

the **Monroe** news

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Departing Council President Koppel Heads to the Freeholders

Township Council President Leslie Koppel resigned from her longtime seat February 16 to accept an appointment to the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

"I regret submitting my resignation; that's the hardest part about all of this," she said. "I grew up in Monroe, and it's an exciting time to live here. It's all very bittersweet."

With her children, Averi, 12, Remi, 18, and Jacob, 21, at her side, Koppel took the oath of office at the Freeholder's February 16 meeting in New Brunswick.

"We wish Council President Koppel nothing but success in her future endeavors," said Monroe Mayor Gerald Tamburro. "The Freeholders are very fortunate to have such a civically engaged individual in their midst. We know as she settles into her new role, Leslie will represent our community and

bring greater awareness to the issues that concern Monroe residents."

Despite her political ascension, the 49-year-old Monroe native says her hometown hasn't heard or seen the last of her.

"I plan on still being active in the community," she said. "I'm not saying goodbye to Monroe. My roots are here, my garden is here and my kids are here."

Koppel will replace former Freeholder Deputy Director Carol Bellante, a South Brunswick resident, who officially stepped down February 3, citing retirement and her intentions to spend more time with family.

Koppel has been a fixture of Monroe's Democratic Party since first breaking onto the political scene as a Township



Council President Leslie Koppel

Councilwoman in 2006.

Since then, she's served as a member of both the Middlesex County Federation of Democratic Women and the Monroe Township League of Women Voters and as a former Chair of the Mercer County Human Relations Committee.

In her nine-to-five capacity, Koppel is the executive director at Rise A Community Service Partnership, a Hightstown-based social service organization geared toward case management, food access and youth programming for low-income individuals and families.

While initially serving Bellante's unexpired term through 2017, Koppel confirmed

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Retirement Nears for Veteran B.A. Wayne Hamilton

Steer your gaze in nearly any direction of the township and you'll find Wayne Hamilton's fingerprints.

The longtime township business administrator, widely considered as one of the framers of modern-day Monroe, is poised for retirement, officially bidding a professional farewell to the

community March 31.

"Every person gets a signal when it's time," 63-year-old Hamilton said. "I got mine a little over a year ago."

His first real taste of government came shortly after he graduated with a bachelor's degree from Montclair State University.

Continued on page 4



Wayne Hamilton

Check out the local calendar of events, pages 10-11.

TOWN HALL

1 Municipal Plaza • Monroe Township, NJ 08831
www.monroetwp.com

ELECTED OFFICIALS

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Gerald Tamburrogtamburro@monroetwp.com

Council President:

Stephen Dalinasdalina@monroetwp.com

Council Vice President:

Elizabeth Schneidereschneider@monroetwp.com

Council Members:

Blaise Dipierrobdipierro@monroetwp.com

Michael Leibowitzmleibowitz@monroetwp.com

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Township Main Number	.....(732) 521-4400
Animal Control	.....(732) 521-0222
Construction Office	.....(732) 656-4585
Court Administrator	.....(732) 521-4020
Township Engineer	.....(732) 605-9440
EMS and First Aid (non-emergency)	.....(732) 521-1880
Health Department	.....(732) 521-4400 ext. 192
Environmental Protection	.....(732) 521-4400 ext. 118
Monroe Township Library	.....(732) 521-5000
Utilities Department	.....(609) 655-1050
Office of Senior Services	.....(609) 448-7140
Parks Department	.....(732) 723-5000
Police (non-emergency)	.....(732) 521-0222
Public Works	.....(732) 656-4575
Recreation	.....(732) 723-5000
Recycling	.....(732) 656-4575
Tax Collector	.....(732) 521-4405
Township Clerk	.....(732) 656-4573
Traffic Safety	.....(732) 521-0222 ext. 126
Transportation	.....(609) 443-0511

Mayor's Testimony at the State Senate Select Committee on School Funding Fairness, February 2, 2017

"Good morning, I am Mayor Gerald W. Tamburro from Monroe Township in Middlesex County and I am here to testify that the New Jersey school-funding formula is broken.

Monroe Township is one of the fastest growing municipalities in New Jersey. In the last seven (7) years, Monroe Township has issued 2,153 certificates of occupancy for new residential construction with 1,058 of those being age-restricted. Now, with the recent affordable housing court settlement, over 4,000 additional residential housing units will be built over the next 20 years and only 700 will be age-restricted (in compliance with the requirements of the Act and our court settlement).

Public school student enrollment, in the same seven-year period, has skyrocketed from 5,500 students to over 6,600 students or 20% growth. Despite an increase in enrollment of approximately 300 students this year, our State Aid only increased \$15,000 – this funds one student, 1 of 300. It is anticipated that 300 new students will be added in each of the next five years.

The amount of State

Aid received in the same period has been devastating to our taxpayers. Instead of getting an increased amount of State Aid, the exact opposite has taken place. Using the baseline 2009/2010 school year (before the mid-year reduction), the Township school district and taxpayers have sustained a cumulative loss of over \$16 million in State Aid for our public schools.

With the State-imposed affordable housing mandates and the lack of builder-impact fees in New Jersey, local officials are rendered almost defenseless in slowing the residential growth for a community.

