



New Marlborough 5 Village News

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Clayton • Hartsville • Mill River • New Marlborough • Southfield



Douglas Trumbull, of Southfield, was among those with questions at a November 29 marijuana information meeting.

SMOKE SIGNALS: *Marijuana Discussion at Town Hall*

By Sandra Fusco-Walker

Mary Jane, weed, grass, reefer, pot. Whatever you call it, it's been legal for adults over 21 to consume and even grow their own six marijuana plants in Massachusetts for over a year now. That's not to say there still aren't a lot of issues to work out, and cities and towns across the state are getting their first view of proposed regulations developed by the newly formed Cannabis Control Commission (CCC). The CCC will start accepting license applications from growers, manufacturers and retail operators April 1, 2018, and once approved, businesses can start opening July 1.

Medical marijuana, legalized here in 2012, presently has fifteen facilities operating in Massachusetts. Currently, the Department of Public Health manages the Medical Marijuana Program, but, as a result of the new retail

marijuana law passed last July the CCC will take over management of the medical program along with the retail.

Whether it's a retail operation selling marijuana to adults or a manufacturing facility providing product to medical dispensaries or retail stores, the state will certainly see a boost from fees and tax revenues. Towns where a company locates their facility would also benefit. Beyond the state's 10.75 percent excise tax and 6.75 percent sales tax, towns can impose a 3 percent sales tax on retail marijuana. In addition, towns are also allowed, as part of a "host community agreement," to assess a fee up to 3 percent of gross sales to recover any expenses the town might incur as a result of hosting the facility in their town.

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Colorado, one of the first states to legalize marijuana, paints a pretty financial picture since legalization. The Colorado Department of Revenue reports that, from 2014 to November 30, 2017, marijuana fees and taxes have added over \$600 million to the state coffers (see table next page). Colorado law requires that each year, the first \$40 million in revenue from marijuana be credited to their Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) program. This program funds upgrading and building educational facilities throughout the state. Remaining revenues are spread across health and educational initiatives, both state and local, and also cover regulatory management and oversight costs.



Thomas Matuszko, assistant director of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, addressed an attentive crowd on the shape of things to come with marijuana production in Massachusetts.

photos by Joe Paindexter

continued on page 2

Colorado's Marijuana Revenues	
Calendar Year	Total Revenue
2014	\$67,594,323
2015	\$130,411,173
2016	\$193,604,810
2017 (Jan-Nov)	\$226,157,028

On November 29 at the New Marlborough Town Hall, seventy people attended an informational program detailing Massachusetts' new marijuana law, presented by Thomas Matuszko, Assistant Director of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.

Mr. Matuszko listed the types of marijuana businesses the law allows: retail stores, cultivation and growing, testing labs, and manufacturers who would make marijuana products such as edibles which are sold as medical or retail products. He also presented several options towns can take, from prohibiting or restricting marijuana establishments to placing a moratorium until the end of 2018, towns can then take time deciding whether they want any restrictions.

Concerns raised by attendees ranged from how a facility would affect the water consumption and pesticide use in the town to the amount of potential revenue the town might see.

According to recent CCC draft regulations, growers will be required to comply with generally accepted agricultural practices and Massachusetts law regarding plant nutrients and pesticide applications. In addition, an Energy and Environmental Workgroup will convene by January 31 to recommend best management practices for energy and environmental objectives.

Another issue brought up at the November meeting was the question of whether local farmers would be left out of the potential financial opportunities available in this new business. The new law does create an



The focus of attention – Cannabis Sativa. photo by Robert Feuerer

avenue for local farmers to organize their own Craft Marijuana Cooperative, whereby they can partner to cultivate, obtain, manufacture, process, package, and brand marijuana and marijuana products for delivery to marijuana establishments, but not to consumers directly.

Members of the audience asked for clarification about restrictions and a moratorium. Regarding both restrictions and moratoria, the Legislature made it a bit more difficult for towns like New Marlborough, where the majority (64.9 percent) voted to legalize marijuana to then prohibit or restrict commercial marijuana establishments. Towns

that voted "Yes" that wish to pass any zoning or by-laws or place restrictions or moratoriums on retail marijuana facilities must do so by a two-thirds majority vote at a Town Meeting and a ballot vote.

New Marlborough's Protective By-Laws require a special permit for most new businesses in town. Only after a public hearing and a determination by the Board of Selectmen that the use will not be injurious, noxious, or offensive, and that such use is consistent with the intent of the by-law, can the special permit be issued. Included in the list regulated in this by-law are commercial greenhouses, about

which a member of the audience had voiced concern.

At the December 13 Planning Board meeting, the Board voted not to move forward with a moratorium and agreed that, when state regulations were available, they would revisit the issue to determine if there was any need beyond the Protective By-Laws already in place.

The Cannabis Control Commission spent the early part of December developing draft regulations and, after the members unanimously adopted them, the draft was filed with the Secretary of State's Office on December 21. Public hearings on the draft regulations will be held in February and the Commission intends to finalize the regulations by March 15, 2018. To view the draft visit: www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/12/22/DraftRegulations122117.pdf If you would like to express your views on the draft regulations, comments can be emailed to cannabiscommission@state.ma.us, or by calling 617-701-8400, or by mail to Cannabis Control Commission, 101 Federal Street, 13th Floor, Boston, MA 02110.

Whether or not one agrees with the recent changes in marijuana laws, marijuana has been used illegally for decades and has produced a mammoth underground, unregulated economy. Finally, at least in Massachusetts and a small number of other states, it is being forced aboveground where it can be taxed, regulated, and monitored for safety. It is important to bear in mind, however, that marijuana production and distribution is still illegal in the eyes of the federal government. □



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IN PRAISE OF OUR ANIMAL INSPECTOR

It's a rewarding feeling knowing you are good at your job, and it certainly doesn't hurt when that good job you are doing is recognized by others. So, Prudence Spaulding should be feeling pretty darned good these days over a letter that was received by Town Administrator Mari Enoch in late November. The letter was from Michael Cahill, director of the Division of Animal Health of the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. He opens by saying, "I am writing to ensure you are aware of how lucky the town of New Marlborough is to have such a dedicated and diligent Inspector of Animals as Ms. Prudence Spaulding. Not only is Prue responsive and helpful when the Department has specific requests in town, but she is quick to alert the Department to any concerns she has while performing her routine duties. That type of instinct is an invaluable trait amongst our "front line" inspectors. Prue really does a great job, and

I appreciate her assistance."

In commenting on the praise directed toward her, Prue says, "I think to have my 'boss' in Boston write such a wonderful letter is really very rewarding." She went on to say that she now covers more than fifty barns of one sort or another in New Marlborough, and she finds this to be a very positive statement about our community and its values, to have so many homes with agricultural animals in such a relatively small population. The cooperation she receives from animal owners makes the job, one she's been doing since 1983, all the more pleasant.

