

# MONROE MATTERS

A COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

## FROM THE OFFICE OF THE SELECTMEN

Fall has definitely arrived. Here is what is going on.

1. The new Recycling program has begun. Please remember to look before tossing items into the bins. Bins are marked for certain items. Also please remember to flatten your cardboard.
2. The closing of the roads to Off Highway Recreation Vehicles is still in place. The Selectmen are working on how best to move forward. Watch for updates.
3. The Town now has adult and children sizes of T-shirts, Crewneck Sweatshirts, and Hooded Sweatshirts with the town seal. Contact the office for prices. They make great gifts.
4. Town Hall is open as of 10/1. Please remember to fill out the Contract for Use of the Town Hall or Equipment and submit to the Selectmen's office for approval.

As always, if you have any questions, please contact the Town Office at 603-638-2644 or by email at [monroeselectmem@roadrunner.com](mailto:monroeselectmem@roadrunner.com). Be sure to check our Facebook page and website ([www.monroenh.org](http://www.monroenh.org)) for announcements.

## PLANNING BOARD

**Due to the November 3<sup>rd</sup> elections the next meeting will be October 27<sup>th</sup>**

Due to the current COVID-19 Pandemic, meetings will have remote access. You may attend online or call in to the WebEx meeting. Please contact Diane, the Town Administrative Assistant at [dgibsonsmith@monroenh.org](mailto:dgibsonsmith@monroenh.org) to receive access information.

If you have a matter to go before the Planning Board, all documents and applications must be provided to the Town Administrative Assistant in digital pdf format one week prior to the meeting date so all board members have access.

Based on current conditions, Class 1 & 2 fires in Monroe are now being allowed. Online permits are not available at this time so you **must** contact the warden or a deputy warden to get a paper permit. Please use extreme caution when you burn and make sure your fire is completely out. Though we have received some rain there is still a drought and fires can spread.



**LEARN**  
Check local offices, bulletin boards, websites and visitor centers for current fire restrictions.



**DROWN**  
Drown the campfire ashes with lots of water. Don't take chances—use a lot!



**STIR**  
Stir the remains, add more water and stir again. Be sure all burned material has been put out cold.



**FEEL**  
Feel materials with your bare hand. If it is hot to touch, it's too hot to leave!

## **We Wear Masks - A Back to School Story**

**by Chelsie Boutin, Executive Secretary at Monroe Consolidated School**

August 31st, the day before school starts. All the backpacks are packed and ready to go with hand sanitizer, wipes, plastic cutlery, hair ties, headbands, 47 different types of masks and anything else the school or Facebook mom group said was needed. I could not sleep, my stomach was in knots and I questioned if this was the right choice to make. I should mention that this is also my first year working at the school, so tomorrow was mom's first day of school too. We had been planning, rearranging, changing the changes, discussing and worrying for so long but tomorrow it was time. It was time to see if we planned enough and prepared enough to keep students and faculty safe while providing an education.

September 1st, the first day of school. I am up and ready to go, I wake up my daughter and say "let's go, it's the first day of school are you excited?" she replies "I GET TO SEE MY FRIENDS TODAY!!!" I of course remind her of all the rules outlined in our reopening plan and to remember that things are going to be VERY different this year so to remember to breathe and embrace the changes. My stomach is in knots and I seriously question everything yet again as I drive us to the school.

We arrived at school and because we have been using an app to track symptoms we didn't need to be screened before entering the building. I think I suspected scary men in large white protective suits guarding the door like the TSA at airport screenings. Instead, everyone is excited to see each other. Students and teachers are happily chatting and talking about the things they did over the summer and how much they missed one another. They are all complimenting masks like it's a cool accessory they picked up for school like an 80's Trapper Keeper or something.

Students arrived at their classrooms ready to learn. We have a smaller student population and a large building so all the shuffle and stress of moving around students and classrooms was worth seeing the smile on their face when they were allowed to take off their masks at their desks. I witnessed many classrooms migrate outside after attendance to be socially distanced in the sun learning in a different environment. The Nurse came around and double checked temperatures and yes, a couple of students had to go home, but the procedure was the same as going home any other school year with a parent coming to pick them up. The parents were notified of the rules of re-entry due to the situation and the day continued.