Despite the lack of support from the State and its housing mandates, the municipal government has PARTNERED with District officials by introducing the following initiatives to slow down the growth and its impact on the schools:

- We have purchased over 5,000 acres of open space and over 1,000 acres of preserved farmland, with more on the drawing board.

- We have a large inventory of age-restricted housing.

- Increased 6-acre to 10-acre zoning in parts of the Township.

- The Township has partnered with the Board of Education on several shared services initiatives and capital improvements.

- The Township expended over \$1 million and provided other open space property to secure 30 acres for the Monroe Township High School.

- The Township provided 30 acres of developer-donated land for the construction of Oak Tree School.

In spite of our past & continuing efforts by the municipal government, our Board of Education and the students in the district have suffered from being underfunded by the State. During the last 12 months, we have met with Senate President Sweeney, the Commissioner of Education, and our local legislative delegation to explore a different approach for the State to assist the underfunded school districts, such as Monroe, for more equitable school funding from the State of New Jersey. Now it is time for action. The taxpayers and the State's children deserve and demand it.

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the **Monroe** news

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Mayor Gerald W. Tamburro

Hard Work Was at the Center of Wayne's World

By Mayor Gerald W. Tamburro

Goodbyes are never easy and it feels like we've been saying far too many as of late.

March 31 marks a bittersweet day for us here in Monroe's town hall, as our Business Administrator, Wayne Hamilton, heads into retirement after devoting 15 years to our community.

Being the business administrator in any community in New Jersey for more than a decade is largely considered an anomaly.

It's often long taxing hours and on most days, a thankless job, which

has typically led to a high turnover rate in municipalities across the State.

Nonetheless, we here in Monroe couldn't be more thankful for Wayne's wealth of knowledge, unshakeable leadership and guidance over all these years.

Like most in his field, Wayne was tasked with steering the Mayor and Council in the right direction, oversight of the municipality's various departments and day-to-day operations, ensuring our divisions were following the letter of the State and federal laws and more importantly, one of his great labors of love, budgeting.

As many of you may be aware, with Wayne at the helm, the Township's bond rating has inched its way up to AA plus

status and is expected to top out at the peak rating of AAA before the year's end.

In part, we credit that accomplishment to our business administrator, who ensured our fiscal integrity with a strong budgetary performance and ample reserves.

Many of the programs our residents have come to cherish are the indirect handiwork of Wayne, who pushed for measured expansion and growth when a housing and warehousing boom freed up funding.

For almost eight years, and under some public scrutiny, he pushed for a library expansion, a new recreation center and our most recent addition, the senior center.

Of course, he's led Monroe through several dark hours – from school

budget defeats to the hurricane-caused flooding to the Great Recession – and we landed on our feet each time, much in part because Wayne always had a set of viable options to present to us.

Aside from his professional endeavors, we have watched and admired Wayne's personal commitment to public service over the years.

He was appointed to Spotswood's Recreation Commission at the early age of 18.

Within four years, he ran for Borough's Council, where he held a seat behind the dais for a decade.

He rose to some local political stardom when he became the borough's mayor at only 26; although, he'd eventually leave the post to step

behind the curtain, helping administer municipal government.

Wayne is also a veteran member of the Spotswood Volunteer Fire Department, having spent five of those years as the organization's chief engineer.

While we here at Monroe are sad to lose such an important facet of the township, of our family, we count ourselves fortunate for having Wayne for this long of a run.

If any of our residents would like to see him off, I invite you to attend his final Monroe Township Council meeting March 6 at 7 p.m.

In the interim, we have been searching for his replacement, a person who undoubtedly will have some very large shoes to fill.



Mayor Tamburro meets the library staff at the popular Bookmobile.

Koppel Heads to the Freeholders

Continued from page 1

that she'd be on the ticket to run for the full three-year seat come November's election.

"Monroe has always had a good working relationship with the County, taking advantage of shared services agreements and open

space acquisitions," she said. "I see how the County and a municipality work together successfully; and if I can bring that to other municipalities in Middlesex County, then that's my goal."

Meet the Author of *What Was Mine*

The library is hosting an author talk with Helen Klein Ross on Thursday, March 30 at 2 p.m.

Ms. Klein Ross is the author of *What Was Mine*, a gripping emotional tale of a woman who kidnaps an infant when the opportunity presents itself.

Since there was a very similar case recently in the news, it'll be interesting to hear what Helen has to say.

<http://www.helenkleinross.com/about-helen-klein-ross/bio/>

Retirement Nears for Veteran B.A.

Continued from page 1

At age 22, Hamilton made a successful bid for the Spotswood Borough Council.

Two short years later, he rose to the ranks of Council President and by 26, he clinched a major victory during the Borough's mayoral election.

"I had a set number of things I wanted to accomplish in that six-year run as Mayor," he said of his youthful tenure as mayor. "After that I had no desire to continue. Continued elected service was not in my future"

At the time, much of his career was staked in the private sector's transportation industry, where he navigated buyouts, fluctuating markets and extensive traveling in various supervisory capacities.

By a stroke of serendipity, he sought a graduate degree from Rider University and began carpooling with Monroe's eventual-Mayor Richard Pucci.

