more if we added services. If you don't use the library, or would use it more if we provided something new, we are interested in hearing from you. If you are unable to make the forum, please email montereylibrary@gmail.com with any thoughts you have. This is an excellent opportunity to brainstorm and give the committee some new ideas about what we can do in the next five years to keep building on what we already have.

—Mark Makuc
Library Director

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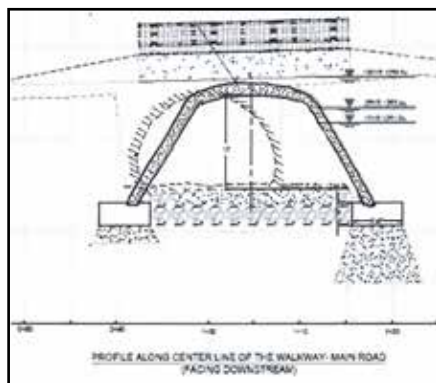
Route 23/Main Road Culvert Design Plans Available

As summer winds down, we continue to brace for rainy days—keeping our umbrellas or rain boots at hand. It's clear that our discussion on preparing for increased heavy rains and flooding was well-timed. Hopefully, you've connected with Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) at recent community events to learn about future flooding scenarios and the Monterey's climate resilience plan, including replacing the Main Road culvert. This project aims to protect the town hall and surrounding properties from flooding. If you've missed these insights, visit the town website to explore flooding inundation maps and see how future storms will impact Main Road/Route 23. (montereyma.gov/climate-resiliency).

Over the past year, significant progress has been made in securing engineering designs to upsize the Main Road/Route 23 culvert. As of July, we have presentable design plans now available for review (find them at montereyma.gov/climate-resiliency in the left side bar).

The structure will increase the opening from the current ten-foot culvert span to a twenty-five-foot span bridge—the necessary “1.2 times the bank width of the Konkapot” required by Massachusetts Department of Transportation. According to the plans, road width and height will remain the same even with the addition of a pedestrian walkway which was added to the plans to make it safer from town hall or Bidwell Park to the rest of downtown (the post office, library, and elsewhere). The walkway can go on either side of the road—and we are looking for input as to whether it would be better to place the walkway on the upstream side near town hall or the downstream side connecting Bidwell Park and the crosswalk to the post office. The walkway will be designed with ADA compliance, elevated to the curb height by a ramp. This will give the added benefit of allowing room in the structure for the water main to the western portion of the Monterey Water Company system so that it is insulated yet accessible for maintenance.

You can view the designs on the town website. These include the flood elevations



The drawing above, taken from the engineering plans and enhanced by hand, shows a comparison between the existing culvert and the proposed new culvert.

The three lines on the right (unreadable at this scale) show projected high water marks with the new culvert, from bottom up, ten-year, twenty-five-year, and one-hundred-year flood levels.

during different storms as well as a mockup of the walkway and railings. The railings are open to change stylistically to match the character of the town.

While GZA Engineering is busy finalizing draft plans, costs, and preparing bid specifications for permitting, we'd like to hear from you. If you were unable to attend the hearing on August 29 with the select board, you can still register for a meeting on Wednesday, September 6, at 7 p.m. To register, go to bit.ly/Route23Culvert.

—Courtney Morehouse
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission



Visible House Number Signs

The Monterey Police Department is dedicated to making Monterey a safe community. We are offering house number signs in compliance with town bylaws as a way to easily find your house in case of an emergency.

The police department has begun taking orders for simple green signs with reflective numbers to put at the end of your driveway. The reflective aluminum signs are 6" x 12", two-sided, and have two holes for easy mounting.

The department will do a bulk order to keep the cost down. Each sign will be approximately \$20.

If you wish to order your house number sign, please contact the Monterey Police Department by sending an email to Officer Jennifer Brown at jbrown.montereypd@gmail.com.

We will contact you as to the exact amount and where to send the payment. If you have already put it in an order you will be contacted.

In Pride and Service,

—Monterey Police Department



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Report about Town

Last month I wrote a preliminary article about the Monterey General Store promising a more complete, in-depth article to follow. My hope was to have the article ready for the September issue but vacations and families interfered. I'm now aiming for the October issue. In the first article I spoke about Jared, who is Chapin's real estate business partner, as also his partner in the store. In fact Jared is not involved. The store is owned and being developed by Chapin and Kevin Fish.

We've had good conversations and the article next month should clarify where the progress on the store is at and what the future holds.

So, what's happening on the roads, bridges, and ball fields of Monterey?

New Highway Worker

Welcome to our new highway 4 worker. Jim Hunt has had trouble finding help, and as we approach the winter, it becomes even more of an issue. Sheldon Langly, one of our transfer station hard workers, heard about the opening, has been impressed with Monterey's Highway Department and took the leap of faith and left another job for this one. He will continue at the transfer station one day a week and work at the highway department the other four. A plus is that Jim considers him a skilled plow truck operator. A win for Monterey. Welcome aboard Sheldon.

Rebuilding Beartown Road

The original timeline for this major project (over \$1 million from the state) is once again being delayed. The town contracted with a local engineering firm and discovered too late that it was not capable of meeting the proposed timeline. Their delay in providing the engineering documents needed to bid the project has extended the original start date by nearly a year, from late summer 2023 up to late spring 2024.

Transfer Station

This falls into the category of "no matter how good a decision is—it can still go south."

The select board, with the assistance of Jim Hunt, director of operations, and Melissa Noe, town administrator, looked at the relationship the town had with Casella Waste Systems—it was rocky. The contract was up so the town had to decide if it wanted to continue with Casella or look for another supplier.

The town decided to put it out to bid and received a competing bid from Roger's Trucking, a local company. After comparing the two bids the select board decided to end their relationship with Casella and give the contract to Roger's. On the surface this was a straightforward business deal but there were equipment issues. While Roger's was prepared to switch out the dumpsters owned by Casella with their own, the problem was with the compactors. The town owned one (for cardboard

recycling) and Casella owned the other (for household trash). Common sense would argue that Casella would sell or lease to the town the compactor they owned until the town could procure a replacement. Casella decided to play hardball and removed their compactor leaving the town in the predicament that we now find ourselves. It's been a tough two months without having a cardboard compactor, but a new one is on the way. A big thank you to all the residents and our great transfer station staff who broke all the cardboard boxes down flat to reduce the volume. This simple act saved the town thousands of dollars. (The town pays by the ton *and* for the hauling, so without the compactor there's fewer tons per trip.) The good news is that Roger's Trucking has been great to work with and, when the new compactor is installed, the change will be justified.

Curtis Road Bridge Replacement

A number of you commented on the Department of Transportation gathering at the bridge on Curtis Road a few weeks ago. What's going on? Why were there twenty-plus officials along with ten-plus state cars?

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Well, in early 2017 the DOT conducted an inspection on the bridge and determined that it had deteriorated so they needed to restrict the amount of weight passing over it. This put the town and Gould Farm in a real bind. This would restrict all our fire trucks, most of our highway trucks, delivery trucks to Gould Farm, and trucks moving gravel from the quarry. We were able to negotiate a waiver for a year after we conducted an independent inspection. The company that did the independent inspection worked with the town to develop a repair protocol that would keep the weight limits high enough as to not affect our use of the bridge. The town voted the monies and Tryon Construction completed the repair in 2018. The photo above shows some of the below-deck repair that was done.

While all this was happening the town also applied for state funding for a new bridge. We were put on the state schedule for bridge replacement and were told it would be two to three years. Now six years later Jim Hunt just got the word that the replacement has once more been pushed down the road, now not until 2025. Jim has been told that the project has been approved, money is there and it will happen. With no changes in design over the years

the cost has increased from just under \$1 million to the new estimate of \$3.2 million. Delays have consequences.

The town's responsibility is to arrange for a detour and any costs associated with the detour during the construction. This will be accomplished by upgrading Gould Road from River Road to Gould Farm. Starting this month on Gould Road, the pavement that slopes down to River Road will be milled down 1 1/2" and a new asphalt top coat put down. Over the past two years Jim has been gradually increasing the height of the gravel section of Gould Road east of the transfer station and will use the millings from the old pavement to further stabilize the surface. It's this kind of planning in advance that keeps Monterey ahead even if the state is behind.

Paving Projects: Foxhill Road

This is a full-depth reclamation project that will happen this month. Jim is working with our fire chief with the hope that better parking adjacent to the road in front of the pavilion can be created. This will help alleviate the parking issues that residents of Foxhill Road brought to the select board. Whenever there has been an event at the pavilion there have been issues with folks parking on lawns and in driveways. The town has installed signs and that has helped but solving the problem will take additional parking.

Our Town Trees

We have a new tree warden, Kevin West, and he has jumped in with both feet. He has spent a few hours with Jim traveling the roads and reported to the select board that he is busy doing a town-wide inventory of trees and will be reporting back with proposals when that is finished. He also said that he would be writing an update for the *Monterey News*. Welcome aboard Kevin.

A number of folks have asked about firewood or, more to the point, what happens to the trees that are cut down. The town's policy is to leave by the side of the road lengths of trees they have cut that are available on a first-come basis. The lengths vary from four to eight feet. In addition, Jim will deliver to your property a dump truck load of log-length (12') wood. This is not for the faint of heart. You would need to have an easily accessed place to dump the load. The diameters would be up to 25". It would then be your responsibility to cut and split the wood.

If you would like to get on the list for a truck load of wood send Jim an email at dpw1@montereyma.gov.

Baseball Field Improvement

Jim Hunt reported to me in late August that the town has received the special soil mixture—70% sand, 15% clay, and 15% silt—that will be used to restore the

Report about Town, cont. page 6 >

Getting the Monterey News

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Route 57 on the New Marlborough Village Green	
	<p>NEW MARLBOROUGH MEETING HOUSE</p> <p>Meeting House events can sell out! Buy tickets ONLINE now at: nmmeetinghouse.org</p>
<p>Aug 12 4:30 pm</p>	<p>Karen Allen Join multi-award winning actor and director Karen Allen for a fast moving, interactive afternoon as she shares highlights of her exciting career.</p>
<p>Aug 26 4:30 pm</p>	<p>Alison Larkin An in-depth conversation with Comedienne, bestselling author, and founder of the Berkshire based audiobook company Alison Larkin Presents.</p>
<p>Sept 2 4:30 pm</p>	<p>Simone Dinnerstein Simone Dinnerstein returns by popular demand, performing works by Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, and others. This performance sells out!</p>
<p>Sept 9 4:30 pm</p>	<p>Melissa Clark and Madhur Jaffrey Tasting the World: Two of today's great cookbook writers come to New Marlborough to discuss food, cooking, and their careers crafting delicious recipes.</p>
<p>Sept 23 4:30 pm</p>	<p>Trio Calore: Wincenc - Nikkanen - Asteriadou The trio of renowned recitalists will perform works by Jacques Ibert, Franz Doppler, Bohuslav Martinu, J.S. Bach, and others.</p>
<p>Oct 7 4:30 pm</p>	<p>Simon Winchester with Chandra Prasad, Francine Prose, and André Bernard On writing in the age of artificial intelligence.</p>

Report about Town, cont. from page 5

infield running paths. As the material is now piled in his way at the highway garage, he told me that he intends to get the work done soon. There will be 3" of existing soils removed and the new mixture spread and rolled. This will finally bring our ballfields up to the standards that our weekend warriors deserve.