Mr. Cahill concludes his letter by saying, "I hope that New Marlborough never has to find a replacement for Ms. Prudence Spaulding." We can all second that motion! □

Larry Burke



photo by Larry Burke

Sign Language: Several enigmatic signs have popped up on roads that intersect Route 57 in New Marlborough, such as this one at the junction with South Sandisfield Road (Route 183). Contrary to appearances, the road is not closed to through traffic. In fact, not only is South Sandisfield Road open, it is actually the road that trucks need to take to bypass the village of New Boston. According to Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring, the signs were put up either the state or by the Sandisfield Highway Department (without consulting New Marlborough), and they are intended to inform truck drivers on Route 57 that they need to detour because the bridge in Sandisfield just west of Route 8 is being reconstructed. While there is a side road just across from the Silver Brook Café that allows cars to pass around the closure, this route is not available for trucks. So much for sign language.



photo by Martha Bryan

As local as it gets: The first of many happy customers, Eugene Cleary, left, congratulates Tom Brazie on the opening of the farm stand at The Farm New Marlborough. The newly opened stand, located in the long barn at the former Kolburne School, is part of Tom Brazie's vision to offer the highest quality meats raised right here in our backyard. To kick things off, the farm stand will be open on Wednesday and Fridays, 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m., with plans to expand hours in the coming months.

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Town Business Is Your Business

BOARD OF SELECTMEN



November 27: It was another standing-room-only crowd waiting to hear the latest developments in the broadband saga, as Chairman Tara White convened a joint meeting of the selectmen and the Municipal Lighting Plant (MLP) Board.

Broadband Committee Chairman Richard Long started things off by summarizing last Monday's Broadband Committee meeting, reporting that **the committee agreed not to make a recommendation either to extend or terminate the contract negotiations with Frontier, effectively leaving it up to the MLP Board to make that decision.**

He did say, however, now that the Frontier deal is effectively dead, that the Committee has been in touch with two broadband providers the Town had not previously contacted, Charter Communications and Crocker Communications. "So we'll see if anything develops on those fronts," he said. Meanwhile, he noted that the Committee continues to remain in contact with Fiber Connect, WiredWest, and Matrix.

Then it was Selectman Nat Yohalem's turn, who said the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) notified him last week that Frontier is continuing to insist on a guarantee by the Town of its proposed fifteen-year, \$6.3 million payment obligation, and is therefore rejecting the Town's proposal to try a three- or four-year test of a service agreement to see whether enough people sign up for broadband to alleviate Frontier's financial concerns and thus obviate the need for a guarantee. (See the November 13 Board of Selectman report in the December issue of the NM5VN for details on why the Frontier deal fell through.)

Mr. Yohalem said MBI also told him that if New Marlborough is not going to sign with Frontier, then Frontier would no longer be interested in serving

Sandisfield and Tolland either. However, according to Mr. Yohalem, Frontier told him in a phone call earlier in the day that that is not correct and that Frontier is still considering whether it wants to go to contract with just those two towns. But Frontier also told him that if it does go ahead with Sandisfield and Tolland, it would connect to them directly from its Connecticut infrastructure rather than going through New Marlborough, and that if New Marlborough decided at a later date it wants to be part of that network, it would be more expensive for New Marlborough.

When he was done, the **MLP Board, as expected, voted unanimously not to extend the negotiating deadline with Frontier**, after which the Board adjourned the MLP portion of the meeting and proceeded with the rest of its agenda, starting with town resident Jean Pollock who was there to pitch the Board on the idea of holding a square dance in the Town Hall to raise money for a worthy cause such as the homeless or a local food pantry.

But the Board pushed back, saying that while it's a wonderful idea, the Town does not have a policy "for individuals using Town space in that manner," according to Town Administrator Mari Enoch. As she noted, there are a number of issues that would need to be resolved, including insurance, rent, and security. "We just don't have that in place right now for individuals to hold events," she said. Instead, the Board suggested approaching either the Cultural Council or the New Marlborough Village Association to see if either of those would be interested in sponsoring such an event.

Under Town Administrator updates, Ms. Enoch reported **there were no bids for the annual supplemental snow and ice removal contract, but that Keith Wilkinson indicated he'd be willing to do it again for the same price he was paid last year**, which was \$75 an hour, a figure that included the use of his truck. As Ms. Enoch noted, state procurement law does not require a bid for snow and ice removal, but the Town bid it out anyway hoping to get competitive pricing, but having received only one bid, the Board voted to hire Mr. Wilkinson again.

In a related matter, Ms. Enoch said **Highway Superintendent Loring has inquired about the possibility of finding someone he can hire as a temporary substitute in the event one of his regular, full-time plow truck drivers is out sick or otherwise can't report for duty during the winter snowstorm season.** In addition, Ms. Enoch mentioned that Mr. Loring himself is planning



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to take a week's vacation in March and would like to have someone available to drive a plow truck while he's away. The Board, after considerable discussion, finally conceded that he could at least go out and find a possible candidate for the Board's consideration.

December 4: After approving the minutes of its three most recent meetings, the Board, with all three members present, held a property tax classification hearing with Board of Assessors' Marsha Pshenishny. As in the past, Ms. Pshenishny recommended a single tax classification for both residential and commercial properties and proposed a tax rate of \$10.45 per \$1,000 of valuation. That's a \$.65 increase over the previous year's rate, and represents a nearly \$200-per-year jump in the annual property tax on, say, a \$300,000 home.

The Board by unanimous vote approved the single classification and then discussed the reasons behind the unusually steep one-year increase in the rate. According to Town Administrator Enoch, three factors played into what is nearly a 7 percent increase.

The 2½ percent allowable increase in the levy limit accounted for \$.25 of it, while payments on the Town's debt, which this year are peaking at \$315,000, contributed another \$.17. But it was the final \$.23 that most of the discussion centered around because that's attributable, according to Ms. Enoch, to an approximately \$10 million drop in the total assessed value of all the property in Town, and according to Ms. Pshenishny, that loss is largely attributable to a drop in property values in both the Lake Buel and Windemere neighborhoods.

Before leaving the topic, Ms. Enoch cautioned that the new \$10.45 tax rate is still preliminary and has to be approved by the state Department of Revenue (DOR) before it becomes official. (Subsequently, she said, the

DOR did approve the new rate.)

From there the discussion moved on to plans for renovating the Town Hall to bring it into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Currently, the Town Hall bathrooms are not ADA compliant, nor is there handicapped access either to the upper level of the building, where town meetings are held, or to the stage in the meeting hall. In addition, many of the doors, floors, walls, and fixtures will have to be replaced or modified to achieve full compliance.

To deal with all these issues the Board had previously hired architectural engineering firm EDM of Pittsfield, and EDM has now come back with four design options for the Board to consider.

In the lengthy discussion that followed, the Board zeroed in on two of them as the most likely possibilities.

The first would involve closing off the entire upper level of the building, moving the two offices there, one for the building inspector and the other for the Board of Health, down to the ground-floor level, and upgrading the bathrooms to make them ADA complaint. However, as Mr. Yohalem noted, with the upper level closed, town meetings would have to be held elsewhere, possibly at the Fire House, he said, or the Meeting House, or even out of Town somewhere, which, as Ms. Enoch pointed out, would require a by-law change.

The other option would be to keep the upper level open, install an interior wheelchair lift, while eliminating the stage, since it's almost never used anyway, and upgrading and enlarging the bathrooms.