In 1996, Hamilton transitioned to working full time in government, taking the reins as Spotswood's administrator.

Six years would pass before Pucci cornered Hamilton with a job offer.

"He said, 'You're not leaving my office until

you say yes. I need you in Monroe,'" Hamilton recalled. "I'm very lucky to have served under Mayor Pucci and Mayor (Gerald) Tamburro." At the time of his hiring, Hamilton was asked to become a State-certified Qualified Purchasing Agent, which has benefitted the Township taxpayers.

With a population of around 28,000, it was a period when Monroe had yet to reach its full build-out potential, residentially and commercially.

"It was in the beginning of that sustained growth," Hamilton explained.

The community has grown to well over 40,000 people and watched its bond rating climb to an AA plus status during his tenure.

It's overcome major natural disasters, including flooding, lengthy power outages and downed trees on municipal roadways brought about by Hurricane Irene and then again with Hurricane Sandy.

"As a community, we really rallied together," Hamilton said. "I'd like to think I was a part of that."

All the while, Hamilton looked to guard taxpayer's dollars while expanding services.

Between 2005 and 2013, the township embarked on a number of projects, from expansion projects of both the library and community center to the construction of standalone senior center.

"You have to get those things in place while you're still growing," Hamilton said, describing the delicate balance involved in spending and ratables and property tax revenues in a wise and timely fashion.

In terms of regrets, Hamilton says his biggest will be leaving behind the employees he's become so fond of.

"Of course there are some things I won't miss," Hamilton said, revealing that he rarely looked forward to the collective bargaining process and the annual request for qualifications for professional services.

As for the future, only time will tell, Hamilton said.

"I'm not adverse to continuing to serve the public in some capacity," he said. "But I'm walking away with my head held high, knowing that I served the people of Monroe to the best of my ability."



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A Word from the School Superintendent

By Dr. Michael Kozak, Superintendent, Monroe Township School District

Do you remember what you were doing when Neil Armstrong became the first person to step foot on the moon? Or, perhaps you remember the excitement that was generated in this country when John Glenn became the first American to orbit the earth? If so, you are a member of the Greatest Generation, as coined by journalist Tom Brokaw. The Greatest Generation fought and/or participated in the war effort and then responded to the threat posed by Russia's launch of Sputnik by answering President Kennedy's call to put a man on the moon.

If you were not alive during the Gemini or Apollo space missions, perhaps the success of the space shuttle program or the beautiful pictures of the far reaches of space brought back by the Hubble Space Telescope or one of the many satellites piqued your interest in science.

For me, the movie *The Martian* (2015), which details the story of an astronaut stranded on Mars and how he uses his knowledge of science and ingenuity to stay alive until his rescue, represents the type of learning skills that students should acquire

in school. That is, learning should be interdisciplinary and applicable to real-life situations. So, how do we teach students these skills?

In the last two years, teachers and administrators have collaborated on strategies for emphasizing Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) in students' learning. The goal was to not only introduce STEM activities in the classroom, but to create learning environments where students had to use critical thinking and creativity to address real-world issues. In the next couple of paragraphs, I will present some of the many ways our students were engaged in STEM.

Students in Barclay Brook are learning how to use computer programming to have mini robots steer through a course. The students worked in teams to learn how to make the robots turn, continue on a path and knock down mini bowling pins. Programming like this is used in self-driving cars, drones and other real-life applications.

Brookside students are learning basic architectural skills by collaborating on redesigning

playground space. Applegarth students worked on the "Run-away Pumpkin" project, which challenged students to discover how the incline of their ramp affected the distance their pumpkin rolled. Students in Oak Tree participated in an "Escape Room Challenge," which involved students using their academic skills in a collaborative effort with their peers to unlock clues leading to their "escape." High school students worked with Mill Lake students last year to create full size wooden go-carts that were built with aerodynamic principles. Students in Woodland School have been working with Lego Mindstorm to create programmable robots.

In Monroe Township Middle School, Mrs. Montgomery's 8th grade students worked on coding activities with Sphero and Finch Robots. While using the robots, students tried to program their way through a maze or spell out the letters MTMS! They also were able to use Makey Makey's to create their own game controllers for programs they created using Scratch!

This past summer

two of our high school students, Geetasravya Vegunta and Ariana Yousafzai, under the direction of Dr. Christopher Himmelheber, a science teacher at Monroe Township High School, participated in the 2016 Waksman Student Scholars Program, an authentic research project in molecular biology and bioinformatics. Rutgers University hosted the project, which brought teachers and students from 32 New Jersey and Pennsylvania high schools together to study genes from duckweed, an aquatic plant, and its use in bioremediation, and its potential use as a biofuel.

Monroe Works to Increase State Aid

We are continuing to work with Mayor Tamburro and our State legislators to increase the amount of state aid the school district receives. The existing formula for distributing

state aid to school districts has not been followed for several years. This resulted in districts like Monroe Township and other school districts with growing enrollments being severely underfunded, while districts with shrinking enrollment continued to be over funded.