Other Highway News

The highway department continues to maintain and improve our gravel roads. They have already hauled and spread sixty loads of gravel this summer. Most of this is for maintenance, but the weather takes its toll too. Going back fifteen years to when Maynard Forbes was our highway superintendent, and then through Shawn Tryon's time, and now Jim Hunt's, the town has been fortunate that these individuals saw beyond just putting down gravel. They actively worked to create better catch basins and cross road culverts. Controlling the flow of water is so important to the maintenance of our gravel roads. Jim feels that we are benefiting from this forward thinking now. There is less road edge gravel washing out as the new culverts and catch basins are able to handle the flow and direct it away from the road surface.

— Kenn Basler

Hupi Road Stormwater Designs Drafted

Editor's Note: Information about this project has been published in the News before. This is not reporting on a new project.

As many know, the town has been working with Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and stormwater engineers at Comprehensive Environmental Inc. to update drainage system along a 1,000-foot stretch of Hupi Road from Elephant Rock Road to Peppermint Brook—a stream near Mountain Laurel Way. With Clean Water Act funding issued by Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and a local Community Compact Grant—we had a draft of engineering designs completed this past month. (View them at montereyma.gov/climate-resiliency).

The plans outline the installation of a catch basin drainage system that will capture much of the dirt road runoff and surrounding pollutants. The underground stormwater piping outlets into a pre-treatment sediment forebay just downhill of the driveway for 146 Hupi Road. Pretreatment will collect and concentrate much of the sediment and therefore nutrient pollutants. Just past the pre-treatment "sediment forebay" there is a planned fifteen-foot-long vegetated swale with stone check dams to slow down and infiltrate the remaining stormwater piped through the drainage system. Across the road a proposed baffle tank is designed to capture water and separate solids from water from the southern side of the road.

Some changes were made from the original designs based on field surveys. The first is the addition of the sediment forebay. This will increase sediment capture and lessen the burden of ongoing highway maintenance by concentrating the solids in a smaller area. A baffle box was added to replace the hydrodynamic separator originally planned and moved to a different location where pollutant removal is more effective. The baffle tank works to separate sediments by slowing down flow through concrete baffles and screens that cause the sediment to drop off and water to move through the system over the top of the baffles. The new designs removed the manholes in the middle of the road for the catch basin system. This will make it easier for the highway crew to plow in the winter without damaging structures in the road or their plows.

You can take a look at the stormwater designs posted on the town website at montereyma.gov/climate-resiliency. You may also attend via Zoom the information session where these designs will be presented along with the Route 23 village culvert designs, on Wednesday, September 6, at 7 p.m. in the library. Register here for the Zoom link: bit.ly/Route23Culvert.

As always, if you have questions or feedback about this project, feel free to contact Courteny Morehouse, Senior Planner at Berkshire Regional Planning Commission at cmorehouse@berkshire-planning.org.

— Courtney Morehouse
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Improvisation

prints by
Midori Curtis
thru September 9

Shapes and Colors

JD Logan

September 15 - October 21
Reception: Friday, Sept. 22, 6-7:30pm

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Home Stormwater Assessments Wrapped Up

As of Labor Day I have finished doing stormwater assessments. Twenty-two households participated, many around Lake Garfield—a great success! I am working on finishing up reports now that the assessment round is closed. As part of the grant, the town has funding to install either a stream/lakeside buffer garden or a rain garden on five properties.

Properties will be selected based on the ease of installation, cost of the project, and pollutant removal opportunity. If you feel like your property is a good candidate and you didn't get an assessment done, let us know. While it likely can't be accommodated under this grant, there are also resources available that I am happy to provide that help you get a head start on doing the work yourself. Just let them know at cmorehouse@berkshireplanning.org, or call (413) 442-1521, ext. 26.

If you had your property assessed, stay tuned. I will be in touch sometime this month to let you know whether you were selected, and work with you to schedule installation either later this fall or early next spring. Thank you to all who participated and spread the word!

—Courtney Morehouse
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Community Center Seeking A New Director

The Monterey Community Center has come a long way in the last six years, from a building that had occasional use to one where multiple activities take place each day, both inside and out. Most of that growth can be attributed to the efforts of our hardworking director, Mary Makuc. Her ability to know everyone in town and create a welcoming space for people to both sponsor and attend the many activities the MCC offers has been extraordinary.

Having gotten the MCC off to a wonderful start, Mary has decided to leave her position as director. The Monterey Community Center committee is tasked with finding someone to fill the position and continue the work that Mary started. While it will be difficult to replace Mary, the committee is confident there is someone out there who is interested in a part-time position—ten hours per week—and whose love of Monterey and enthusiasm for the MCC will make this job irresistible. The position is people-oriented and requires good organizational and communication skills. It will be posted at the end of August on the town website and in local newspapers. So please spread the word and help us as we embark on the next chapter of the Monterey Community Center.

—Laurie Shaw
Chair, Monterey Community Center

Letter of Appreciation Thank You for Your Support

As many of you know, Doug McTavish passed away on June 22 at home in Monterey. I wish to thank the people of Monterey for your support and kindness in this tough time. The first responders arrived and made me feel like everything possible was being done. It was comforting to see familiar faces and be able to rely on them when I was at a loss. Your help throughout the past few years has been so appreciated. I know that Doug would be grateful. The service at the church and gathering at the library were a powerful opportunity to share in celebrating Doug's life. Thanks to the Monterey Fire and Police Departments, Monterey Coffee Club, Bev, Eric, George, Kathryn, Kay, Liz, Mark, RJ, and everyone who attended the service.

Thank you to the town of Monterey.


With gratitude,

JoAnn Bell, Rebecca, Emily Jane,
Charles McTavish, & Magnolia

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Southern Berkshire and Berkshire Hills Schools Merger Decision

School Districts Merger "Inconvenient" Questions

Last month, in an attempt to engage readers to think critically about the proposed merge of our two local school districts, I posed eleven “inconvenient questions.”

Don Coburn, one of our representatives to the 8 Town planning board, endeavored to answer many of the questions (see page 9 to 11). Susan Bronson asks a question concerning data of students “choosing” into Monument Mountain high school (at right).

Three of my questions remain unanswered, so I will republish them below:

1. What will happen to the cohort of students grades 9-12 who will have no cohesive high school for perhaps two years if the Monument Mountain high school is torn down and \$100 million or more spent to build a new one? Are they going to be housed at Mt. Everett and/or elsewhere?

5. Has the environmental/climate impact of discarding all the invested resources of the existing school (materials, equipment, energy, previous labor, and the built spaces), to be replaced by all the new material resources for new construction been considered? Consuming less and conserving more is a key environmental strategy. (I don't believe this is a concern that anyone would be prepared to talk about.)

6. Can anyone explain the state's "safety valve" rules to smooth out tax burdens among the towns?

Meet 8 Town Board Chair

Tuesday, September 12

If you have questions, there will be a good opportunity to ask them:

From Justin Makuc, chair, Monterey
Select Board:

The Monterey Select Board invites interested people to an open meeting with representatives of the 8 Town planning board.

On Tuesday, September 12, at 6:30 p.m., Lucy Prashker and Jake Eberwein will be representing the RSDPB at a select board meeting at Monterey Town Hall. They will begin with a presentation, followed with Q&A for select board members and members of the public. This might be a great opportunity to ask lingering unanswered questions. I hope you are able to attend if interested. There will be a remote option as well.

—Justin Makuc

In a recent development, the draft district agreement governing the process was recently returned by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for further edits. This delay might push a possible vote on the merger proposal to later October or November.

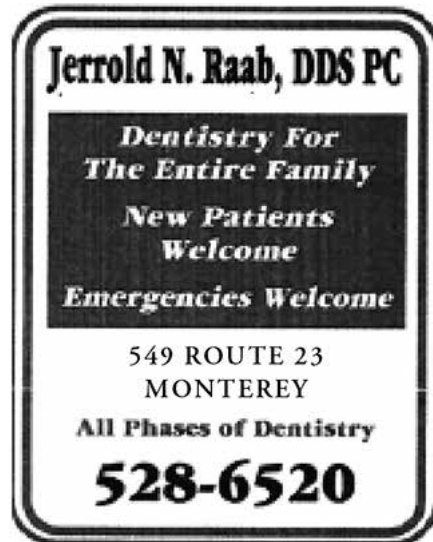
—Stephen Moore

Letters

Merging and School Choice

One piece of data that I can't seem to find is how many students from Monterey take advantage of school choice to attend Monument Mountain Regional High School. Our twin daughters attended Monument for a variety of reasons. We "choiced" them into the elementary school because it was actually closer to our home than Undermountain, more conveniently located for us coming to and from work for events and drop-offs, and, most importantly, offered a better after-school care option at the time which was essential for us as working parents. We then chose to keep them at Berkshire Hills through middle school and high school partly because they were already part of that community and also because we felt Mount Everett was simply too small for twins with fewer than fifty kids in a grade.

We had a good experience with Berkshire Hills, but of course our particular circumstance is not really relevant to whether the merger is the right path. However, I do believe that looking at the number of students from Monterey who have taken advantage of school choice to attend Monument Mountain Regional High School over the last decade or so is relevant data. Of all the Monterey teens in the last ten years, what percentage have attended Mount Everett and what percent have attended Monument? I found this in a letter to *Berkshire Edge* from February 2023: >



Southern Berkshire and Berkshire Hills Schools Merger Decision

“Egremont, one of five SBRSD towns, is choosing-out 16 students to Monument, more than those attending their own Mt. Everett school with 14. Comparable figures for New Marlborough attending Monument vs. Mt. Everett are 13 students vs. 25; for Alford: 4 vs. 3; for Monterey: 11 vs. 16 at Mt. Everett.”

What is the data over a longer period? I also know that at some point it became more difficult to get a school choice spot at Monument and there may be others who wanted to attend, but could not. Is there a way to get access to school choice requests that were denied as well?

I’ll tip my hand here to reveal what was likely already obvious. As parents, we all inevitably look at this question through our own personal lens. Which school was/is better for our child? It is hard for me to look beyond that when considering the merger, which from my perspective, given demographic realities, seems to me ultimately inevitable. But in any case, I believe the school choice data over the last decade is relevant here and should be part of the discussion.

—Susan Bronson

Letters

Withholding Support for Merger

While serving on the 8-Town Regional School District Planning Board and its educational quality subcommittee since its inception in 2020 I had an open mind, hoping to help make positive change for the good of students and the health of our communities. During the process my fifty years as an educator led me to raise many questions about the process and the conclusions being offered.

- What is the evidence that this merger proposal will improve educational outcomes for students in the Southern Berkshire Regional School District?
- Where is the evidence showing that improving career preparation by building a vocational high school is more effective than developing a strong internship program, with academic courses that support it?
- What does current research say about how to prepare students for an unknown future?

Until these and other questions are answered with evidence that goes beyond what the research team has presented, I cannot support the design of this merger proposal.

—Jane Burke, former Chair of SBRSD, New Marlborough, MA

The Merger Decision

Should I vote for or against the proposed school districts merger? That will be the issue for each of us at a special town meeting this fall. How should we approach deciding this critical issue?

If you have time and want details, consider reading the vast amount of posted information. The work of the 8 Town Regional School District Planning Board has been completely transparent. All our educational and other experts’ reports, including their data, plus the advantages and disadvantages of every model studied, and all committee debates are available. Everything is just a computer click away at 8towns.org.

Is a deep plunge into the details impractical for you? Then perhaps a brief history of the process so far will be reassuring.

Over three years ago the select boards of all eight towns unanimously recognized that this complex issue needed to be studied by a representative body before being submitted to the voters. So with the specific approval of each town moderator, the select boards appointed two representatives with the third member by law being an elected school board representative from each town.

Editor’s Note: Monterey’s elected school representative is Kim Alcantara; our two appointed representatives to the 8 Town board are Don Coburn and Jon Sylbert.