To do either of these would involve significant cost to the Town. EDM estimates the first option at nearly \$300,000, while the second would come in at just under \$500,000. As Ms. White noted, grants for up to \$250,000 are available from the state for ADA compliance work, but the earliest the Town could apply for one would be

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next November.

The Board concluded the discussion by agreeing that, because of the amounts involved and because Town Hall is such a major fixture in town, the Board would like to get input from townspeople on the decision, most likely at the next Annual Town Meeting in May.

Under Town Administrator updates, Ms. Enoch said two business licenses are up for renewal, Wyman & Son Lumber of Hartsville and Canger Concrete and Masonry of Southfield. The Board approved both renewals.

Ms. White reported on a meeting held Thursday night, November 30, between representatives of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District (SBRSD) administration and the five district towns. Billed as a “regional roundtable,” the meeting was attended on the district side by Superintendent Beth Regulbuto and Business Administrator Chris Regan, plus several members of the SBRSD School Committee and selectmen from four of the five towns; Sheffield’s selectmen, Ms. White explained, were unable to make the meeting but sent in written comments on issues of importance to them.

The purpose of the meeting, according to Ms. White, was to focus on the challenges facing the district as viewed by the district towns. These included, not surprisingly, the school budget and its impact on the individual town’s tax rates, amending the five-town regional school agreement, and revising the assessment formula to eliminate or at least dampen the financial peaks and valleys that have been impacting the towns for the past several years. There was also discussion, she said, of the middle school program, as well as the consolidation of all the district’s students onto the Sheffield campus. In addition, there was an extensive discussion regarding the reopening of the Egremont School next year and the future of the educational program there. Other topics included school choice, as well as the possibility of sharing educational programs with other schools, as opposed to outright consolidation of either schools or districts.

As Selectman Yohalem noted, this was just the first in what is going to be a series of roundtable meetings between the school administration and its member towns, but that in the future members of the towns’ finance committees will also be invited. The next one is scheduled for January 11.

December 18: With two members present and Mr. Yohalem conferencing in by telephone, the Board, in its first order of business, interviewed Toran Manning, a candidate for a part-time position with

the Town’s Police Department. Mr. Manning, a graduate of the police academy, previously spent five years working as a part-time officer in the Town of Clarksburg, but is currently employed as a security guard for Canyon Ranch. Police Chief Graham Frank, who was also present, indicated Mr. Manning, who lives in Williamstown, would initially be working weekends and on police details and that he’ll be replacing part-time officer Nick Felix, who resigned this past August to take a full-time job with the North Adams Police Department. The Board voted to approve the appointment, contingent on Chief Frank checking his references.

The Board also approved liquor license renewals for the Old Inn on the Green and the Southfield Store, and approved them for Gedney Farm, Cantina 229, and a package store license for The Mill River General Store, contingent on inspections by the fire chief and building inspector.

The Board then met with Patricia Mullins of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) to discuss the process by which the Town could apply for a Community Development Block Grant. According to Ms. Mullins, the grants, which are funded

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of the middle school program,
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the Sheffield campus*



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by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) but overseen by the states, are generally awarded for repairs to lower and middle income housing, but can also be used for infrastructure projects or even ADA compliance work, such as the Town is considering for the Town Hall (See the December 4 Board of Selectmen report). She noted that between twenty and thirty grants, worth up to \$800,000 each, are awarded annually across the state, but they are very competitive, she said.

In order to become eligible to apply for a grant the Town must first develop a Community Development Strategy, documenting its goals and priorities, and that BRPC, she said, will work with the Town on that document. In addition, Ms. Mullins proposed that, should the Town go ahead and apply for a grant, BRPC would be willing to work with the Town on that as well, but in return the Town would have to agree to designate BRPC to administer the grant, for which it would receive as much as twenty-five percent of the award, according to HUD guidelines. Grant applications are due March 2, with the grants being awarded in July.

In order to become eligible to apply for a grant the Town must first develop a Community Development Strategy, documenting its goals and priorities

To get the ball rolling, the Board formed a Community Development Strategy Committee and appointed Town residents David Hastings, Becky Schreiber, and Selectman Tara White as members.

In other matters, the Board appointed Board Administrative Secretary Sharon Fleck to fill a vacancy on the Board of Registrars, which oversees town elections. Town Administrator Enoch noted that because of the holidays, Town Hall will be closed for half a day on both Friday, December 22, and Friday, December 29.

The Board approved business license renewals for the following New Marlborough businesses: Alvin Stalker's Evelyn's Antiques;

John Miller's Brookmede Farm; Bernard D. Litchfield III Electrician; Little Store Antiques; Reiner White & Sons Carpentry and Renovations; Jamie Mullen's JML Landscaping; Law Office of Susan M. Smith PC; Sisson Hill Building & Renovations; and Michael White Contractors Inc.

This will be the last meeting of the year, with the next one scheduled for January 8, 2018. □

Peter Schuyten

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VIEW FROM THE BOARD

by Michele Shalaby

In January, homeowners will be receiving their first real estate tax bills of 2018, the revenues of which will be applied to covering the Town budget that was decided upon back in May. Since the voters did not allow a Proposition 2½ override at that time, the expectation might be that the increase in our tax bills will be just 2½ percent. This, unfortunately, will not be the case. It is likely to be more, and this warrants some explanation.

At the time of Annual Town Meeting, the Finance Committee, assessors, and selectmen were estimating that our tax rate would increase by approximately \$.42 or 4.4 percent (\$.25 of this due to a 2½ percent budget increase and \$.17 of this due to additional debt that is excluded from the limits of Proposition 2½, specifically, the school roof and boiler project).

But now, our certified tax rate for FY18 is \$10.45, an increase of \$.65 (6.6 percent), \$.23 more than expected. This unanticipated addition is a result of changes in property values. Although we have experienced some new growth, the town's collective real estate value has declined by nearly \$10 million. Much of the loss was concentrated in a couple of areas, or neighborhoods, in town, while most have retained assessed value. This means the tax levy gets redistributed. Those with decreased value will pay the new tax rate on a lower assessed value and the rest will pay the new tax rate on an equal or higher assessed value.

With several variables coming together, it is challenging to anticipate real estate taxes and avoid seemingly erratic increases and decreases. However, there are steps that can be taken and we've begun work:

- Debt planning: FY19 is a peak debt payment year. It is the first year of full, annual bond payment for the school roof and boiler while we continue servicing all our debt obligations from previous years. Beginning in FY20, we will see some of our earlier debt obligations paid in full. The Capital Planning Committee will be seeking ways to manage debt to avoid significant annual changes. Because all our approved debt has been excluded from the limits of Proposition 2½, we see increases in taxes beyond 2½ percent when new debt payments are incurred.

- Budgeting: While we, New Marlborough, don't always have control over the cost of delivering the same services as the previous year, we have been increasing our town operating budget by very modest amounts. The school was even more modest this year, but our share of the school assessment increased dramatically. While we'll hope to get assessment relief next year, we're also discussing a change of assessment calculation with the other four district towns and the School Committee. Our small population lends itself to these dramatic shifts, making planning difficult for all five towns. At a recent regional meeting, representatives of the other towns indicated agreement to discuss revision of assessment calculations.