We have met with Senate President Sweeney, written legislation and met with the Commissioner of Education, but all to no avail. However, we are continuing our efforts and we will continue to bring awareness of our plight to Trenton. As Superintendent of Schools in Monroe, I have also testified before two State Committees on how the lack of state funding is having a detrimental effect on our taxpayers and our ability to provide the resources that we need to house our growing student population. I will keep you updated on this process in future editions.

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Monroe's Veterans Day: A Salute to Service

Each year, when the calendar settles on November 11, you'll find Monroe's veterans, officials and residents out in full force honoring all those who've served their country.

That tradition stood in 2016, as a group consisting of the American Legion Post 522 and the local Korean War Veterans' chapter, huddled around the Veteran's Monument at the Monroe municipal complex to pay homage to the millions who have donned the uniform.

While the breezy morning ceremony opened with a color guard, a presenting of colors and a salute to veterans, it closed with a nondenominational prayer and a bugler belting out Taps, a reverent and more than century-old military tune.

In the interim, stirring speeches and somber moments underscored the gravity of the tribute, said Nicholas Ferrarotto, Monroe resident and commander of American Legion Post 522.

Dignitaries like Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman, Mayor Gerald Tamburro, several Township Council members and a representative from the State's Department of Veterans Affairs were on site to mark the occasion.

For his part, Mayor Tamburro presented Ferrarotto with a Township proclamation recognizing the 75th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack, an esteemed token that now occupies a designated American Legion case in the municipal building.

"After the ceremony, we all got on a bus, provided by the township, with all of our flags and paraphernalia," Ferrarotto said. "We headed over to the Veteran's Memorial Park on the other side of Monroe and basically, held a second ceremony. The park has a battlefield cross completed by a Boy Scout. It's a sculpture of a pair of boots and a rifle upside down with a helmet."

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PBA 255 – Benevolent As Ever

From non-perishables to toys to monetary donations, the Monroe Township Police Benevolent Association 255 has proven its charitable drive knows no limits.

Members rang in fall with a polar bear plunge in support of Special Olympics New Jersey at Asbury Park on November 12 and by holding a food collection for the Monroe Township Senior Center, where cases upon cases of Thanksgiving staples made their way to dozens of needy local residents' tables.

More recently, the organization concluded its third annual holiday toy drive to benefit the Bristol-Myers Squibb Children's Hospital at Robert Wood Johnson in New Brunswick.

Coordinators set a

collection window between late November and December 8, and an overwhelming community response followed.

As a result, officers hand-delivered hundreds of unwrapped toys to the hospital December 12.

"The generous donations of toys and games from township residents and our community partners helped make patients' stay at the children's hospital as normal as possible," said Monroe Township Chief of Police Michael E. Lloyd.

In yet another philanthropic push, Monroe's PBA is out in full force fundraising to assist 12 of its own Police Unity Tour ride participants.

Established in 1997, the ride draws thousands from around the nation to New Jersey each spring. So begins



The 2016 Holiday Toy Drive

the yearly and daunting trek by bicycle down to Washington D.C. to honor and support officers who've lost their lives in the line of duty.

Last year, Monroe's officers were among the approximately 2,200 riders, who helped raise \$2.5 million for the National Law Enforcement Officer's Memorial, the tour's official beneficiary as of 2010.

Each respective rider is tasked with donating \$1,850 – a challenge that's led the local PBA to host its second annual "Beer, Spirits and Wine Tasting" at the Crowne Plaza, 390 Forsgate Drive, April 29.

Doors for the four-hour event will open promptly at 7 p.m.

Aside from an assort-

ment of alcoholic beverages, provided by Monroe Township's BuyRite vendor, the tasting will feature food, a 50/50 and tricky tray raffle and Team Monroe Unity Tour merchandise.

Only 300 of the \$60

admission tickets are available and must be purchased prior to the tasting.

Tickets and further information can be obtained from Wesley Panckeri by calling 732-691-0107.

Be On The Lookout For The Tree-Killing Emerald Ash Borer

The emerald ash borer was found in an ash tree in the western section of town. As this invasive pest can easily spread to neighboring trees, all residents should check their ash trees for symptoms of infestation. There are 1,100 of these trees in the Township.

"The emerald ash borer will kill 99 percent of all ash trees within the next few years if not treated," said Lucille DiPasquale, Shade Tree Commissioner. Residents should identify ash trees on their property and monitor for signs of

Continued on page 8



The 2016 Monroe Township Police Unity Team.

The Tree-Killing Emerald Ash Borer *Continued from page 6*

damage or decline such as unusual woodpecker activity or missing bark.”

Since the discovery of the emerald ash borer in Michigan in 2002, the beetle has killed hundreds of

millions of ash trees in North America. In May 2014, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture confirmed New Jersey’s first detection of the emerald ash borer in Bridgewater, NJ.

The emerald ash borer is a small, metallic green, non-native invasive pest. Trees can be infested for years before the tree begins to show symptoms of infestation. Symptoms include canopy dieback, woodpecker activity, missing bark, D-shaped exit holes, shoots sprouting from the trunk and S-shaped larval galleries under the bark.

If a tree is already infested or in poor health, it may be best to remove the tree before it becomes infested and poses a hazard to people

and surrounding structures. But for those residents with high-value ash in good health, trees can be treated before they become infested.