Merger Decision, cont. on page 10 >



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Southern Berkshire and Berkshire Hills Schools Merger Decision

Merger Decision, cont. from page 10

In almost two hundred meetings over more than three years, the 8 Town Planning Board members pondered and debated all the issues, aided by numerous experts in law, education, and finance, and the State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The proposed regional agreement to be presented to the voters this fall is their resolution of those debates.

Mostly in America we rely on representative government. As a practical matter, we need representatives who can take the time that we individually don't have to concentrate on the pros and cons of complex policy issues.

In this case, the 8 Town Planning Board members resolved to act in the public interest, gathered extensive expert assistance, engaged in respectful debate, and proposed a solution to the involved financial and educational issues. On balance, even though you may harbor some doubts about this or that detail, a commonsense respect for the institution you created and its transparent processes suggests that the merger be endorsed. After all, isn't that what we generally do year in and year out at town meetings when we sit in judgment on the budgetary recommendations of our finance committees and select boards?

Nonetheless, since particular issues were raised by *Monterey News* editor Stephen Moore about the merger in last month's edition of this paper, and since he specifically asked for comments on his questions from Monterey's representatives to the 8 Town Planning Board, of which I am one, I hope you will find the following replies useful.

The impacts of not merging are listed in our experts' reports. The overarching and undeniable fact is that enrollment is steadily decreasing, down 37% from 2000 to 2023, and is predicted by experts to be down 52% (from 2000 numbers) by 2030. As enrollment declines, state funding decreases. Consequently, our tax burden will increase, and our ability to maintain the appropriate level of educational, cultural, and athletic experience for our children will be increasingly compromised. With merger, we will be better able to prepare our children for successful careers. And by pooling resources, we will be able to realize efficiencies and economies of scale that will allow annual operating expense savings by the merged district of about \$1.5 million.

Mount Everett High School now has about 135 students. Monument Mountain High School now has about 485 students (including many high school students who currently choose in from SBRSD

towns). The state projects that merging the two high schools would yield a school of around 620 students. That merged number (still relatively small) is important. In 2005, the *Washington Post* reported this: "After analyzing progress in mathematics and reading from 8th to 12th grade for 10,000 students in a federal data base from almost 789 public and private schools of varying size, the two researchers concluded that 'the ideal high school enrolls between 600 and 900 students. Size matters, they believe, because it affects social relations within the school and the school's ability to provide a strong curriculum for all students. Very large schools lack a sense of community and cannot shape student behavior, while very small schools cannot offer a full academic curriculum.'"

The new high school needs to be built whether the merger is approved or not. The only question is whether it will be big enough to include our students or instead be built smaller to accommodate only the students of the Berkshire Hills towns of Great Barrington, Stockbridge and West Stockbridge (and the few other towns that presently tuition their students into Monument).

Moreover, let's not lose sight of these facts. A very small portion of the building costs would be borne by Monterey. If the cost of the new high schools comes at or near the predicted \$100 million, the average house in Monterey will have an increase of just under \$50 a year. If the merger fails, Monterey will have to fund the expense of our children who choose to attend the expanded vocational (Chapter 74) programming at the new school at an annual estimated cost (including transportation) of approximately \$26,000 per student. That further taxpayer burden, which the merger would avoid, is likely to exceed Monterey's modest capital contribution for the new high school. Of course, merging the districts would completely avoid that extra vocational education expense.

The alternative to merger of increased collaboration by the two existing school districts has been discussed for decades without successful implementation.



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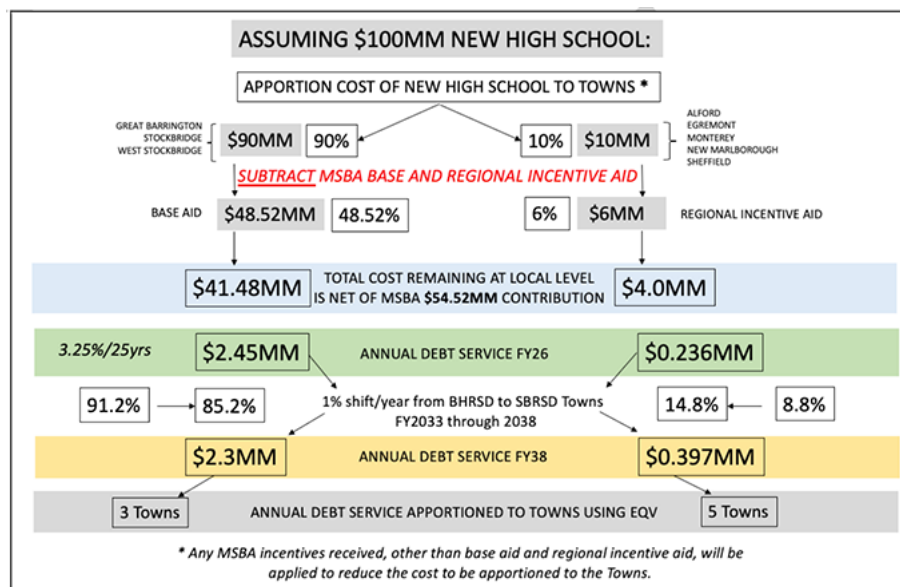
Southern Berkshire and Berkshire Hills Schools Merger Decision

The state's portion of capital costs would be 54.52%. How all other capital and operating costs would be shared among the eight towns is described at 8towns.org and is included in the proposed regional agreement, which you can navigate to from the first page of 8towns.org.

Our facility at Mount Everett High School is already significantly under-used relative to its capacity. Without merger, the under-use will worsen. With merger, the freed-up space could be used for other purposes and the maintenance costs and any rental income will be shared by all eight towns, as will the maintenance costs for all the other school buildings in the new regional district.

The proposed agreement does not contemplate the closing of any school. Also, the proposed agreement includes a detailed process for any future discussion of the closing of any school that is even more deliberate than that in our current agreement. Before any vote to close a school, there would need to be a detailed feasibility study. Any school committee vote to close a school would need a supermajority of 2/3, with representatives in at least six of the eight towns voting to support closure. And that vote would still need to be further ratified by a majority vote of resident voters at an annual or special town meeting in at least six of the towns.

Consideration of the merger at a special town meeting rather than the annual town meeting is in the best interests of the voters precisely because the issue is so important and deserving of full debate. We've all experienced the problem of trying to resolve new and complex issues at an annual town meeting after we've spent hours addressing the regular budgetary matters. Often, exhausted, we resort to tabling. While it is true that special town meetings are usually sparsely attended, that is because the issues are most often so inconsequential. With the education of our children at stake, I believe the turnout will match or exceed the usual town meeting turnout. In addition, if we want a merged high school, we need to make that decision now in order to participate in its design.



A chart published by the 8 Town board to show how the capital cost of a new high school would be apportioned among the towns.

Last month's paper included Kim Alcantara's article opposing the merger. Her criticism of our Planning Board's process is belied by the facts. On the substance of the proposed merger, she lists all of the educational, cultural, and athletic aspects present at Mount Everett that she fears will be lost with merger. But here she is engaging in pure speculation. First, the merger is designed to create more, not fewer, opportunities and choices for all our students. Second, her assumption appears to be that good programs and policies now existing at Mount Everett will not be incorporated into the new high school curriculum. But isn't the contrary far more likely when the new school committee, informed by its school administrators, turns to the task of creating the best educational experience possible? Moreover, the new eleven-member school committee will have a majority of six members from the former Southern Berkshire towns (Alford, Egremont, Monterey, New Marlborough, and Sheffield). Why would a reasonable person assume that they will vote to undermine the education of our children?

Lastly, Kim challenges the cost estimate for building the new high school and the new vocational building, presently projected by our research team to be in the range of \$100 million. She then asserts that

we should know the actual building costs before we vote. Implicit in that assertion is that a pro-merger vote now would bind us no matter what the actual building costs become. That is untrue. If the merger is approved this fall, that decision will not be final. The next step will be a vote by the residents of all eight towns to decide whether or not to approve the debt needed to pay the non-state share of the established borrowing costs for the new building. In accordance with state law, the new school committee will decide whether the issue will be decided by a majority of all voters or a majority of voters in every town. If the vote is no, the merger would be undone and the two existing regional school districts would continue as they are now.

This opportunity for us to have a new state-of-the-art high school and vocational facility at almost no cost to the taxpayers of Monterey is highly unlikely to ever come again. The merger of the two local regional school districts has been under discussion off and on since at least 1985. Hasn't a half century been enough time to make the issue ripe now for a positive decision?

—Don Coburn
Monterey Member, 8 Town Regional
School District Planning Board

Local Journalism at a Crossroad

Although a flourishing press is a pillar of democracy, local newspapers are in trouble across the nation. “Every week, two more newspapers close—and ‘news deserts’ grow larger,” says a recent headline in the *Washington Post*, citing the loss of two papers each week.

This is not good news for local governance. “When nobody is paying attention, corruption increases, problems fester and misinformation spreads,” said Don Morrison, a *Berkshire Eagle* columnist and member of that paper’s advisory board. He was introducing a discussion on community journalism sponsored by the Becket Athenaeum with three local editors and participation from contributors to three other local papers.

It turns out that southern Berkshire County is bucking the trend—community newspapers (mostly monthlies) here are holding their own, if not exactly flourishing. And new ones have started up. All this despite radical changes in the media landscape, including digital and social news platforms, rising print and distribution costs, hyper-targeted advertising strategies, and diminished attention spans.

Panelists at the Becket event included our own *Monterey News* editor Stephen Moore; *Sandisfield Times* editor and co-founder Ron Bernard; and Ellenor Downer of the *Country Journal* (an advertising-based publication that covers sixteen hill towns to the east and north of Otis). Contributors from other papers also chimed in, including those from the



The panelists at the discussion (l. to r.): Stephen Moore, *Monterey News*; Ellenor Downer, *Country Journal*; Don Morrison, moderator; and Ron Bernard, *Sandisfield Times*.

year-old *Becket Beat*, the *Otis Observer*, and the new town-sponsored, four-page *Washington Tracks* newsletter (“bare bones, but it tells you what’s going on”)

Most of the papers originated when a group of town folk decided “We really need a paper.” This happened in 1970 in Monterey, and more recently, about a year ago in Becket, and back in 2010 in Sandisfield, after a three-year newspaper hiatus. The *Sandisfield Times* editors take pride serving as watchdogs. “A paper should stir things up,” said Simon Winchester, a bestselling non-fiction author and one of its co-founders. Bernard cited some of the achievements since the paper was revived: When a cannabis plant sought to move into a residential area, for instance, the paper clarified the issues and encouraged selection of a new location that “made everyone happy,” he said. And the paper uncovered and helped correct malfeasance in the town government, making some enemies in the process.

But community papers should also bring people together. Moore talked about seeing his role as encouraging community conversations and the expression of many voices. He’s done such a good job that the *Monterey News*, which started fifty-four years ago as a church-sponsored broadsheet, is now, at twenty-eight to thirty-two pages (usually), the longest of the local papers.

“Becket has become a more interesting place since it got a newspaper,” said one of its founders. Arlene Tolopko, the

Otis Observer publisher, talked about her mission to bring different factions of the town together, particularly “the originals and the transplants.” “We have changed the tenor of the town,” she said, adding, “To have some portion of people’s attention focused on where they live—I think that’s a healthy thing.”