- Assessing: The Board and the Finance Committee have agreed that a better understanding of the assessment process is important for all their members. At a recent meeting of the Board, we had a Classification Hearing. This is an annual obligation and usually happens without much discussion, since we have a single classification for all of New Marlborough. This year, members of the Board of Assessors spent some additional time with us to help us understand values, assessments, and neighborhoods. Typically, our assessment identifies growth, and the neighborhoods generally protect most of New Marlborough from escalating real estate values in certain areas of high market interest. This year appears to simply be an anomaly but we will be vigilant of trends.

For those who have hardship, there is relief available. You can see our assessor's clerk, Marsha Pshenishny, at Town Hall, about what is available. The Board and Finance Committee are beginning to plan the FY19 budget and capital expenditures. As always, your participation is strongly encouraged. Call or write to your representatives. In April and May, we hope to see many of you attending the budget presentation and voting at Annual Town Meeting and in the Town Election. □

Thank You to Our Contributors!

Ronald & Sharon Bassett; Robert & Irene Dvorchik; Myron and Kay Jaffe; Gary Shelto & Michael Buchanan; Joyce & Tom Weeks; Miladeen Wyman; Michael Skrak; William Krejci; Daryl Wickstrom; Mary & Bill Childs; Richard & Susan Silver; Laurence & Virginia Chipurnoi; Freda Schreiber; Enid Michelman; Sheila Fitzpatrick; George & Sharon Fleck; Judianne O'Brien; Ken & Pat Rudolph; Joyce & Tom Sachs; Martin Love; Mari Enoch; Scott & Sandra Walker; Jean Travis; Andrea Marks & David Warmflash; and Dennis Sears & Rene Wood.

Upcoming: *Events Calendar for January and February*

January 14: Winter House Concert — Manon Hutton-Dewys, piano, Emily Vold, violin in a program of works by Marianna Auenbrugger, Clara Schumann, Ruth Crawford, and Edvard Grieg, 4:00 p.m.; \$25, \$20 for members of the New Marlborough Village Association; make reservations at (413) 229-2785 or at www.newmarlborough.org

February 18: Winter House Concert — Sarah Vonsattel, violin, Chihiro Allen, viola, and Julia Bruskin, cello, play string trios by Dohnanyi and Beethoven, 4:00 p.m.; \$25, \$20 for members of the New Marlborough Village Association; make reservations at (413) 229-2785 or at www.newmarlborough.org

CHANG-CHAVKIN SCHOLARS PROGRAM LAUNCHED

An innovative college scholarship program for low-income Berkshire County high school students who will be the first in their family to attend college is gearing up for its first awards. The Chang-Chavkin Scholars Program is named after its benefactors, Laura Chang and Arnold Chavkin, who have been part-time residents of Southfield for more than thirty years, and who want to improve the lives of families in a community they care about.

Over a year of thought and research, the program has taken shape, reflecting Ms. Chang and Mr. Chavkin's deep appreciation of the impact of a college education. "While there are many programs focusing on low-income first-generation students in urban areas, very few programs focus on rural students," said Mr. Chavkin. "We're committed to opening doors for those who are under-represented in higher education and who often don't complete that education."


Each Chang-Chavkin scholar will receive up to \$15,000 per year for four years toward the cost of attending an accredited U.S. college or university. A unique aspect of the program is that it will help guide scholars and

their families through the complicated process of applying to colleges, selecting among admissions offers, and navigating financial aid awards. "The pressures associated with applying to and paying for college appear to increase every year," said the program's executive director, Dr. Nancy Roseman. "These are a challenge for any student and family, but studies show that the effort is magnified for students who are the first in their family to go to college." The program will advise and support recipients throughout their time in college to increase their chances of earning a diploma.

In this first year, Dr. Roseman is partnering with Drury, Waconah, and Monument Mountain high schools to identify junior and senior class candidates for the scholarship. "In the future, only juniors will be eligible to apply for the scholarship," she continued, "but Laura and Arnie generously wanted to jumpstart the program by allowing this year's seniors to apply."

The program expects each year to name four or five juniors as Chang-Chavkin Scholars. Over time, the program will expand to other rural Berkshire County school districts. □

Barbara Lowman



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BROADBAND UPDATE

THE WORK CONTINUES

by Barry R. Shapiro



While residents of New Marlborough hurried around in December getting ready for the holidays, the hard working, volunteer members of the Broadband Committee had the added chore of getting ready for an informational meeting they have promised to deliver to the Town by the middle of this month. “We will deliver our analysis of the best information we’ve been able to gather in January,” said Richard Long, chairman of the Committee. “We’ve been making calls and trying to set up meetings so that we will have the most complete and accurate information available.”

As of now, Mr. Long reports that there are six options being reviewed. “All of this is subject to change as we move forward.”

The options and their current status follow:

- **CHARTER/SPECTRUM** — This company has not shown any interest to date in working with the Town but is reported to be taking “another look at the numbers.” This provider would not require the expenditure of any Town money. Some financing would be provided by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) and the balance would have to be funded by Charter/Spectrum or come from additional grants from the State.
- **CROCKER** — Mr. Long is attempting to set up a meeting with MBI and Crocker to talk about Crocker’s approach and to determine the level of MBI support. As of now, Crocker’s approach is to take the MBI money and wire as much of the Town as it can which would leave a large part of the Town unserved. The Town would have to pay to wire the balance. Crocker is reviewing the cost to wire the entire town and is “refining its business model.” Although Crocker would have some investment in the electronics for the network, it intends to own the system, even though the cost of constructing the network would primarily be funded by public money. Crocker would, however, bear the risks of operation and maintenance over time.
- **FIBER CONNECT** – Despite efforts to get Fiber Connect to provide a specific proposal, this company has not yet done so. They “have simply thrown out ideas as to how they would work with the Town but not the specifics we have asked for,” Mr. Long explained.
- **MATRIX COMMUNICATIONS** — Matrix is continuing to discuss with MBI the basis on which MBI would provide up-front financing for it. To date, MBI has been reluctant to do so, offering to provide financing only after Matrix has demonstrated two

years of profitable operations, among other conditions. The Town would be responsible for certain “make-ready work” but not the cost of constructing the network which would be built by Matrix.

- **TOWN-OWNED NETWORK** — This remains a possibility which the Committee is exploring but would require the Town to borrow the money to build and operate the network.
- **FRONTIER COMMUNICATIONS** — Although negotiations with Frontier have formally ended due to its insistence that the Town issue a contingent guarantee (approximately \$6.3 million), it remains possible that discussions with Frontier could be resurrected.

“The Committee is frustrated,” said Mr. Long, “that in some instances we can’t fully flesh out our options in detail but we are moving forward with the best information available. As of now, the Committee believes that there is no option that doesn’t require some degree of Town financial support whether it’s a contingent guarantee or Town financing. This could change as our discussions continue.”

In the interim, stay tuned and watch for the announcement of an informational meeting, which the Committee expects to hold in mid-January.

IMPORTANT UPDATE: As this issue went to press, the Broadband Committee announced that the informational meeting would be held on Saturday, January 20 at 10:00 a.m. at Town Hall.