A certified tree expert can help residents evaluate, then treat or remove ash trees. Contact the Board of Certified Tree Experts at (732) 833-

0325 or at njtreeexperts@gmail.com for a list of professionals serving your area.

Report any signs. If any signs of the EAB beetle are found, call the New Jersey Department of Agriculture at (609) 406-6939. Visit www.emeraldashborer.nj.gov for more information.



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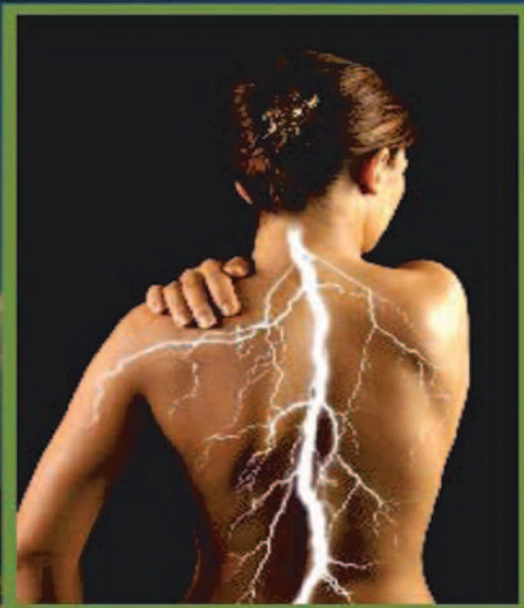
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Recreation Calendar of Events

The Recreation Events Calendar will no longer be mailed out separately at the beginning of each year and will now be included in The Monroe News. It will also be available online at www.monroetwp.com.

April 2017

Monroe Township Department of Recreation
120 Monmouth Road • Monroe Twp., NJ 08831
732-723-5000 • monroerec.com



Egg Hunt
Bonnet & Top Hat Contest
Family fun starts at Noon on Saturday, April 8th at
the Community Center Hockey Rink



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 MONROE WOLVERINES Monthly Meeting Community Ctr, 7 PM SENIOR LUNCH & LEARN Community Ctr, 11 AM	4	5 MAYOR'S CUP BOWLING Country Lanes, 9 AM PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB Community Ctr, 7 PM	6	7	8 EGG HUNT Community Center Hockey Rink, 12 NOON
9	10 RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING Community Center, 7 PM	11 MTBA General Membership Meeting Community Center, 7 PM	12	13	14	15
16	17 MTGSA Board Meeting Community Center, 7 PM	18	19 PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB Community Center, 7 PM	20	21	22 MTBA Baseball and MTGSA Softball Opening Day
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

May 2017

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Veterans Park
spray ground
OPENING DAY OF THE
SPRAY GROUND IS
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10am-8pm

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 SUMMER CAMP Registration Opens MONROE WOLVERINES Monthly Meeting Community Ctr, 7 PM	2	3 PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB Community Center, 7 PM	4	5	6
7	8 SENIOR LUNCH & LEARN Community Center, 11 AM	9 MTBA General Membership Meeting Community Center, 7 PM	10	11	12	13
14	15 RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD SCHOLARSHIP DINNER Community Ctr, 7 PM	16	17 PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB Community Center, 7 PM	18	19	20
21	22	23 SENIOR/SENIOR GAMES Multiple locations, 9 AM	24	25	26 SPRAY GROUND at Veterans Park opens for the season, 10 AM	27
28	29 MEMORIAL DAY Community Ctr Closed Spray Ground is Open	30	31			

The Recreation Events Calendar will no longer be mailed out separately at the beginning of each year and will now be included in The Monroe News. It will also be available online at www.monroetwp.com.

Recreation Calendar of Events

June 2017

Monroe Township Department of Recreation
120 Monmouth Road • Monroe Twp., NJ 08831
732-723-5000 • monroerec.com



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 MAYOR'S CUP WOMEN'S TENNIS, Concordia, 8 AM
4	5 MONROE WOLVERINES Monthly Meeting Community Center, 7 PM	6	7 PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB Community Center, 7 PM	8	9	10
11	12 RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING Community Ctr, 7 PM SENIOR LUNCH & LEARN Community Ctr, 11 AM	13 MTBA General Membership Meeting Community Center, 7 PM	14	15	16	17 MAYOR'S CUP MEN'S TENNIS, Concordia, 8 AM
18	19 MTGSA Board Meeting Community Center, 7 PM	20	21 FIRST DAY OF SUMMER PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB Community Center, 7 PM	22	23	24
25	26 MAYOR'S CUP WOMEN'S GOLF Concordia, 8 AM FIRST DAY OF SUMMER REC CAMP & MTSEPA CAMP	27	28	29	30	

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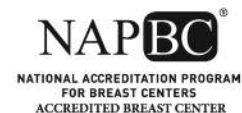
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Thanks for the Memories

The past year saw several retirements among Monroe's lead and long-time employees. The township would like to give these individuals a proper farewell by way of congratulations and a small tribute to a job well done.

SHARON DOERFLER *Township Clerk*

Sharon Doerfler began her tenure as a deputy clerk in Monroe in May of 1980.