So what is the future of local journalism? New business models are being explored. Morrison sees the way forward as being a hybrid profit/non-profit model. Indeed, this is happening in many places. Recently, for instance, the National Trust for News has help convert marginally profitable papers around the nation to non-profits, including by facilitating the conversion of almost all of Maine’s daily papers. Jodi Shafiroff, the Athenaeum’s outgoing executive director and organizer of the panel, pointed to existence of numerous grant possibilities. There was also discussion of the possibility of more collaboration on such initiatives.

All of the papers represented at the forum, with the exception of the *Country Journal*, are non-profits, fueled by volunteer enthusiasm and commitment, some advertising revenue, and a good measure of community support. All rely to some degree on reports submitted by various organizations. Most have regular columnists. Sandisfield boasts some trained journalists among its leadership. But operating on a shoestring can make it difficult to sustain substantive news coverage and recruit

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personnel with the time, inclination, and capacity to maintain editorial quality, as several people mentioned.

This is true for the *Monterey News*, which has been run for almost ten years essentially as a one-man band. In addition to recruiting writers from a wealth of local talent and carefully developing and editing their material, Moore manages advertising, selects and captions photos, lays out and produces the paper, distributes it around town, and maintains a database of articles and circulation data. It's more responsibility than most people would want to take on for a relatively small stipend (\$850 per month).

The situation is also too good to last. Moore recently announced that he "wants his time back." But he has given the board a year to figure out a way to get along without him. It won't be easy, because, if you read the paper regularly, you know what a great job he does. It will likely involve a reorganization and a segmenting of different responsibilities. So if you have a secret desire to be part of this sometimes exciting, often grueling, much-needed enterprise of community journalism, this would be a good time to step up.

—Janet Jensen

Cultural Council Grants Meet Monterey's Council

Early fall is a potent period for the cultural life of the town: September 1 marks the beginning of the cycle for grants funded by the Mass Cultural Council and the Town of Monterey. So this is a time when creative souls can flesh out ideas for exciting educational experiences, engaging performances, or a multitude of other projects that can enhance our cultural fabric.

To learn more, join us on Wednesday, September 27, at 4 p.m., in the Monterey Library. Members of the Monterey Cultural Council will meet with anyone interested in learning how to apply for a grant or in becoming a council member.

For those interested in applying for a grant, we will show you how to access everything you will need, including an online tutorial which will take you through the steps of the application process. Bring a laptop or iPad if you have one, and you can get started right away. You can get started early by going to massculturalcouncil.org/, and search for "Grants."

The online application cycle closes on October 16, after which we will review the proposals and decide how to allocate close to \$8,000. Typically the awards range from \$250 to \$1,000, depending on evidence of good planning, community support, and financial need. Our local council prioritizes grassroots projects and those that need

"seed money" to get started. We also aim for a well-rounded, multi-seasonal slate of projects that represent a diversity of programming: music, poetry, theater, visual arts, and learning experiences are all on the table.

Join the Council

We will also explain what's involved in serving on the council and being part of the grant selection process. Most of what we do happens between October and January when we read through grant applications. Much of our work can be accomplished from home, and we always offer a virtual meeting to those who are away from the Berkshires.

Our Monterey Cultural Council members listed below will be at the September 27 meeting to answer questions and offer support.

—Maggie Barkin

- Maggie Barkin, maggierobertsbarkin@gmail.com
- Stephanie Sloane, stephaniebsloane@gmail.com
- Barbara Dahlman, berkshirebubba@aol.com
- Carole Clarin, crclarin@gmail.com
- Dorene Beller, dorenebeller@yahoo.com
- Erica Stern, ericastern71@gmail.com

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Mondays: *Hablemos!* 10 to 11:30 a.m. *Intermedio y Superior* – to practice Spanish and meet new friends.

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

Tuesdays: Chair yoga, 10 to 11 a.m.

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

Mahjong, 7 to 9 p.m.

Tuesdays and Fridays: Bridge, 1 to 4 p.m.

Wednesdays: Tai chi with David Crowe, 10 a.m. \$8 per class or \$30 for the month. No tai chi on September 6.

Thursday, September 7: Darn yarners, at 10 a.m.

Thursdays, September 7 and 21:

Chorus, 4:15 p.m.

Music jam sessions with Mark Andrews, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. All skill levels are welcome, instruments and singers. If you are interested, please contact Mark Andrews at mccjamgroup@gmail.com.

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

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

Ping pong, 2:30 p.m.

Sundays: Al Anon family group meeting, 9 a.m.

Monday, September 11: Monday supper club, 6 to 8 p.m. Under the tent. Please register by emailing supperclub-monterey@gmail.com. The theme is "It's a Wrap." (See page 15.)

Monday, September 25: Cookbook club, 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. Register by emailing WendyGJ@gmail.com. See page 27.

Friday, September 29: Transformational breathwork, at 5 p.m.

Note: The next wellness check will be in November. Tritown Health will be focusing on vaccination clinics until then.

Special Events

Saturday, September 2: Desperate Catskill Mountain Band, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Free concert under the tent, sponsored by the Monterey Cultural Council.

Saturday, September 9: Mushroom Walk, 10 a.m. with leader John Wheeler (Berkshire Mycological Society). We will meet at the community center and car pool to location (location to be divulged on arrival). Please wear proper attire for mushrooming—good walking shoes and protection from mosquitoes. Bring a collecting basket, and if you have a mushroom you want identified bring it along. Free event, sponsored by the Monterey Cultural Council. Please register by emailing calendar@ccmonterey.org or leave a message at (413) 528-3600.

Thursday, September 14: Yoga nidra, 5 to 6 p.m. Suggested donation \$20. Please register by emailing nancyamonk@gmail.com.

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

—Mary Makuc, MCC Director,
and Nancy Kleban



Colta Ives


Don't let the pretty berries and graceful tendrils fool you—oriental bittersweet is a highly aggressive climber that can overgrow, strangle, and kill even large trees.

Uprooting Invasive Plants

How can we conquer the aggressive plants that strive to overtake our gardens, fields, woods, shorelines, and roadsides, thereby endangering our native plants and animals? Wayne Mezitt, Chair of the Massachusetts Invasive Plant Advisory Group, will help us to identify and eradicate some of our most threatening green adversaries, including Japanese Knotweed, Bittersweet, Burning Bush, Goutweed, and Japanese Barberry. Mr. Mezitt, Past President of the American Nursery and Landscape Association, will present an illustrated tutorial on Saturday, September 30, at 11 a.m., at the Monterey Community Center. Register for this important, informative event by emailing pollinators01245@gmail.com.

—Colta Ives

Native Pollinators Working Group




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Monday Supper Club September 11

Our "Fruitful Harvest" supper club was a heck of a good lime, with an astonishing number of people showing up—over forty-five were there, all contributing dishes that peached some kind of fruit in any way, grape, or form. Our buffet table was quite tasteful, and displayed dishes such as classic caprese, roasted chicken with tarragon blueberry sauce, green salads with dried and fresh fruit, galettes, crisps, and the obvious: good ole fashioned fruit salad. Either this town has some true talent in the kitchen, or it's all a facade—a movie set placed at the end of summer, and someone is about to yell "End Scene!"

Like a closing act, we come to our last supper club under the tent. The weather is getting chillier, days are getting shorter, and it's time to cozy up—the moment has come to say "That's a Wrap!"

Now, don't get caught up in thinking about a turkey, avocado, and spinach wrap that you might order at a cafe, although that does sound delicious. Wrap is not only a noun, but a verb as well: bacon-wrapped dates, prosciutto-wrapped asparagus, tamales, dolmas, crepes, pigs in blankets....a



Google search will provide many more ideas if you find yourself in a bind. Have fun with this one, go wild, and wrap happy!

Our dinner happens to fall on a day that marks the anniversary of a tragedy, so let us all embrace how lucky we are, and embody eternal gratitude for those who sacrifice their well-being for us.

Our dinner is Monday, September 11, at 6 p.m.

If you would like to attend, please RSVP to supperclubmonterey@gmail.com for further details.

—Hanna Jensen

Science, Engineering, Art and Math Workshops

Sparks at Flying Cloud Farm announces that three STEAM workshops for children ages seven through eleven years old will be offered during the fall months at the farm on the New Marlborough South Sandisfield Road. Ceramicist and science educator Jane Burke will lead activities that connect Science, Engineering, Art, and Math. The workshop will be free thanks to the generous support of the Monterey, New Marlborough, and Sandisfield Cultural Councils. The workshops will be on Saturdays, September 23, October 21, and November 18. Pre-registration is required. Contact me at janesburke@gmail.com or text (413) 429-6103.

—Jane Burke



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Parks Commission Kids' Beach Party

Kids' Fun Day at the town beach on August 5 was a big success! The weather was glorious, and everyone enjoyed just being out on the beach all day. There were free hotdogs and popcorn, as well as an old fashioned ice cream truck. Monterey Police provided popsicles. Thank you, Laura Mensi, for making all those hotdogs and bringing them warm to the beach. All afternoon beachgoers of all ages were delighted by Beth Hoffman's face painting artistry. Thank you, Beth! We appreciate John Camp's many years of expertise, which he brought as a judge of the sand castle contest. The lifeguards, Darren and Larry, used the megaphone to encourage everyone to find a castle site and get building. They entered into the spirit of the day with humor as well as with their waterfront safety skills. The bouncy house was a hit with the under-ten crowd. We are grateful to Denise Carnese who monitored the house and the participants all afternoon and kept things bouncing smoothly and to Shannon Amidon Castille for her love of the beach and support for the day's activities. There was quite a big crowd, and Philip Enoch directed the parking, ensuring organization and parking for all. Last but not least—Jim Hunt, as usual, provided backup support such as trash collection, helping to make the day a success and to keep the beach clean.

Enjoy all the remaining beach days this summer in Monterey.

—Tracey Brennan
Parks Commission



Thanks to Grace and Shannon Amidon Castille for the photos.



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	Opening Reception September 1, 5-7 p.m.	
Details about New Marlborough Meeting House events online at NMMeetingHouse.org		
Route 57 on the New Marlborough Village Green		

The Light in September

ripens the grapes that appear at the farmers market, overflowing their baskets, grapes with names like Jupiter, Mars, Faith, Joy, grapes so good they don't seem real.

Last year by September light, I made a grape pie for a wedding (it was a pie-luck), the wedding where he thought I drank too much but I thought I drank just the right amount for a best friend's wedding, and besides, afterwards, I had to lie on his bed before driving home, in that yellow dress which was, roughly, the color of light in September,

which somehow seems lighter, brighter than summer light, the way the ocean is warmest in the fall, holding on to heat the way skin holds a tan.

The light in September has nowhere to hide.

The light in September says, let's just get this over with.

In first grade, my science fair project was "Do plants grow toward the light?" Of course they did, but the school took its science fairs seriously, made us do experiments, with hypotheses and variables to be tested—and I think of this now, watching the plant I've moved over from the window a bit contort itself in protest, birthing arms that grow sideways and twist into the September sun,

which he suggests is blinding me, which beats down hot on the market, on the grapes, on the ones called Gratitude, which are sour. My Evidence withers in September light.

We learned to frame things as questions, in a way that allowed a plant to grow however the hell it wanted to. Maybe that's how I learned to be open-minded, or obstinate, thinking I could use the same Methods and get a different Result, thinking I could have the impossible.

The light in September is steeped in stillness, perhaps that's why we notice it more. The dirge of insects in the meadows. Nothing but light to wake us up in the morning.

I learned how to not cut corners, not jump to Conclusions, how to follow something through, though I knew just exactly how it would end.

It still kind of amazes me—how a plant will nearly uproot itself, splitting and bending, pink-speckled leaves tripping over themselves to grow back toward the light.