Editor’s Note: As part of his effort to gain greater understanding of the knotty issues surrounding our elected officials’ attempt to bring broadband coverage to New Marlborough, Barry Shapiro met with Mount Washington selectman Brian Tobin to hear how that very small town succeeded where other, larger rural communities have yet to find the way. Here is his report:

When Mount Washington resident and selectman Brian Tobin sits down at his home computer these days, he has a big smile on his face. “I look at the speed I’m getting and often see 200 Mbps download and 400 Mbps upload. It’s incredible. And what’s also incredible is that we own our network and can control what we do with it.”

The story of how Mount Washington went from a perceived backwater community which didn’t have electricity until 1950 to one with broadband service among the fastest in the commonwealth is one which has intrigued many residents of New Marlborough.

Of course, Mt. Washington is quite different from New

Marlborough, with just a fraction of the road mileage and far fewer residents. Still, the focus and dedication that a group of citizens brought to the challenge of obtaining broadband is instructive. It's a story which Selectman Tobin is proud to share, given the leading role he took to make it happen.

"We set out to come up with a viable, robust business plan for a town-owned network. We studied our construction and other costs and compared them to the available sources of revenue. We became convinced that we could own this network and operate it without any cost, or only a minimal cost, to the taxpayers. We kept it simple and had a handful of people who worked very hard, making the decisions and had great support from our service providers who helped design and build the network."

Mr. Tobin explained that the estimated cost to build the network and to bring it to every home in the sparsely populated town is expected to be in the \$700,000 to \$750,000 range. Funds came from the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) (\$230,000), the State Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (\$226,000), funds allocated from the town's stabilization fund (\$250,000) and a \$450,000 State House Note program loan (which currently bears interest at a remarkably low rate of .87 percent). The total funds raised exceed the estimated cost in order to provide for contingencies and any needed working capital. Any money not spent has been, or will be, segregated. The town approved the bond issue and the movement of funds from stabilization at a special town meeting by unanimous vote.

"Our goal was to do this without a tax increase with the expectation that, if our business plan worked, as we believe it will, the funds from subscribers should be enough to run the system without having to raise taxes," said Mr. Tobin.

Once the town made the decision to proceed, work moved quickly, state procurement procedures were followed and contractors selected. In fact, there were seven companies interested in building the network. Ultimately NextGen Telecom Services Group was selected to build the network. Crocker Communications was selected to provide internet and phone service (television service is not provided, but most users choose to stream their television over their new, ultrafast network).

"There is no pressure or burden on town administration to manage or maintain the system. If a tree were to come down, NextGen takes care of it. The first year of service is included in the construction cost we paid them. Future years are negotiable. If there's an issue in someone's home with their service, Crocker is responsible. Crocker also does all billing and collection. Both NextGen and Crocker have been amazing to work with and we're very happy," added Mr. Tobin.

"The board of selectmen have set the pricing for the

service, not some large company. We've set the monthly rate at \$119 which includes internet and telephone. We hope that we can reduce it in the future as we see how our cash flow is and our goal is that all expenses for paying our debt and running the system will come out of the money paid by subscribers. The \$119 per month is paid to Crocker, which does the billing. They keep \$40 and pay the balance to the town. To the extent possible, we hope to use that money to establish a reserve fund for future expenses and upgrades, to replenish our stabilization fund and to pay any interest costs on the \$450,000 bond which means that we won't need to add anything to our tax base."

Mr. Tobin advised that Mount Washington has 21 miles of road, 17 of which have fiber and that there are 147 residential structures, although some are abandoned and some seasonal. About 100 homes have taken the service, something Mr. Tobin says is likely to increase. "We have a 75 percent take rate," he said with pride. He also said that 100 percent of the residences in town have service available to them, even those which are two miles from the nearest house. "We didn't want anyone left out."

Internet speed varies by residence depending on the efficiency of their equipment but Mr. Tobin says that hard wired connections are frequently as fast as 200 Mbps download and over 400 Mbps upload. "We can increase the speed for everyone to over 500 Mbps for \$2,400 annually for the entire town and one Gigabit for an additional \$2,400 per year. Our system was designed for one Gigabit," Mr. Tobin noted. "Residents are responsible to purchase their own routers and networking equipment."

There is no charge to bring fiber to the home regardless of the length of the driveway or to wire a private road, and in many cases underground conduit is being run to the residences, also without charge. Mr. Tobin notes that his driveway is about 400 feet long and it took about an hour for the conduit to be installed.

His advice for other towns struggling to bring broadband to their residents? "Own your own network so you can control it and pricing. Start by designing a network and pricing out the cost so you know what you're dealing with. We used GS-4 Fiber, a world-class company, and they were great. Come up with a good, solid business plan to minimize or eliminate the tax burden. Keep it simple and get some dedicated people in place who can really drive the process."

The process certainly worked for the remote town of Mount Washington, which has now left many of its less geographically isolated neighbors in its dust. Whether this model or some variation can work in New Marlborough, which has many more roads and residences, as well as quite different fiscal constraints, is a question which the Broadband Committee may want to explore. □

TWO HOLIDAY FAIRS SET THE SEASONAL TONE

by Catherine Twing

As the first significant snow of the season fell outside on Saturday, December 9, New Marlborough residents were getting in the holiday spirit at not one, but two, holiday events. The New Marlborough Central School PTA held its annual Holiday Fair in Mill River, complete with a Christmas tree sale outside, while across town in Southfield, the 5th annual Holiday Market was in full swing at the Southfield Church/United Church of New Marlborough.

At the school, the bottom floor was filled with crafts made by students and other items made or baked by parents. The signs hung above various tables read, "Magic and Wonder," "Knits and Cozies," and "Spa Ahh." The Magic and Wonder section offered a selection of magic wands, fairy boxes and other magical creations made by students during "Crafternoons," a time after school where students in grades 2-4 make crafts. The Spa Ahh table offered bathtub scrubs made by younger students, and candles made by parents.



photo by Robert Olsen

PTA Secretary Amy Drown explained all proceeds directly fund educational activities and enrichment programs for students attending the New Marlborough Central School. "I think we've stepped up our game this year," Drown said.

Besides the crafts and live music downstairs, the fair also offered a "Make and Take" room for children to make crafts, a photo booth for them to dress up and take fun photos, and a place for children to pick out gifts for their parents and then wrap them. NMC teacher Lynn Webster was helping in the gift wrapping room, along with volunteers Lily Duval and Sofia Giumarro from Mount Everett Regional School's Gender and Sexuality Alliance, who also happen to be NMC alumni.

"The gifts were donated by teachers and parents," Ms. Webster explained, as a young boy at her table talked about the gift he found for his dad, as well as the things he found for himself.



photo by Robert Olsen



photo by Larry Burke

Top: Prue Spaulding and Merry Abolafia explained their crafts and homemade jams to a potential customer. Middle: At the church hall in Southfield, things were all a'bustle around mid-day. Bottom: The Mount Everett Madrigal Singers at New Marlborough Central School. Left to right, are Elisabeth Enoch, Mary Shalaby, Olivia Marchione, Mickey Masters, Charles Kerzner, and Andrew Haiss.