Lunchtime arrived so quickly it felt like whiplash. I went downstairs to see how everyone was doing and all the student's lunches were put out at their assigned seats ready to go. There were dividers on the tables that were donated by Pete and Gerry's and once the students arrived everyone interacted as if they weren't even there. Teachers took this time to regroup and custodians sanitized the classrooms.

It's the end of the day and the buses showed up, parents picked up their kids and older students walked home. All the students were gone and we were tired! We discussed small changes to make things go smoother and we were relieved that we could do this. We realized that this was possible and that just like any other school year there would be things that needed to be changed and issues to work through but overall we had succeeded. I went home to talk to my daughter and asked her how her day went. She said "It was SO AWESOME, we were outside almost all day with our books, and I got to see all of my friends!!!" Confused I said "what about all the changes?" she replied "What changes? Nothing is different except we wear masks."

## **We Wear Masks cont'd**

THERE IT WAS. It took a six year old saying that one sentence to make me realize it was all worth it. It wasn't about touchless sinks, hand sanitizing stations or stocking up on toilet paper and masks. It was:

A fearless leader who did not give up when stepping into a bigger role to include Principal AND District Administrator while still wanting to provide an in-person education to the children and our community.

An extremely capable nurse with a well thought out plan and a pre-screening app to make sure students get the most out of their school day.

A food director willing to go the extra mile to make healthy meals with so many guidelines in place.

A guidance counselor willing and able to deal with any situation that may arise in addition to the usual circumstances.

A business manager applying for grants and reworking numbers so that we can accomplish everything we need to do and have the ability to provide it.

A special services director that focused on individual students and how masks and routines may affect them and creating plans for those needs.

A district administrative assistant buried in paperwork for those who choose to homeschool and making sure those plans are in place.

A very understanding school board that trusts the people they have hired to operate this school at the highest level of competency.

A very thorough custodial staff that accommodated our every whim and change without question or hesitation.

A group of teachers who are so passionate about teaching the students that they went above and beyond to make sure that our students get the best education possible no matter what guideline or computer program they have thrown at them.

And of course this Community. A community full of families that were patient, understanding and adapted to all of our changes and trusted us with their children, knowing we would keep them healthy and safe at all costs. Knowing we would teach them and accommodate things the best we could even if we couldn't show them what goes on inside these walls.

So in conclusion, Reopening was far from easy and there will probably still be bumps along the way. I am in awe of this community and so grateful to be a new member of its amazing school. It's been a month since we reopened and my daughter was right. There will always be challenges and changes with or without the pandemic. The only difference is; right now... We Wear Masks.

## **HALLOWEEN FUN FOR ALL AGES: TRUNK OR TREAT**

There will be no party at the town hall this year but organizers feel trunk or treat is a safer way to celebrate. There will be 40 spots available on the school's soccer field to park your decorated car and distribute candy. Trick-or-Treaters won't have to worry about going door to door and you won't miss seeing everyone in costume. Contact either Hilary at [hil\\_bradshaw@yahoo.com](mailto:hil_bradshaw@yahoo.com) or Molley at [molleyg@gmail.com](mailto:molleyg@gmail.com) or 638-2800 ext. 48 to reserve your spot. Times for this event have yet to be determined, but either Hilary or Molley will keep you up to date. Look for flyers at the town hall and the town office explaining the guidelines that will be in place.

 **IT OUT AT THE LIBRARY**

Winter is approaching and maybe you're wondering what you're going to do to keep busy. The library is in the midst of budget planning and would like to know if you're interested in attending virtual programming. Please call and let me know if you are interested in author visits or programs involving storytelling, history, music, animals, how to's, or have another idea.

**Open By Appointment in October**

Tuesdays 12pm-7pm

Wednesdays 9am-4pm

Saturday, October 12<sup>th</sup> 9am-12pm

Call 638-4736 or email  
monroepubliclibrary@gmail.com

What if you don't have an appointment but are driving by and want to pop in to grab something? Call us from the parking lot if your cell phone works. If you don't have one and don't see any cars in the parking lot, open the door and give a "shout" If there is no one here and there are no appointments scheduled to come in, we are happy to accommodate you.

**COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER**  
*Monroe Public Library*  
PO Box 67  
Monroe, NH 03771

STANDARD RATE  
US POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT NO. 3  
MONROE NH  
03771

POSTAL PATRON  
Monroe, NH 03771