—Kateri Kosek

In the Old Woods

In woods the predominant impression is one of restfulness, of trunks that have found their rest in rumpled dusks, no longer in thrall to the sun that dodged their rocketry while plunging west.

Done also with the birds shuttling between treetops at their scribbled ends on the air-blue scrolls unraveling from cloudlets which will never be their friends.

Although like us the trees aspired to height, these toppled towers are no cause for grief, They can not hear the swallows' homing cry on finding them laid low and without leaf.

Oaks whose plumage blotted out the sun and were lyrical as lightning in late fall lie at length in duff where field mice run, never having left the woods at all.

—Don Barkin

Monterey Historical Society

Rob Hoogs sent in a write-up of "Development of a Dream, Part 2," Bob Rausch's presentation on the early days of Gould Farm. Unfortunately there was insufficient space for the entire article. It will be published in the October issue.

Third Thursday History Talks:

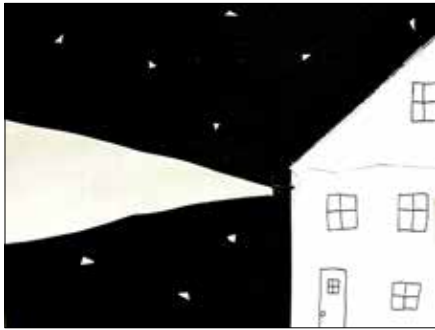
The next Third Thursday History Talk, on Thursday, September 21, at 7 p.m. in the library, is "What's-it?" Our special guest speaker is Charlie Flint. Charlie will bring about a dozen eighteenth-century objects for the audience to try to identify, followed by his explanation about the objects.

Rob Hoogs will lead a Monterey historic mills hike on Saturday, September 23, from 1 to 3 p.m., beginning at the Monterey Library. We will learn about mills along the Konkapot River including foundations of several eighteenth-century mills, old mill dams, and other historic features.

Be prepared to walk on some uneven terrain with a few wet spots. Wear hiking shoes, bring trekking poles if you like, and bug repellent. Total two hours, about one mile. To learn more, and to register, go to "Events" at bidwellhousemuseum.org.

Thank you for your interest in the Monterey Historical Society.

—Rob Hoogs



Letters

Defending the Dark Skies

I wanted to write this article because I went to the “Defending the Dark Skies” presentation at the Monterey Library. When the presentation got started, there was a documentary about dark skies in Maine. There were some astronomers who were talking about the dark-skies parks in Maine. Then Destin Heilman started up a slideshow showing how the dark skies are disappearing in front of our eyes! First there’s how when lights shine into the atmosphere the stars get harder and harder to see. Then there’s how when those bright lights shine into our eyes and we think, “oh, it needs to be brighter.” But no! That’s glare! Those bright blue lights are so bright that we can’t see anything. So, when people are driving on the road and glare gets into their eyes, they can’t see anybody crossing the street. Dr. Heilman also showed us examples of how glare can affect our eyes. I am very concerned about light pollution. I went out last night and looked at the stars, and even at 1:30 in the morning, I could see the light to the North. I noticed, walking in the night, that there were a few lights on buildings that were very bright. I felt disappointed seeing the light blocking out the stars. I hope that people in Monterey turn their lights off to protect our dark skies.

—Everett Kreider, age 9

Daytime Book Group

Wednesday, September 20, at 1:30 p.m., in the library. This month’s book is *The Covenant of Water*, by Abraham Verghese.

—Bonner McAllester



Less than a day after the select board decided to request that National Grid use warmer and fewer street lights for the streetlight replacement project, the power company was on the job retrofitting the old sodium vapor lights with the cooler-temperature LED lights in the center of town. There are real environmental issues with these cooler-temperature lamps.

Told of this development, select board member Susan Cooper said that we still have the option of requesting collars to direct the light downward and turning off unnecessary lights. —Janet Jensen

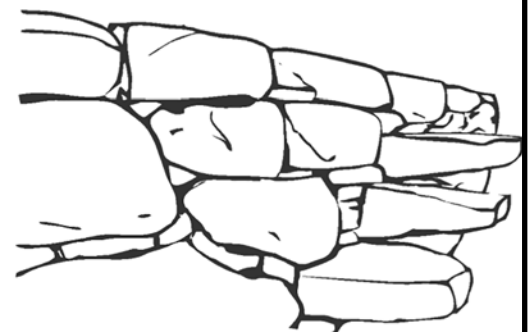


Everett Kreider wrote his letter (at left) and created these two art reflections after attending the “Defending the Dark Skies” presentation on August 18. Paper, construction paper, pens, and glue.

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Housatonic Heritage Walks

Five Fall Weekends of Free, Guided Tours

The Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area will hold the annual autumn “Housatonic Heritage Walks” on five consecutive weekends September 2 and 3 through September 30 and October 1. Dozens of free, guided walks will be offered throughout Berkshire County, MA and Litchfield County, CT.

The public is invited to participate in these family-friendly, informative walks, offered in partnership with our region’s historic, cultural, outdoor recreation organizations. The Heritage Walks are the ideal opportunity to experience and learn about our region’s rich and varied local heritage.

Historians, naturalists, and environmentalists will lead participants on explorations through historic estate gardens and town districts, behind-the-scenes cultural site tours, nature walks, trail hikes, and tours of many of the industrial-site ruins that were once thriving local industries. There will be Native American and African American history walks, a canoe paddling trip on the Housatonic River, and a bike tour on scenic country roads.

Detailed Heritage Walks brochures will be available at libraries, post offices, restaurants, and grocery stores in the region. Details about the walks are available online at housatonicheritage.org. You can download a brochure under the “Experience” tab.

—Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area



Maps will be available at each studio as well. Look for the orange and white Berkshire Pottery Tour road signs at key turns.

Berkshire Pottery Tour

On September 23 and 24, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., the Berkshire Pottery Tour will present fourteen potters at five studios all within a short drive from Monterey. A short preview video of the main potters and studios is available on the Berkshire Pottery Tour website, BerkshirePotteryTour.com. On the home page are photos of the studio owners’ work and links. Guest potters and their links are shown under the “Guest Potters” tab. Admission to the studios is free.

Ellen Grenadier’s studio near the village end of Tyringham Road will also host Connie Talbot and Michael McCarthy. Talbot will be showing and demonstrating her flameware line of pots you can cook in including tagines, casseroles, sauté pans, and more. McCarthy’s work is focused on wheel thrown, wood-fired functional pottery.

Just across the line into New Marlborough folks can visit Linda Skipper’s studio. Linda’s pottery features elegantly simple forms with incised patterns.

Some new guests this year include two emerging artists, Mariana Vasquez-Crede and Hunter Cody, who will be at the Berkshire Art Center’s stop to share their passion for clay and show visitors the ceramic studio at the school.

The other potters include Sarah Hazelke, Mark Rowntree, Dan Bellow, Ingrid Raab, Sarah Haze, Rie McCarthy, Mark Rowntree, and Sidney Schatzky.

—Ellen Grenadier



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Catching up with the Council on Aging

With the coming of fall, many of us are inspired to start new projects. It's a perfect time to begin exercising more regularly and we have two excellent offerings for you.

Exercise with Annie! is returning and we encourage all who are looking for gentle exercise to join her two sessions (September 13 and September 27) this month. She has already developed a loyal following who uniformly report feeling greatly relaxed and renewed after her classes. Dates and details below.

Matter of Balance, a huge favorite in pre-pandemic times, is returning to Monterey. If you are held back by a fear of falling or unsure of your balance, this could be the solution for you. Taught by Kay Purcell, Beth Hoffman, and Linda Riiska. It's an eight-session free course that meets twice a week for four weeks, on Mondays and Thursdays. See dates below. Registration for the series is required. Call or email Kathryn at the number or email below to register.

Van transportation in Monterey is now available for everyone, with expanded hours and new towns added. See ad on page 21 and all the good reasons on page 30.

Finally, keep an eye out for an October meeting to begin planning a "neighbor brigade." We want to give all of you who have offered to help seniors in our community and those who would welcome assistance an opportunity to shape what we hope will become a signature CoA program.

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
CoA Outreach Coordinator/
Administrative Assistant

Correction

On page 30 in the August issue, in the caption under the photo of the Peter Poirier band concert, it was stated, "The band was paid by passing a collection basket." In addition to this the Monterey Council on Aging paid \$400.



A capacity crowd at the community center enjoyed an enlightening and entertaining talk on why "Laughing Matters" by Monterey resident and professional psychologist and psychoanalyst Dr. Sue Epstein to celebrate the council on aging's fiftieth anniversary.



Monterey's Council on Aging gathers frequently as a diverse group at varying local restaurants. Please feel free to join the ever-changing group for lots of laughter and local neighborly news. Baba Louie's in September!

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Council on Aging Coming Events

Monday, September 11: Monthly CoA board meeting at town hall from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. The agenda is posted on the town hall website. All are welcome.

Mondays, September 11, 18, 25, and October 2: Matter of Balance at the community center from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Registration in advance for the series is required. Call or email Kathryn at the number or email above to register.

Additional sessions on Thursdays, September 14, 21, 28, and October 5. Registration required.

Wednesdays, September 13 and 27: Exercise with Annie! at the community center from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. Join us for this very popular class which presents a unique approach to exercising as we age (most exercise done seated). \$10 suggested.

Wednesday, September 13: Movie night at the Monterey Library, at 7 p.m., showing *Dead Poets Society*. A genuinely inspirational turn from Robin Williams grants Peter Weir's prep school drama top honors. A new English teacher is introduced to an all-boys prep school that is known for its ancient traditions and high

standards. The teacher uses unorthodox methods to reach out to his students, who face enormous pressures from their parents and the school. With his help, the students learn to break out of their shells and pursue their dreams. The CoA will serve light refreshments.

Thursday, September 21: Lunch out at Baba Louie's, at noon. Please get in touch with Kathryn to reserve your seat at the table.

Wednesday September 27: Documentary film at the community center, at 2 p.m., showing *It Ain't Over*. According to Rotten Tomatoes, which gives the film a 98%, "This emotional and uplifting documentary about Yogi Berra takes us beyond the caricatures and "Yogisms," and into the heart of a sports legend whose unparalleled accomplishments on the baseball diamond were often overshadowed by his off-the-field persona." Featuring interviews with Billy Crystal and many baseball greats. The CoA will serve light refreshments.

(Please note—no wellness check this month, but Tritown will return in October offering vaccinations.)

Ongoing Services

Parkinson's Support Group: This month's meeting is on Thursday, September 7, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., at the Monterey Library. Richard Pargament began our APDA-approved support group in October 2021. He and Roberta Weiss always provide a kind, compassionate and informative two hours. Caregivers are encouraged to attend. Call the CoA at the number above if you'd like more information.

Transportation: For trips to Great Barrington, Sheffield, Egremont, Stockbridge, New Marlborough, and Pittsfield (Pittsfield is for medical only, Mon. & Wed.). Call (413) 528-1881. Twenty-four hours notice required to guarantee a ride. M-F 8-6, Sat. & Sun. 10-4.

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

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

VAN HOURS EXPANDED!
Shopping fun stuff and even medical
NEW TOWNS ADDED



8 am - 6 pm Mon-Fri
10 am - 4 pm Sat & Sun

Van is now open to everyone in Monterey, though seniors and people with disabilities are given priority.