"When I started working for the township, we were actually located on Buckelew Avenue and Schoolhouse Road," she said. "The population was 8,900."

In 1993, Doerfler accepted a promotion to Township Clerk, shortly after completing her required certification.

While at the helm, Doerfler steered the office into the computer age, enabling employees to provide services with greater efficiency and speed.

"There was a lot of evolution," she said. "We started out with typewriters and went to computers, with carbon paper and we went to copiers. Even now, the clerk's office does vital records, which is marriage, birth and death certificates – that was all handwritten over the years."

Doerfler marked her last day September 1, leaving a capable and competent team in her stead.

"I'm very proud of the staff that I've hired over the years," she said.

Retired, Doerfler is still trying to shake the feeling that she's on vacation.

"After 36 years, I am now enjoying my home and spending quality time with family and friends," she said.

JUDY KALMAN *Supervisor of Social Services*

Judy Kalman has called herself a Monroe resident for 42 years, 17 of which she devoted to the Township's Senior Services Department.

As department supervisor, Kalman closed the book on an exemplary career with her December 1 retirement.

"I needed to do other things in my life while I was still able," she said. "I really miss the staff and the people I worked with for so many years. We became like family."

In her capacity, Kalman developed and oversaw groups that tackled everything from bereavement to anxiety to depression – even visual impairments.

Along with her staff, she assisted with entitlement forms, applications for Medicare and Medicaid and established community outreach initiatives, like the Roaring 90s group. "We provided a lot of really valuable services," she said.

Residents gifted Kalman with some of her

most cherished moments on the clock, as they reported gains and positive results stemming from their counseling.

"The fact I made a difference in people's lives, that's what blows me away," she said. "If you can improve someone's quality of life; well, that's something."

Kalman continues to offer one-on-one counseling and, as of late, has considered launching additional support groups.

JOHN RIGGS *Director of Planning and Environmental Protection*

The former Director of Planning and Environmental Protection John Riggs entered retirement December 30.

There's nary an organization that hasn't crossed Riggs path during his long-spanning history of community involvement, from the Mother's Auxiliary to the Green Fair to the Monroe Township Cultural Arts Commission, not to mention a multitude of government boards and councils.

"I moved to Monroe in 1972," he said. "I was working with people involved on council and helped work on the Master Plan behind the scenes; then it gave me an opportunity to do it in front of the scenes."

His interest in local government was first piqued in the 1970s,

when he was tapped for the township's zoning board, a post he occupied for 8 years.

Riggs eventually made the jump to Township Council, sitting behind the dais for 17 years, two of which he served as president.

In 2006, he departed from the political limelight, accepting the position of Environmental Protection Manager with the Township.

Years passed and Riggs found himself with added responsibilities and new titles like Conservation Officer and eventually, Director of Planning and Environmental Protection.

"My job was to make sure the township was developing in a sustainable manner," he said. "My proudest accomplishments were the open space acquisitions."

Riggs left his signature around the municipality in the form of mandated berms, raised strips of land that visually safeguard Monroe's rural sceneries from the warehouse and housing build-outs.

While retirement is still new, Riggs suspects it'll be short lived at best. "I miss the day-to-day involvements," he said. "I'd like to go back and volunteer for the Environmental Commission."

TONY WILCENSKI *Recreation Director*

Rewind 29 years to find a young Tony Wilcenski on his first day directing Monroe's still modest sized Recreation Department.

Wilcenski started with two employees, working out of the township's school facilities and primarily handling local baseball and soccer teams.

He left on January 1 with 14 full-timers, an approximately 40,000-square-foot recreation center on Monmouth Road and a full slate of programming that some 15,000 residents are currently utilizing.

Over the years, he's been pivotal in the development of the township's recreation center and spray park, as well as the planning of Monroe's future cricket fields.

His legacy is evident in the burgeoning baseball, lacrosse, wrestling, volleyball, cheer, basketball, pickle ball and special education programs, just to name a few.

"But our biggest program is the summer recreation program," he said. "Kids come in for five weeks during the summer months. We have over 1,200 kids in that program."

As for retirement life, Wilcenski's got it down to a pretty reasonable routine.

"I'm back playing golf and fishing," he said.

The Empty Bowls Project

The Empty Bowls Project is teaming seniors and students together against one common adversary: hunger.

The Project, a grassroots nonprofit promoting education and fundraising to fight against hunger, found its local footing among Brookside Elementary School's fifth graders several years ago.

At that time, students began following the organization's model,

creating pottery to raise awareness, not to mention funds that were divvied out among five food pantries in the State, including Monroe's.

With an estimated one in five New Jersey children going to bed on an empty stomach, it seemed a fitting cause for the students to get behind.

Recently, organizers at Monroe's Senior Center, 12 Halsey Reed Road, began to collabo-

rate with the school in an effort to expand the Project's reach, said Bonnie Leibowitz, Senior Center director.

On March 10, the Center will host a 10 a.m. brunch, which requires preregistration and a \$5 admission ticket, in support of Brookside.

In April and May, the Center will be inviting members of the public to join students and paint provided ceramic pottery, some of which may

be auctioned off with Brookside's specialty "pinched pots" at a later date.