Down the hall, the silent auction room was filled with attendees bidding on items including a gift certificate for a Massachusetts state inspection at Ormsbee's Garage, a six-week membership at the Kilpatrick Athletic Center, spirits from Berkshire Mountain Distillers, and gift sets from Iredale Mineral Cosmetics. As the snow continued to fall outside, to the delight of the kids, volunteers persevered in grilling sausages provided by the Center for Motivation and Change Berkshire, located in New Marlborough.

Meanwhile, up the road in Southfield, eleven local vendors, largely from New Marlborough, turned out to sell everything from vegetables and honey to soap shaped like matchbox cars. "Everything is home-grown, hand-made, home-produced," said Robert Olsen, organizer of the Holiday Market. In past years he would send an email through Maggie's List, a local message board, to gauge interest and find vendors. This year, vendors reached out to Olsen months in advance asking if they could have a table.

Attendees were very festive, perusing the local products, petting Fern the Holiday Donkey, and talking with neighbors. Soup, cheesecake, brownies, and cookies were also available, made by members of the Southfield Church. "It's small, but it has hometown flavor," said Tara White, "You get to see people and talk to people you haven't seen in a while."

As the day drew to a close, Robert Olsen reflected



photos by Larry Burke

on the underlying purpose of the event: "Throughout the fair, there was a fun and friendly vibe in the air. There was a bit of shopping going on and quite a bit

of connecting with old friends and neighbors before the snows force us all into hibernation till spring. While none of our purses may grow richer during our fair, we all grow richer in a deepening sense of community, I feel. I wonder if we shouldn't consider doing such an event more than once a year!"

Funds raised will help provide emergency financial assistance to those in need in the town of New Marlborough. □



Top: The first real snowfall of the season arrived right on cue for the Holiday Fair – perfect conditions for cavorting in the playground. Below, The Fields family put together a photo booth, complete with costumes, props, and some late-season (and very large) mushrooms!

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Neighbors



Robert Patrick MacKenzie, of New Marlborough, died at home on December 14. Bob grew up on his family's farm, Spruce Hill, in New Marlborough. He graduated from Mount Everett High School, and then attended Berkshire Community College, eventually graduating with a bachelor's degree in business from the University of Colorado at Boulder. Bob always had a tremendous work ethic; he began mowing lawns at age twelve, and never stopped working throughout his life. As an adult, Bob and John Dinan, also of New Marlborough, began building houses, and Bob built over thirty homes in the Berkshires. He then moved to Hawaii where his building career continued, and eventually settled in Colorado. He stayed there until his struggle with bipolar disorder brought him



Bob MacKenzie

back to the Berkshires to be closer to the love and support of his family. He worked for Scott MacKenzie Excavating, and enjoyed a peaceful life on his family's farm, residing in the home where he grew up. Donations in Bob's memory can be made to the New Marlborough First Responders.

photo by Carl Giegold



John and Irma Sisson circa 2007

Irma Sisson, of Mill River, celebrated her 100th birthday on December 26. She was raised in Pittsfield. When asked how she had met her husband, **John**, she said that they had known each other since she was six and he was two. "We were next-door neighbors," Irma explained. "In fact, there were three houses in a row on our street, and there were ten of us kids." They went their separate ways after that: John to the Air Force and Irma to the Red Cross in Washington and San Francisco during World War II, and both of them to spouses and children. Irma later returned to Pittsfield for a position with General Electric. They were married in 2005.

Plans for celebration? "Actually," John said, "our families pointed out that a celebration involving so many people should really be held outdoors, which doesn't work in December. So, we did it last August."

Thirty-five family and friends assembled from California, Florida, Chicago, Richmond, and New Marlborough. Irma doesn't expect to log another hundred years, but she and John are happily ensconced in their Mill River home, and grateful that they can stay there.

photo by AJ Quenneville



Scott and Sandra Walker with Max and Merlin

Sandra and Scott Walker have journeyed from Mill River to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, for a family celebration of Sandra's sixty-fifth birthday on January 1. Their son, **Jared**, lives there, and they will be joined by their daughter and son-in-law, **Shannon and Chris Hyde** from Napa, California, for the landmark birthday (but not as landmark-ish as the one above!) Daughter **Morgan**, recuperating from surgery, will be staying at the Walkers' home in Mill River, dog-sitting for **Merlin and Max**. Before they left, Sandra said, "I'm really looking forward to this. It's exciting to be doing something this special for my birthday!"

In a new venture, Selectman **Michele Shalaby** is joining the management team of Volunteers in Medicine (VIM) Berkshires as the Human Resources/Volunteer Manager. The VIM Berkshires program has grown over fourteen years as



Michele Shalaby

a comprehensive health center staffed by professional medical volunteers that serves those without access to health care. Michele noted, "I was attracted to this job for several reasons, but the main attraction for me is VIM and its mission." She will

Neighbors, continued

recruit and coordinate a large group of volunteers as well as administer federal medical insurance programs, along with other human resources responsibilities. She summed up: "I enjoy tasks that combine technical and administrative challenges with a social aspect." □

compiled by Barbara Lowman: deeuell@yahoo.com

OUR WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS

On December 10, **John Schreiber** sent the accompanying picture with this note: "I found this guy two weeks ago under a rock on one of those warm days, a **blue-spotted salamander**. (PS – I put him back where I found him.)" It seems that John's propensity for turning over rocks rewarded him with a rare find in these parts. On the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife website, the blue-spotted salamander is a member of the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program. While this amphibian is not terribly unusual to find in northeastern Massachusetts, the only previously documented sightings in Berkshire County have been two in Sheffield. Blue-spotted salamanders are among a group known as mole salamanders (genus *Ambystoma*), along with the more-common-to-this-area yellow-spotted salamander. The mole designation comes from the fact that they are burrowing creatures, digging shallow tunnels where they feed on invertebrates and hibernate through the winter. If you would like to learn just about everything that is known of these creatures, go to www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dfg/nhesp/species-and-conservation/nhfacts/ambystoma-laterale.pdf. (Also, to admire this fellow in all his splendor, see him in color at nm5vn.org.)



photo by John Schreiber

The blue-spotted salamander

Don Beauchamp reports that there were relatively few birds at his feeder or along the hedgerows in Clayton, but once he refilled the feeders in late November, three pair of **purple finches**, along with a **gray squirrel**, showed up. In mid-December, "the **house finches** arrived, hogging the feeder, and today, a **yellow-bellied sapsucker**, who did not stay long."



photo by Don Beauchamp

Purple finch

There was certainly no shortage of **goldfinches** at **Sandra Fusco-Walker's** feeders near Hartsville. She says, understatedly, "Some birds have finally returned to our feeders since it snowed." That is a serious bird-feeding facility she's got going there! □



photo by Sandra Fusco-Walker

Goldfinches

Compiled by Larry Burke, lburke2@me.com



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Land Trust News

In all seasons the New Marlborough Land Trust celebrates our town's spectacular landscape and makes fun in the outdoors. On Thanksgiving weekend the Land Trust led hikers of all ages to the summit at Dry Hill Reservation. The incredible view is new every time. □

Martha Bryan



photos by Martha Bryan

After lighting the teepee at the Halloween Scare, the Land Trust's bonfire maker, Paul Hess, tries to shake a creepy clinging bat.