Call (413) 528-1881
 24 hour notice requested
\$ 8. Round Trip to
Great Barrington
Stockbridge, New Marlborough
Sheffield and Egremont
 (\$15 Round trip to Pittsfield for medical only Mon&Wed)
We can arrange a group shopping trip on a Friday morning only.
Monterey Council on Aging

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Dear Monterey community,

Construction of the new Roadside 2.0 is underway! From the inviting porch to the large windows and nostalgic feel of the red siding, it already feels like a place to meet friends or grab a coffee, scone, and paper to start the day. Imagine how wonderful it will be to have Roadside open again in early 2024.

The ongoing supply chain issues require us to place orders for all the equipment and furnishings by September 2023. That is this month! The cost is \$194,000 to equip the commercial kitchen and breakfast counter. Then there is the retail area where you will be able to buy Gould Farm products such as bread, baked goods, cheese, yogurt, and more. We are eager to launch the Gould Farm store, but first—retail shelves and glass-front refrigerators and freezers are needed to showcase the wonderful foods prepared by the work therapy programs of our dairy farm, bakery, and kitchen.

Please help us ensure that we can put our fixture orders in on time!

Just imagine:

- You treat your visiting grandchild to their favorite breakfast—Roadside’s blueberry pancake—the size of a hubcap!
- Your server welcomes you to Roadside and shares how much they enjoy learning new skills and meeting people.
- You are able to enjoy a latte and a freshly baked scone while sitting on Roadside’s covered porch on a warm fall day.
- For good measure, you grab a dozen Farm baked chocolate chip cookies from Roadside’s store as you head out.



• You remember Roadside sells delicious ready-made meals.

• You swing by to pick up a kimchi grilled cheese from the takeout counter, a fresh Farm yogurt, and a loaf of Harvest Barn bread to enjoy at home.

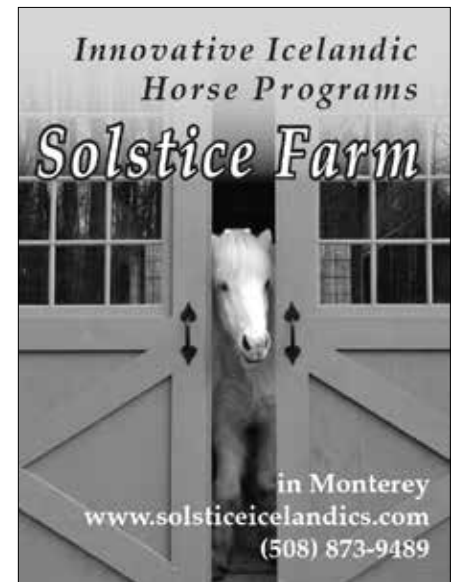
We will place orders once we have raised \$194,000. We know that you are as excited as we are to make Roadside 2.0’s grand opening and the return of our guests’ favorite work therapy program at Gould Farm possible. Together, we can create a vibrant space where people can enjoy delicious meals, connect with one another, and support our guests’ journey to recovery.

Donations can be made online by visiting <https://bit.ly/44XBUEA>.

Checks can be made out to “Gould Farm” and sent to PO Box 157 in Monterey, MA 01245 attn: Kelley Ellsworth.

— Stephanie McMahon

For a more recent photo of the Roadside progress, see page 30.



THE ADVENTURES OF Spirogiø

TRUTHFULLY, I WAS POOPED AFTER ALL THAT DANCING. I HAD TO SIT DOWN.



WHY DO THE THINGS WE LOVE DOING BEST ALWAYS HAVE TO END?



WHY CAN'T WE LIVE IN BLISS ALL THE TIME?



I'VE GOT TO FIGURE THIS OUT!



OUR STORY THUS FAR: OUR HERO CONTINUES TO BE FLUMMOXED BY THE FACT THAT EVERY MOMENT CAN'T BE TRANSCENDENT.

(CHAD)

© KIT PATTEN

Knox Gallery in September

Midori Curtis' *Improvisation* opened at Knox Gallery very early in August. We were delighted that Monterey resident Sarah Varney was able to join Midori as interviewer and prompter. This was a new format for us and was much enjoyed by the audience at the opening reception.

Curtis is a master printmaker. *Improvisation* features monoprints and woodblock prints, two of the various printmaking processes the artist uses to create harmony between what she refers to as "the juxtaposition of cultures and aesthetics."

Curtis is widely exhibited and her work is collected by prominent museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. We are thrilled that she was willing to talk about her work and her creative process.



Kazuo Tuguchi

Sarah Varney, above, with Midori, is a prominent field reporter for NPR, PBS, and other outlets. Although Varney's main focus is on health care, she took on the task of interviewing Monterey artists for the *175th Monterey Anniversary Book*, so she was well prepared for this occasion.

Thanks to the Massachusetts and Monterey Cultural Councils for supporting our artists' talks.

Midori Curtis' *Improvisation* will be on view through September 9.

JD Logan's *Shapes and Colors* will open on September 15, with a reception on Friday, September 22. Please mark your calendars. Logan reports that he finds his work to be liberating and therapeutic. The artist says "I begin each piece with a notion of where I want to go, but once the first paint is applied it then becomes a collaboration between my creative instincts and the paint. I merely get to decide when the interaction ends."

Please join us for Logan's reception



An Interesting Life © JD Logan

on Friday, September 22, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. See the work, and meet the artist.

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

— MaryPaul Yates

my pale arms before me
as I swim the jade green lake
appear, disappear

— Laura S. Denman

To donate, go to the donation site for Memorial Sloan Kettering: giving.mskcc.org/find-a-fundraising-event. Enter: "Splash for Sloan 2023" with event organizer Channing Epstein.



My grandfather and me after our first swim to the island in 2016.

Splash for Sloan 2023 Honoring Paul Epstein

Channing Epstein will be honoring her grandparents Sue and the late Paul Epstein by embarking on a challenging swim in Lake Garfield. As you may remember, Paul swam eighty laps on his eightieth birthday to raise money for Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.

Channing and Paul had a special relationship—bonding over their passion for swimming and giving back to their community. There is no better way to honor her grandfather's strength and charity than by swimming for him in a place he loved beyond measure—while also raising money for the genetic research at MSK.

Research on the genetic makeup of patients and their cancers has been of specific importance to Paul's journey with cancer, so proceeds from this fundraiser will go to Dr. Kenneth Offit's research. Over the last few decades, Dr. Offit has been the driving force behind genetic breakthroughs that changed how cancer medicine is practiced. He has used his findings to change the way cancer is treated and prevented—impacting not only patients at MSK, but patients all over the world.

To read Channing's story, or to donate to Channing's "Splash for Sloan 2023" fundraiser, see below. We are grateful for the support that has the potential to change the course of treatment for so many.

— Sue Epstein

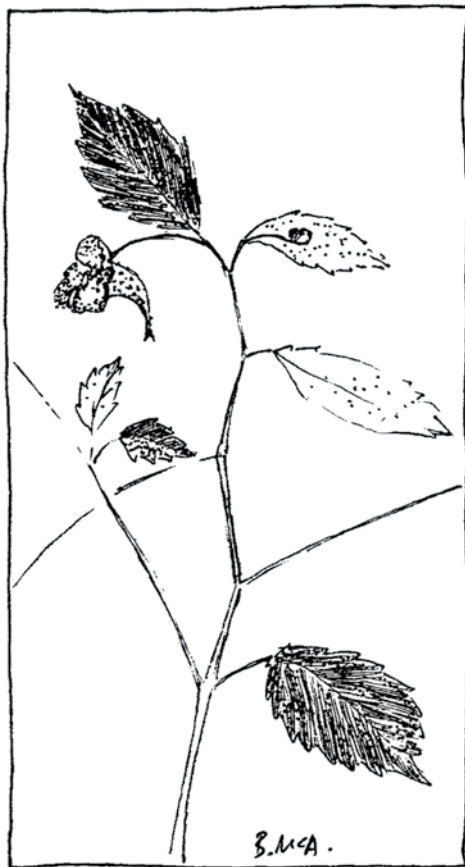
Jewelweed Along the Roadsides, and Elsewhere

Jewelweed is a wild plant in the genus *impatiens*. If the name sounds familiar, maybe it is because this wild character has been domesticated, in the 1960s, and hybridized into a version less gangly and more marketable. Now *impatiens* is a household name and is advertised as “a popular bedding plant.” You can buy it and take it home to brighten up the garden with a variety of colors.

You can also stroll down the road, or look in your compost bin, or even in your vegetable garden which may be a little weedy. There you can see the wild original: jewelweed. It has more than thirty different common names, according to my old family books, and most of them tell something about the plant, also about the folks naming the plants. Some names leave a little to your mind’s imagination.

For instance, why name a fragile, leggy succulent plant that never caused a speck of trouble “kicking-colt”? I can understand some of its other action names, because once it has formed its seedpods, it is active. It is spring-loaded.

The seedpods have five long slim panels, held together at their seams under tension. If you brush against one, it makes a snapping sound, as it bursts along the seams, and out pop the seeds, flicked some distance from the mother plant. This is wild, kind of like a kicking colt, maybe. It is also true



that even if you do not touch the pods, they reach the point at which they spontaneously pop open and fling the seeds out. If you are anywhere near this when it happens, you can hear them. Once I was on hand at just the right moment. It was a clear sunny day, but suddenly it sounded as if there were a sprinkle of rain pitter-pattering near me. No, it was the jewelweeds, the touch-me-nots, the snapweeds, audibly and spontaneously leaping into seed-dispersal action.

Another of its action names is jack-jump-up-and-kiss-me. Erasmus Darwin, poet, physician, and great uncle of the naturalist Charles Darwin, wrote this about the seed dispersal moment of the touch-me-not *impatiens*:

*With fierce distracted eye Impatiens stands
Swells her pale cheeks and brandishes her hands,
With rage and hate the astonished groves alarms
And hurls her infants from her frantic arms.*

Another early British writer, John Joselyn, visited these parts in the seventeenth century and wrote two books about the wonders here. He called jewelweed the humming-bird tree and wrote this: “The Indians make use of it for aches, being bruised between two stones and laid to cold.

But made into an unguent with hog’s grease, there is not a more sovereign remedy for aches upon stroaks.”

Others report the juice of the plant removes warts, so one of its names is wartwort. Even nowadays it is commonly felt to be useful in curing poison-ivy rash. Some say that providentially it often grows near poison ivy. You pick the succulent, juicy jewelweed and crush it a bit, then rub it on the rash.

Speaking of how succulent it is, this is a very juicy plant. Thoreau, who collected all sorts of botanical specimens and carried them home in his hat, found that jewelweed was one species that would not survive this, would wilt inside the hat and not be revived once put in a jar of water. In fact, jewelweed will wilt right where it is growing in a period of drought. But then if there is some rain it springs back upright again, good as ever.

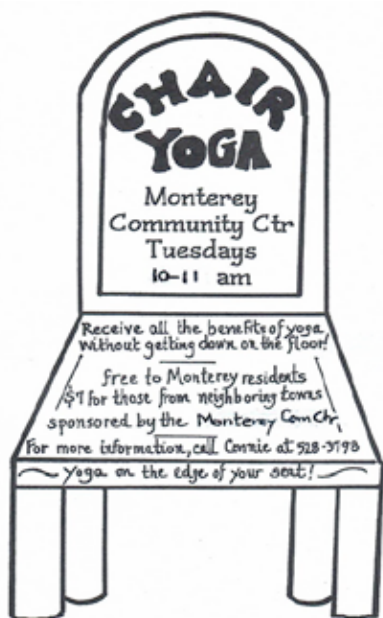
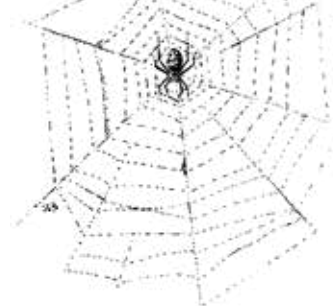
Thoreau’s hat was his botany box. He built shelves inside it and observed that the plants were protected in there and almost all were safe from drying out.