The culmination of this series of activities comes on June 7, when the Senior Center will hold a silent auction and dinner scheduled for 6 p.m. For a \$10 fee, event-goers can expect dinner, a ceramic piece to take home and the opportunity to bid on a few masterfully created pots. Proceeds from that benefit, will help

Brookside students reach their fundraising goals.

"These are the children of our future who will spread that act of kindness all over the world," Ms. Leibowitz said. "What's so beautiful about this is their passion."

For more information on any of the Township's programming for The Empty Bowls Project, contact Bonnie Leibowitz at 609-448-7140.

Notice to All Dog and Cat Owners

All dogs and cats kept in the Township of Monroe are required to be licensed once they have received a rabies shot.

Animal licenses may be purchased either in person at the Township Clerk's Office (Room 108) in the Municipal Complex, or by mail. Residents can obtain the application from the Monroe Township Clerk.

The following information is needed to receive a license.

- Rabies Certificate and/or dog/cat licenses will NOT be issued if rabies inoculations expire between Jan. 1 and Oct. 31, 2017. If a 3-year certificate was presented last year, it is

already in our records and we do not need another copy. If the veterinarian feels your pet cannot receive a vaccination due to a medical condition, a Certificate of Exemption form (completed & signed by the vet) must be presented with the applications.

- A spayed/neutered certificate from a veterinarian.

- The licensing fee is \$10.00 for each spayed/neutered dog or cat and \$13.00 for each non-spayed/non-neutered dog or cat. For auditing purposes, please send separate checks for dogs and cats payable to Township of Monroe.

Renewals: Licenses

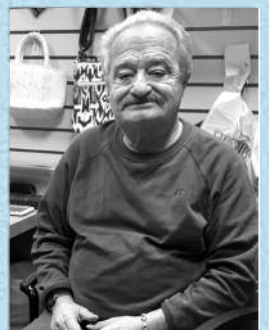
must be renewed by January 31st of each year. If a new rabies inoculation is required, you will be given an extension until March 31st to obtain a license. **A late fee of \$10.00** will be applied for each license renewed after March 31st. Failure to renew will result in a summons being issued by the Animal Control Officer, and you will be required to pay all fines and applicable fees. **NOTE: Late fee is for RENEWALS ONLY.** New pets and first-time licenses throughout the year will not require the additional \$10 late fee.

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Parker at Monroe Celebrates Volunteers

By Harry Glazer, Sr. Manager of Communications at Parker

Alvin Blumenfeld, 86, is a retired operations manager for an inventory company. He lives with his wife in Monroe Township and remains very active as a volunteer for the Parker communities.



On Thursdays he helps out at Parker at Monroe with filing and other administrative tasks, and on Wednesdays he serves as the salesperson in the Country Store in Parker at the Pavilion, Highland Park. "Don't let his humble nature fool you," said Catherine Martino, Administrator of Parker at Stonegate assisted living residence. "Alvin is one of our most dedicated volunteers. His background in accounting has helped us so much. With Alvin doing the books for the Country Store, we have a much better sense of the income and expenses. I wish every volunteer was as sharp and easy going as Alvin."

For information on volunteering at Parker, please visit our website or email volunteer@feparker.net

Recreation Roundup

Large Showing for Grandparent's Day

Over the course of a decade, Monroe's Grandparents Day has been, without fail, a memory-maker between the generations.

This winter's Dec. 28 gathering, held at the township's Recreation Center, 120 Monmouth Road, was no exception with the event swelling to record proportions.

"It's gotten bigger and bigger over the past few years," said Jeanne Crawley, assistant superintendent of Monroe Township's Recreation Department. "In the past five or six years, it's really blossomed. We now use both gyms to accommodate all the participants."

Drawing in approximately 600 attendees, the day began at 10:30

a.m. with family portraits.

By the afternoon, guests were greeted by a buffet luncheon, compliments of The Gardens of Monroe.

"The event is open to grandparents and their grandchildren, one of which has to be a resident of the township," Crawley said. "This year's theme was 'A Beach Party in December.'"

The Gardens at Monroe provided two raffle prizes, one for each gym. Staying true to the theme, this grand prize included admission tickets to Point Pleasant's Aquarium, one-day passes to the respective beach and rides on the boardwalk.

To top off the day, the Township and the Recreation Department supplied participants

with busing and movie tickets to their choice of one of three shows playing at the Regal Theater in nearby North Brunswick.

"We take up five theaters at the movie complex," Crawley revealed. "By the time they returned from the movie, their pictures were available for pick up...I think this event has gained so much popularity over the past few years because of word of mouth. The grandparents come to me and tell me what a wonderful event this is and how much they enjoy coming here with their grandchildren."

Details regarding Monroe Township's Recreation Department can be found at www.monroerec.com, by calling 732-723-5000 or

emailing reccenter@monroerec.com.

Football-Cheer Make National Splash

The Monroe Wolverines wrapped their 2016 season up on several high notes.

Spectators and coaches witnessed a strong presence on both the football and cheerleading sides of the program.

The season began in August and continued through early December. The ages of the participants in the Wolverine's cheer and football programs ranged from three to 15 years old.