Left, the Trust had a hearty turnout of volunteers at its fall road cleanup. Forty bags of garbage were hauled off to the transfer station and the crew (pictured here) was rewarded with a picnic lunch at The Inn on the Green. Below, the group at the summit!



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WINTER HOUSE CONCERTS

The New Marlborough Village Association presents the first of two Winter House Concerts on Sunday, January 14. This concert features Manon Hutton-DeWys, pianist, and her violinist colleague, Emily Vold. Their program will include works by women composers from three centuries, Marianna Auenbrugger, Clara Schumann and Ruth Crawford, and a sonata by Edvard Grieg for violin and piano. Manon recently completed her doctoral studies at City University in New York and studied earlier at Simon's Rock and Bard Colleges as well as Mannes College of Music. She now teaches piano at Lehman College in the Bronx and at Simons Rock, and has performed at many well-known venues in NYC. She

lives in Southfield with her husband, Donald McClelland.

For the second concert of the series on Sunday, February 18, violinist, Sarah Vonsattel, will be returning with colleagues from the Metropolitan Opera orchestra to perform string trios by Beethoven and Dohnanyi.

The Winter House Concerts begin at 4:00 p.m. and last an hour with wine and hors d'oeuvres served afterwards. Both concerts will take place in private homes. Seating is limited so please make reservations by calling 413-229-2785 or by going online at www.newmarlborough.org. □

Larry Burke


REMINDER FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

All residents and homeowners are reminded to plow, sand, and otherwise maintain their driveways during the winter months to ensure access to your home during an emergency. Although the town's emergency vehicles are well equipped for winter conditions, glare ice and deep snow can hinder or prevent emergency crews from timely access in the case of an emergency.

Additionally, all residents with alarm systems in their homes are reminded to register their alarm systems and to provide a key holder who can allow access to your property if you are not home when emergency crews respond to an alarm. Even better, talk to the Fire Department about acquiring a safe, secure Knox-Box for your home. □

Fire Department President David Smith

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Illustration by Ann Gelsing

It's just us chickens, wishing you a Happy New Year!

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THE LOG

Police Department (selected entries)

- Nov. 1 1:32 p.m. Wires down on East Hill Road.
- Nov. 4 7:22 a.m. Caller reports three horses running loose on Route 57 in New Marlborough village.
- 7:09 p.m. Southfield Branch Road resident reports two cars parked in his driveway.
- 7:25 p.m. Clayton Mill River Road resident reports that a communications cable has been torn from its terminal outside his house.
- Nov. 5 8:09 p.m. Resident reports three vehicles roaring at high speed in both directions past her house on Canaan Valley Road.
- Nov. 6 7:03 p.m. A Southfield resident reports that, through the use of GPS, she has determined that a male against whom she has obtained a protective order is in the woods across the road from her home. A second call, at 11:49 p.m., places the intruder just outside her house.
- Nov. 9 7:45 p.m. Mill River Great Barrington Road resident reports that a FedEx truck backed into his car.
- Nov. 15 8:30 a.m. Responding to a Lumbert Cross Road resident who had locked herself out of her house, officer determines that forced entry would be the only option and instead calls for a locksmith.
- Nov. 16 3:34 p.m. Following receipt of an anonymous letter complaining of a car encroaching on Norfolk Road in Southfield village and endangering drivers passing through after dark, the owners (while stating that their intent is to slow speeders through the village) agree to move the car to a parking area across the road during the night.
- Nov. 18 9:00 p.m. Resident reports rapid gunfire near her Rhoades and Bailey Road house.
- Nov. 20 11:35 a.m. Officer, apprised of a dead deer on the lawn of a New Marlborough Southfield Road residence, locates the hunter who shot the deer but then lost it in the rain and has him retrieve it.
- 1:56 p.m. Following a complaint from the mother of a student that a neighborhood dog has been growling at children in the New Marlborough Central School playground, the animal control officer advises the dog's owner of the Town's leash law.
- Nov. 24 6:46 a.m. The driver is uninjured, but the vehicle in a one-car accident on Hartsville New Marlborough Road is disabled and needs to be towed.
- 4:15 p.m. Vehicle towed after hitting a deer on Route 57.
- Nov. 25 1:00 p.m. A New Marlborough Southfield Road resident reports a caller posing as a Dish Network employee attempting to scam information.
- Nov. 28 5:00 a.m. Highway Department is notified of a downed tree blocking Brewer Hill Road.
- Nov. 29 10:03 p.m. A Mill River resident reports an altercation with her boyfriend.

Graham Frank, Chief of Police

Fire and Rescue

- Nov. 2 9:54 a.m. Stone Manor Drive Medical Call
- Nov. 5 12:01 a.m. Leffingwell Road Medical Call
- Nov. 6 6:06 p.m. Cross Road to Canaan Valley Road Fire Alarm
- Nov. 9 11:25 a.m. Alum Hill Road Medical Call
- Nov. 11 8:15 a.m. Mutual Aid to Lakeville, CT Structure Fire
- Nov. 24 6:50 a.m. Hartsville New Marlborough Road MVA
- Nov. 26 11:42 p.m. Canaan Southfield Road Medical Call
- Nov. 29 6:22 p.m. Canaan Southfield Road Fire Alarm
- Nov. 30 1:34 p.m. County Road Medical Call

Fire Department President David Smith

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New Marlborough Village Association 2018 Winter House Concerts

These intimate concerts in homes of Berkshire residents are sponsored by the New Marlborough Village Association. Performances last about an hour, followed by a wine and hors d'oeuvres reception.



SUNDAY, JANUARY 14 at 4:00 p.m.

Manon Hutton-Dewys

*New Marlborough's resident concert pianist
with Emily Vold, violin*

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18 at 4:00 p.m.

**Sarah Vonsattel, violin;
Chihiro Allen, viola; and Julia Bruskin, cello.**



Admission is \$20 for NMVA members and \$25 for non-members

**Seating is limited so please make reservations in advance
at 413-229-2785 or www.newmarlborough.org**



photo by Peter Schuyten

At long last: Pictured above, a heavy crane is lowering the last of seven pre-stressed boxed concrete bridge beams onto the abutments of the long-closed Hadsell Street bridge. The next step in the process will be to pour a five-inch-deep concrete deck over the beams, but because of winter temperatures the concrete will need to be kept warm with a portable heater for approximately three weeks until it sets properly. For those with long memories, the Hadsell Street bridge has been closed to traffic since the summer of 2011.

FROST

Winter is once again upon us. Though the short days and trying conditions can make us long for the coming of spring, there is a purity to winter that is well worth our attention and our appreciation. The beauty of winter is in the details. Take frost, for instance....

—Larry Burke



MOUNT EVERETT ROBOTICS TEAM RULES!

Over the years, Southern Berkshire Regional School District has been a pioneer in robotics. With the help of Flying Cloud Institute, it mounted the first Berkshire County girls' robotics team for grades four through eight. Mount Everett became the first high school in the Berkshires to create a VEX Robotics System team. This team distinguished itself by winning many competitions against much larger schools, and succeeded in qualifying for the national competitions.