We have two kinds of wild jewelweed in these parts. The more familiar one is “spotted jewelweed,” whose blossoms are orange with little red spots inside. The other one is yellow and one of my books calls it “pale touch-me-not” or *Impatiens pallida*. Its foliage is paler green.

Both are profuse right now along New Marlborough Road. If you walk down from the intersection with route 23, you’ll see orange on the right, yellow on the left. The ones on the left are particularly tall. Hummingbirds and bumblebees are foraging for nectar and spreading pollen from one individual to another. Seedpods are forming, once the blossoms drop away, and though they are still green, they are there to see now, with their five slim panels. One of these days, they will pop.

Can we eat these plants? Maybe so, but most accounts call them medicinal. They are considered anti-inflammatory and anti-fungal. I leave them for the hummingbirds and bumblebees.

—Bonner McAllester



Remembrance

Joyce Scheffey

Joyce Brown Scheffey was born on November 14, 1929 and died on August 4. She spent the last few of her remarkable ninety-three years letting her family and friends know that she had lived a wonderful life and was at peace with it coming to an end.

In 1939, Joyce attended the Manumit School, a co-educational boarding school on a working farm in Pawling, New York with strong ties to the New York labor movement.

After Manumit, Joyce went to Goddard College and then to the Katherine Dunham School, where she met Marlon Brando, Eartha Kitt, and her future husband and Kitty's father, Benton Cole, whom she married in 1949. They divorced in 1951.

In 1953, Joyce married Gwilym S. Brown, with whom she had attended Manumit. Their son Jason was born in 1958. Gwil was a staff writer for *Sports Illustrated* and Joyce, Kitty, and Jason moved to London in 1967 when Gwil became S.I.'s London Bureau chief. She spent three happy years exploring Hampstead Heath, London Museums and Theater, the Continent, meeting lifelong friends and learning how to play tennis on grass courts.

After Gwil's death in 1974, she moved to New Paltz, NY and worked in the Programs Department at Mohonk Mountain House. She was often called upon to be the fourth for guests who wanted to play on Mohonk's clay courts.

Moving to Monterey

A mutual friend introduced Joyce to Lewis Scheffey and they married in 1981.

Joyce's first active engagement in Monterey was helping to repair the bridge that led to Rawson Brook Farm. She made lifelong, beloved friends Susan Sellew, Michele Miller, Peter Murkett, Bonner McAllester and Joe Baker, and so many others through that project.

Lew and Joyce founded the Monterey Preservation Land Trust. Land conservation was Joyce's passion and the MPLT conserved hundreds of acres of land, including the beloved Scheffey homestead,



Joyce and Lew Scheffey celebrating her eightieth birthday.

Turkeybush. Turkeybush was the site of countless family celebrations, political and conservation fundraisers until Lew's death in 2012.

She also served on the Monterey Planning Board and Solid Waste committee, and she and Lew owned and operated the Monterey General Store. They were steadfast supporters of Gould Farm, the Bidwell House Museum, the Monterey Preservation Land Trust, and the Monterey Fire Company's annual steak roast.

She and Lew were involved from the earliest days with beginning the community center. Joe Baker said that she was "a steadfast supporter and friend."

Joyce moved to Woodland Pond in New Paltz in 2018, where her activism found a new home.

She loved music, including Jason's tribute to Jack Kerouac, The Beginning of Bop; Beethoven's String Quartet 15; Count Basie; John Hiatt's Hey There.

She could recite "The Mountain Whippoorwill," Henry V's *Crispin Day* speech, *Talking Union*, most of *The Lady's Not for Burning* (she was delighted to discover Richard Chamberlain's version on the internet), and "Ode to a Nightingale," which she was more than "half in love with."

Her favorite authors were Jane Austen, Christopher Fry, Peter Grainger, Vikram Seth, Anthony Trollope, and most

recently, Amy Bloom, whose book *In Love* she recommended to everyone interested in learning about dying with dignity.

She is survived by her daughter Kitty Brown of New Paltz, NY; her son Jason Brown of Sheffield, MA and his partner Corinna Barnard; her granddaughter Lydia; her grandson Jamie; great-grandchildren and numerous, beloved Scheffeys, including sisters-in-law, stepsons, nephews, nieces, grandchildren; and daughters from another mother, Caitlin Langstaff and Diane Attebury.

Burial at the Rosendale Green Cemetery was attended by family. A memorial gathering will be scheduled for a later date.

Donations in her memory may be made to Greenpeace or Planned Parenthood.

—Kitty Brown

MONTEREY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Online worship is available on the

Lenox website blog:

lenoxucc.org/blog

Elizabeth Goodman, Pastor

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www.montereychurch.org

Find us on Facebook too.

Bidwell House Museum

It has been a lovely summer at the Bidwell House Museum with lectures from some wonderful speakers during our summer history talk series; an exciting (though wet!) living history weekend in June; and scores of delightful history buffs who took tours of the house. On August 19 we held our summer fundraiser “Party Gras” and it was a raucous good time! This year we honored Delight and Paul Dodyk, two people who have done so much for the museum over the years. Guests at the party enjoyed hors d’oeuvres by Kate Baldwin, dancing music with band Planet Zydeco and gorgeous weather! Special thanks to the party committee and event volunteers: Diane Austin and Aaron Nurick, Steve Gilbert, Linnea and Peter Grealish, Rob Hoogs, Jane Johnson, Kathryn Roberts, Karen Traynor, and Linda Saul-Sena. Thanks also to Ken and Mimi Heyman for donating flowers and to our wonderful interns Kaeleigh Heath and Hannah Wheeler for working so hard that day! We couldn’t put together such a great bash without the help of our friends and neighbors.

Each fall we love to participate in the Housatonic Heritage Walks series and this year we are hosting three walks, two at the museum and one beginning at the Monterey Library. First, on September 2, Richard Greene will take you on the Royal Hemlock Trail for a long hike through “Township #1.” Then on September 9, join Tom Ryan for a forest ecology walk where you will learn about tree and plant identification, carbon sequestration, climate and wildlife habitat, and adaptive forestry. Finally on September 23 Rob Hoogs will talk about the history of water-powered industry in Monterey with a presentation in the Monterey Library followed by a walk along the Konkapot River.

The hikes on September 2 and 9 begin at 10 a.m., and the walk on September 23 begins at 1 p.m. For the hikes at the Bidwell House Museum, you can expect to encounter some rough woods, roads, and trails, so wear good hiking shoes, bring water, and a snack if you like. Be aware that the Royal Hemlock trail hike on September 2 will be strenuous. All walks are limited to twenty-five participants, and attendees must pre-register on the museum’s website, bidwellhousemuseum.org/events/.



Honorees Delight and Paul Dodyk with board member Kathryn Roberts.

—Photo by Steve Gilbert

If you are interested in the industrial history of the Berkshires and plan to attend Rob Hoog’s September 23 Housatonic Heritage walk, you should also consider attending a talk we are hosting at the museum on Sunday September 17 at 1 p.m. with author John Dickson. Drive around the county, and it’s hard to miss the large, brick building on the corner, behind the trees, or down the street. They’re in almost every town, over 500 of them in the Berkshires by the end of the 1800s, producing textiles, iron, paper, glass, shoes, rakes, or dozens of other goods sold to the farthest reaches of the planet. Join Dickson, author of *Berkshire County’s Industrial Heritage*, to explore the forgotten world of these mills, their owners and innovators, and the ancestors who worked in them. This talk is limited to fifteen people, and tickets will be on sale on the museum website in early September.

The museum is still open for tours by appointment through October, so if you did not get a chance to take a tour over the summer, you still have time! Tour times are Monday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m. Check out the “Plan Your Visit” page on our website for more information. As always, the museum grounds—194 acres of woods, fields, historic stone walls, trails, and picnic sites—are open all year, free of charge. You can take the “Outside the House” tour, walk the Native American Interpretive Trail, view the gardens, or hike the trails. Maps of the trails can be found on the front porch of the museum or downloaded from the website. The program of events can be found on the museum’s website at bidwellhouse-museum.org.

*—Heather Kowalski
Executive Director*

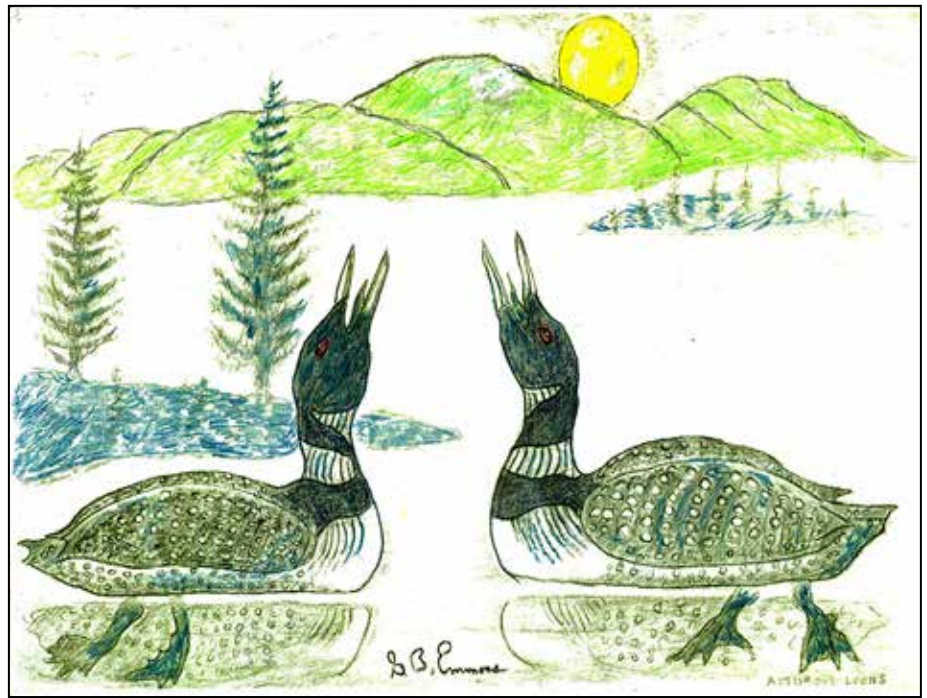


Ancient Loons on Wilderness Lakes

The common Loon is a very ancient species. Their earliest predecessors go back seventy million years. They have become a beloved symbol of the wild lakes where they live now.

As in my illustration, loons swim very low in the water, partially submerged, and propel themselves with churning webbed feet. They are relatively dense, with almost solid bones, resulting in low buoyancy, so they can easily dive and stay submerged for long distances. Their ability to stay submerged and swim fast makes them very successful hunters. They cannot stand or walk upright on dry land by themselves. To become airborne from the water they need a very long start, literally running on the surface of the water building speed to get into the air. With insufficient distance available they can become stranded in the attempt. In flight they stretch out with their long necks and bills, and a tail contour that streamlines the air for maximum lift.

The calls of the Loon echo across the placid evening surfaces. The calls are very clear coming through the darkness, but are not easy to locate. There is the startling yodeling alarm that ripples through a peaceful silence when humans get too close to the nest. It is accentuated by a sudden wild flapping of wings against chest to insure terror in the intruding predators. Even more soulful on a dark night is their eerie wail to locate a missing mate as the sun goes down. Henry David Thoreau at Walden Pond told his friends it was the most un-earthly sound he had ever heard.