This past December, three of the Monroe Wolverine's cheer teams advanced to the Pop Warner National Cheer and Dance Championship, held at ESPN's Wide World of Sports

Complex near Orlando, Florida.

The junior pee wee team placed first in their division, earning a national title, and the pee wee and varsity placed second in their divisions.

"We're always proud of our teams and honored to represent Monroe at the national competition in Florida," Lange said. "There are only two teams that can qualify from each division at a regional competition and advance to Florida. There are a lot of teams that don't qualify."

Several football teams finished strong as contenders in the regional playoffs. Despite a fierce effort, the junior pee wee football team lost the last game of their regular season.

The junior varsity football team won their division and went on to the first round of regional playoffs for the first time ever.

Following a valiant showing, the junior varsity suffered an upset to East Orange.

"They were undefeated until this point," Lange said. "Overall, the Monroe Wolverines had a very successful 2016 season! Congratulations to all."

Field Facelift

The Danny Ryan Football Field is poised

Continued on page 15



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Tuning into The Monroe Township Chorus

Carrying tunes is a small measure of The Monroe Township Chorus' recent efforts, as community outreach has become a more integral part of its regular programming.

More than three years after first launching the group, Chorus Director Sheila Werfel has helped pay it forward in the form of two scholarships, using proceeds raised at a recent winter concert.

The Chorus awarded Monroe Township High School students Cameron Fuller and Sasha Risko respective \$500 scholarships following the group's November 13 benefit at the Marasco Performing Arts Center.

"The head of the choral department had the students write essays," Werfel said. "Both are involved in the music program and chorus."

Pianist David Schlossberg, a recent addition to the ensemble, sorted through entries, narrowing the selections down to the two student finalists.

"We charged \$5 a ticket to raise money to award the scholarships to two high school sen-

iors, who are passionate about voice and singing," Werfel explained.

As for the event, hundreds of audience-goers attended "In Winter," where the all-adult chorus belted out an array of contemporary holiday tunes like Calypso Lullaby, A Grown-Up Christmas List, Mele Kalikimaka, The Latke Song, along with about a dozen others.

In the short time the chorus has been up and humming, Werfel has also witnessed tremendous growth – from 18 members in its first year to the current 75 sopranos, altos, tenors and basses.

"We're always looking for more tenors," she added. "In my auditions, I only ask, 'Can you carry a tune? And do you like to laugh and enjoy having fun?'"

As of late, members have been involved in a local tour, bringing their acoustic renditions to the likes of the township's 9/11 ceremony, into area nursing homes, as well as accepting out-of-county invitations.

"We're preparing for a May 18 'Salute to Armed Forces,'" Werfel said. "Last year, we had over

900 people (attend)."

The 2016 highlights from that performance included an American Legion color guard, active duty military personnel escorting veterans down the aisle and a guest speaker from the Department of Defense.

Werfel has high hopes to host a similar lineup during the upcoming spring concert.

"We're going to honor and salute our veterans," she said. "We have to be one and close and care about one another, which we need at this time in our country."

The doors are tentatively scheduled to open at 6:30 p.m. at the Marasco Performing Arts Center, 1629 Perrineville Road.

Currently, the chorus rehearses Tuesday mornings from 9 to 11:30 a.m. at the township's senior center.

"It's a wonderful group with the best people," Werfel said. "I'm just proud and honored to be part of it."

For further information on The Monroe Township Chorus, interested parties are encouraged to call 609-619-3229.

School Funding Fairness

Continued from page 2

In Central New Jersey alone, the disparity in State Aid is outrageous. Is it fair that neighboring Old Bridge receives \$45 million in State Aid for schools and Monroe receives \$3.3 million? Is it fair that growth municipalities are not getting their fair share of school aid, while stable & non-growth districts get larger increases?

The hold harmless clause for the 31 school districts in the State is a misnomer. Those districts with declining student enrollment are receiving disproportionate & additional State Aid at the expense of growing school districts such as

Monroe Township. It is not 'harmless' but instead 'harmful.'

The school funding formula in New Jersey is broken and a more fair and equitable distribution is needed – one that meets the needs of the growing suburban districts who are presently underfunded, as well as meets the constitutional & court mandate of a thorough and efficient education. I implore the Governor & Legislature to examine the funding formula and provide a fair and equitable funding formula for all of New Jersey's children and taxpayers.

Thank you."

Recreation Roundup

Continued from page 14

to open the 2017 cheer and football seasons with an onslaught of improvements.

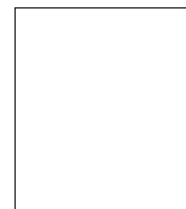
Currently, plans are underway to construct a new concession stand, along with permanent ADA-compliant restroom facilities at the North State Home Road property.

"We're looking at the blueprints now," Lange said of the project. "We hope to break ground in

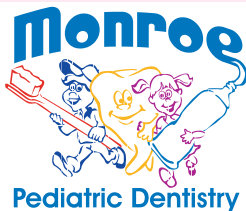
early spring."

With its rare landscape, the tract boasts one regulation-sized and two practice fields.

"Our football field is grass, and we play a lot of turf teams," Lange said. "Our parks department does a great job keeping our fields green until the end of the season...we get so many compliments."



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