A reproductive pair of Loons require at least one-third of a mile across clear and clean waters to insure success. They nest along undisturbed shores just above the waterline. This helps the chicks get into the water within hours after hatching. As lakes get busier with motorized boats, the nests can be seriously threatened by the wake and wash of watercraft. Once in the water the young can be seen getting free rides on the backs of their parents. Like many young birds juvenile Loons soon learn to become independent when mom and dad leave them behind to head off on migration in autumn. Instead of a north to south direction, they migrate from west to east to spend winters in the coastal salt waters. They soon lose their dramatic summer black-and-white plum-

age pattern. Once the juveniles settle in the coastal oceans they tend to stay there for the next two years.

—George B. Emmons

Monterey Cook Book Club August 28 Lunch Meeting

The monthly Monterey Cook Book Club met for the second time on Monday, August 28, at the community center. There were seven of us with Wendy Jensen and Susan Johnson hosting. The featured cook book was *Milk Street: The New Rules*. We had a wonderful lunch of several soups, a bean stew, a watermelon feta cheese salad, and finished with four desserts. The conversation was lively and informative and the meal was enjoyed by all.

September Meeting

Our next meeting will be on Monday, September 28, at 11:45 a.m., at the community center. The featured cookbook will be *Eating from the Ground Up: Recipes for Simple, Perfect Vegetables*, by Alana Chernila. 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. Wendy Jensen and Susan Johnson will be hosting this meeting. Twelve spots are available, so please register with Wendy by email: wendygj@gmail.com.

—Wendy Jensen



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The Wilds of August: Birds, Bears, Borers, and More

This has been another wild month in Monterey. Ed Salsitz of Beartown Road sent dietary bear photographs (below): scat full of chokecherry seeds, well-fertilized to continue the shrub with its delicious fruits, also a photograph of the cherries on the tree, or shrub.



Bear scat above, choke-cherries below



How to tell a shrub from a tree? *The Shrub Identification Book*, by George W.D. Symonds, 1963, puts it this way: "A relatively small, woody plant with several stems (instead of a single main trunk as with most trees.)"

Roberta Weiss has seen an American Woodcock, also many bluebirds from two broods at her place, and tree swallows. She saw a Bald Eagle over in Hudson, NY.

Allan Dean saw a two-inch-long beetle and sent a photograph (at right). This is a "Broad-necked Root Borer," or "Giant Root Borer," one of several species of beetle whose larvae or grubs bore into tree roots and later emerge above ground as big flying beetles. Anna Poirier was

lucky and saw a Yellow-Billed Cuckoo flying and moving low in grasses and flowers at Gould Farm. She also reports the youngsters of phoebes, kingbirds, bluebirds, and many kinds of swallows, hunting and catching insects. She saw a "female goldfinch gathering thistle fluff for her nest, while a male feasted on thistle seed." Ed Salsitz watched a goldfinch "nibbling on a sunflower," taking seeds right off the plant.



Bonsai Cox took a photograph of a handsome buck deer near Steven's Pond (above). She also reported several kinds of moths on the screens at night at her place. Here on the east end of Hupi Road, Joe Baker saw a Carolina Wren near our house.

Maureen Banner sent photographs of a very small, exquisite fly with its wings shiny dark brown, decorated with white patterns (top right). The body is black, with lighter legs and head. Looking it up, Maureen found this to be a species of "picture-winged fly." Its Latin name is



Delphinia picta with the second or species name meaning "painted," from the Latin.

The Banners also found a three-inch-long caterpillar, one of the many kinds of hornworm in these parts (below).



On Griswold Road, they took photographs of a handsome young American Chestnut tree, still coming up from the underground roots around here, as they have for a century (below). The trees above ground sometimes live long enough to make nuts with their prickly hulls, or chestnut burrs, but more often they die without getting this far. The chestnut blight has been with us all the decades, and hits the trees once they get above-ground.





Water snakes have been out sunning themselves all over town and I have accounts from Elizabeth Maschmeyer, Bonsai Cox, and Bob Cutick, who writes of his snake (above): "This little ole water snake tried to slither away with our canoe. He didn't go far. Couldn't do a J-stroke." The snake instead is posed on the dock beside the canoe.

And last month Steve Snyder sent in some photographs of low-slung spider webs (below), some in the form of funnels heading down to the ground. Cora and I went camping late in August down by the Connecticut shore and found the same kind of webs near our tent, with dew sparkling on the lines.



Susan Sellow sent these photographs (above) of little snapping turtles hatching. They were released right at their nest-site, after a brief photo session.

Thank you, one and all, for your photographs and sightings, for staying in touch and giving us all a walk on the wild side of our town.

— Bonner McAllester,
(413) 528-9385, bonnermca@gmail.com



Berkshire Fish Hatchery Last Derby of the Year

The last fishing derby for 2023 is on Saturday, September 9, from 9 to 10:30 a.m., for children thirteen and younger.

The derby is held at the lower pond at 240 Hatchery Road, New Marlborough (go down River Road in Monterey).

Sponsored by Friends of the Berkshire National Fish Hatchery and the National Fish and Wildlife Service.

—Linda Thorpe

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The FREE Matter of Balance program may be the solution.

The Councils on Aging of Monterey and Sandisfield will bring the
Matter Of Balance program to Monterey
in September and October

Monterey Community Center 468 Main Rd 1:30 - 3:30 PM
Mondays and Thursdays
September 11, 14, 18, 21, 25, 28 October 2, 5

Taught by coaches: Beth Hoffman, Kay Purcell, and Linda Riiska
Call 413-528-1443 x 112 to register.





Select Board Corner

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

MontereyMA.gov

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

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

For general inquiries, please click "Contact Us."

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

Police Emergency Contacts

- For real emergencies, call **911**.
- The email address for the dispatch service is:

dispatch@sdb.state.ma.us.

- Police dispatch service number:

(413) 236-0925.

- For non-emergencies to contact the Monterey Police Department, call:

528-3211

Top Ten Reasons to Take the Van

We are lucky to enjoy an incredibly rich array of activities in Monterey, thanks to our community center, cultural council, parks commission, council on aging, and so many creative and generous residents who share their knowledge and talent. But perhaps you want to do something different this week and don't drive, or can't right now, or your car is in the shop. If that sounds like you, there are lots of options with the van. You don't have to feel isolated or alone. Talk to a friend and see if any of the ideas below interest you both. And let's keep the list growing. Send your suggestions to coaoutreach@monterey.ma.gov and we will publish them in the October *Monterey News*.

Remember—the van is now available to all Monterey residents. See the accompanying ad for information on hours and destinations.

The Reasons

10. Enjoy the Farmers Market in Great Barrington on Saturday morning (or the Sheffield Farmers Market on Friday afternoon) to buy fresh fruit and veggies and beautiful flowers for your home.

9. Visit the art gallery at the New Marlborough Meeting House, or attend one of their always interesting and engaging events.

8. Shop at Ward's or Agway for chrysanthemums while they are in season.

7. On days when the red BDE coffee truck isn't in town, have breakfast in Stockbridge at Stockbridge Coffee and Tea, or The Lost Lamb, or go later and have lunch at the Main Street Cafe. Any time of day, buy some old-fashioned candy at the General Store and shop at the Red Lion Inn gift shop.

6. Lose yourself in the beauty of the Berkshire Botanical Garden. Don't miss the new meadow walk and the Leonhardt Galleries. The garden is free on Tuesdays.

5. Let someone else cook. Meet friends for breakfast, lunch, or a very early dinner at one of many restaurants in Great Barrington, Sheffield, Stockbridge, Egremont or New Marlborough. There are a lot of them!

4. Take advantage of Guido's 10% senior discount Monday through Wednesday. You might want to try their new cafe, too.

Contributions in August

Jeff Purvis
Julia & Jon Melzer
Holly Kulka
Stephen & Ruth Dube
Richard Greene
June Thomas
Lin Howitt
Margaret Dudley

We do our fund raising in the spring, but we wouldn't make it until next spring without these additional contributions month-after-month.

VAN HOURS EXPANDED!
Shopping fun stuff and even medical
NEW TOWNS ADDED



8 am - 6 pm Mon-Fri
10 am - 4 pm Sat & Sun

Van is now open to everyone in Monterey, though seniors and people with disabilities are given priority.

Call (413) 528-1881
 24 hour notice requested
\$ 8. Round Trip to
Great Barrington
Stockbridge, New Marlborough
Sheffield and Egremont
 (\$15 Round trip to Pittsfield for medical only Mon&Wed)
We can arrange a group shopping trip on a Friday morning only.
Monterey Council on Aging

3. Spend some time at the Naumkeag Mansion in Stockbridge. Walk through the elegant home and gorgeous gardens.

2. If you miss the feeling of pavement under your feet, do some window shopping in Great Barrington, maybe buy yourself something special you don't really need, and top it off with ice cream at the Soco Creamery.

1. Take a trip to the dispensary in Egremont. (Only your driver will know.)

— Lin Saberski, chair
Council on Aging

Calendar

The MCC calendar is on page 14.

The Council on Aging calendar is on page 21.

Sundays: Monterey softball: Batting practice at 10, games begin at 10:30 as weather permits.

Saturday, September 2: Desperate Catskill Mountain Band, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Free concert under the tent, sponsored by the Monterey Cultural Council.

Wednesday, September 6: Main Road culvert meeting on Zoom, 7 p.m. See page 3 for how to register for the Zoom link.

Thursday, September 7: Parkinson's support group, 2 to 4 p.m., in library. See page 21.

Saturday, September 9: Fishing derby, 9 to 10:30 a.m. See page 29.

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.

Monday, September 11: Monday supper club, 6 p.m. See page 15.

Tuesday, September 12: 8 Town Planning Board chair Q&A session on the schools merger, 6:30 p.m.. See page 8.

Saturday, September 16: Lenox Contra Dance, 7:15 to 10:30 p.m., 65 Walker Street, Lenox. Live music, all dances taught. LenoxContraDance.org.

Sunday, September 17: Bidwell History talk with John Dickson, on Berkshire's industrial heritage, 1 p.m. See page 26.

Wednesday, September 20: Daytime book group, 1:30 p.m., in the library. This month's book is *The Covenant of Water*, by Abraham Verghese.

Friday, September 22: Knox Gallery reception for JD Logan, 6 to 7:30 p.m. See page 23.

Saturday & Sunday, September 23–24: Berkshire Pottery Tour. See page 19.

Wednesday, September 27: Monterey Cultural Council meeting. Attend if you'd like to join the council or apply for a grant. See page 13.

Monday, September 28: Cookbook club, 11:45 a.m., MCC. See page 27.

Saturday, September 30: Invasive plants tutorial, 11 a.m., MCC. See page 14.

Saturday, October 7: Library strategic planning forum, 10:30 a.m., in the library. See page 2.

Monterey News

The *Monterey News* is an independent nonprofit corporation dedicated to fostering communication in the Monterey community. We invite signed letters, articles, drawings, poetry, and photographs. Submissions may be sent via email to montereynews9@gmail.com or to PO Box 9, Monterey, MA, 01245. For advertising rates or other information, contact the Editor at (413) 329-7912 or email.



Young fish in a Berkshire Fish Hatchery tank. —Photo by Nancy Manzano



Stephen Moore

Roadside 2.0, on Sunday, August 27. Red horizontal tongue & groove siding, windows—we can begin to see where we'll be sitting inside or out. Contribute to the equipment fund—see page 22.

MONTEREY NEWS

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*Contributions from local artists this month:
Rachel Jo Arnow, p. 24; Maureen Banner, p. 29;
Everett Kreider, p. 18; George Emmons, p. 27;
Bonner McAllester, p. 24.*

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