Another first was achieved by the Mount Everett Middle School VEX team, 'Hyper Space,' which is now in its second year. This nine-member team was the only middle school from western Massachusetts to participate in VEX robotics competition held on December 2 in Framingham. They won all nine of the regular round matches and swept through the playoffs with a 15-0 record to win the competition.

When asked about the win, Vaughn Marchione from Mill River said, "Our team did not win because our robot was extraordinary. Many teams at the competition had robots that could move twice as fast and reach twice as high, but they were not reliable. The other robots broke down, got stuck, or failed to start almost every match. The one match where our robot did malfunction, we still won because of our bonus points for being the only team who scored in the 15-second autonomous period before the game starts."

An outsider may find the structure of the competition hard to understand. When asked to explain more about the game Vaughn provided this explanation: "The VEX Robotics Challenge changes every year. This year the main goal of the game is to stack cones on goals, and move goals into zones. There are two parts to the game, first, there is a 15-second autonomous period where the robot is programmed to move without help from a driver. Our autonomous program could only score two points out of ten, but it could do so reliably, and because of that we never lost the autonomous rounds. There is also a 2 minute and 45 second period devoted to driver control, where one person controls the robot's movement, and the other controls the robot's arm. We were able to score 40-50 points in the driver control time, more than most of the other twenty teams that competed."



photos by Jane Burke

The Mount Everett Regional Middle School robotics team after going undefeated in competition in Framingham, Massachusetts: from left, Vaughn Marchione (with the winning robot "Hyperspace"), Logan Reynolds, Travis McLoughlin, Kota Rinaldi, Colin Thorp, Mikel Nourse, and Kathryn Barrett; (in front) Carter Lotz and Isaiah Neski.

Those interested in knowing more about this team might contact coach Chris Thompson, who was raised in New Marlborough and is a graduate of Mount Everett. If you want to attend a practice and meet the players, Chris can be reached at cthompson@sbrsd.org. The team continues to meet as they prepare for the Southern New England Regional Championships to be held in March. If they win there, they will go on to the nationals. Community support will mean a lot to these budding engineers. □

Jane Burke

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 Artemis, by Andy Weir
 Two Kinds of Truth, by Michael Connolly
 Ramses the Damned: The Passion of Cleopatra, by Anne Rice
 Enchantress of Numbers, by Jennifer Chiaverini
 Year One, by Nora Roberts

Adult Nonfiction

Promise Me, Dad: A Year of Hope, Hardship and Purpose, by Joe Biden
 Leonardo Da Vinci, by Walter Isaacson
 Infidel, by Ayaan Hirsi Ali
 Berkshire County's Industrial Heritage, by John S. Dickson

Children's Fiction

Click, Clack Moo I Love You! by Doreen Cronin
 Rafi and Rosi Pirates, by Lulu Delacre
 Who Am I? An Animal Guessing Game, by Steve Jenkins
 Feather, by Cao Wenxuan
 A Surprise for Mrs. Turtle, by Paula Merlan

Young Adult

The Book of Dust, by Philip Pullman
 The Hate You Give, by Angie Thomas

Books on CD

Leonardo Da Vinci, by Walter Isaacson
 Murder on the Orient Express, by Agatha Christie
 Artemis, by Andy Weir
 Hardcore Twenty-Four, by Janet Evanovich

DVDs

Bob the Builder: The Movie Mega Machines
 The Crown
 Doc Martin, Season 8
 Dunkirk
 Home Again
 Kingsman: The Golden Circle
 Lego Ninjago Movie
 Victoria & Abdul

Library Winter Hours

Mon. Wed. Sat. 10:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
 Tues. & Thurs. 1:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
 Fri. 1:30 – 7:30 p.m.
 413-229-6668



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 Free Estimates



DENNIS J. DOWNING

ATTORNEY & COUNSELLOR AT LAW

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Tel: (413)528-5040 Fax: (413)528-5095
 e-mail: downing.law@verizon.net

Contributions are needed to continue the paper!

Please fill in the form and send with your contribution to:

New Marlborough 5 Village News, P.O. Box 243, Southfield, MA 01259

YES, I WANT THE *New Marlborough 5 Village News* TO CONTINUE!

HERE IS A TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION OF \$_____ (payable to NM5VN)

NAME _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Town Times

Board of Selectmen: Every Monday at 6:00 p.m.

Town Administrator: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Planning Board: Second and fourth Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

Board of Health: First Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

Conservation Commission: Last Saturday of the month at 9:00 a.m.

Board of Assessors: Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Fire Department training: Every Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. at the fire station

Building Inspector: Monday 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m., Wednesday 8:00 - 10:00 a.m.

First Responders: meeting/training: First and third Wednesday
at 7:00 p.m. at the fire station

Cultural Council: Second Thursday at 4:15 p.m. at the library

Post Office: Mill River Window: Monday - Friday 11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Southfield Window: Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

(The Southfield Post Office lobby is open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.)

Town Treasurer: Monday & Tuesday 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Tax Collector: Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Selectmen's Administrative Secretary: Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Dog and Animal Control Officer: John Springstube 413-232-7038

Town Clerk: 229-8278; 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. weekdays; Saturday by appointment

Town Hall: 229-8116

Police: Business office: 229-8161

Transfer Station Hours:

Wednesday: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Saturday: 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Sunday: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

PERMITS WERE DUE JULY 1

The fee of \$125 can be paid by mail.

Please enclose a self-addressed,
stamped envelope.

Late fee, after August 15, is \$150

Emergency calls:

**Police, Fire, Medical
911**

New Marlborough Highway Department

Located on Mill River-Southfield Rd.

Hours:

Monday - Friday 7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

PO Box 99, Mill River, MA 01244

(413) 229-8165

We welcome advertisements from businesses owned by New Marlborough residents.

Other businesses can be listed in the Service Sector (see back page). Questions, rates? Call Barbara Lowman: 229-2369

NM5VN Editorial Team

Larry Burke, issue editor; Diane Barth, designer;

Martha Bryan, Jane Burke, Barbara Lowman,

David Lowman, Joe Poindexter, Jodi Rothe,

Peter Schuyten, Barry Shapiro, Pam Stebbins,

Jon Swan, Marianne Swan, Sandra Fusco-Walker,

Contributing writers and artists: Ann Getsinger,

Mary Richie Smith, Tara White. Index: Donna Weaver

New Marlborough 5 Village News

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also online at www.nm5vn.org

The next issue will be dated February 2018.

All copy must be submitted no later than January 17.

For advertising, contact Barbara Lowman, tel: 229-2369

PO Box 243, Southfield, MA 01259

5villagenews@gmail.com

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SERVICE SECTOR 1/18

- ♦ **Cohen and White Associates, Monterey office:** Nancy Kalodner, Senior Affiliate Broker. Offering New Marlborough the finest professional real estate services since 1979. Call 528-9595 or 413-446-1115
- ♦ **Design+Planning:** Christopher Blair; Since 1986, creative, budget-aware design. Achieve your goals for additions, alterations to an existing home or new construction. 413- 528-4960. chris@design-planning.com.
- ♦ **Fine Jewelry:** Designers and manufacturers; custom orders/commissions welcome; expert repairs. 45 years experience. Sachs Reisman, Inc. 25 Maple Ave., Sheffield 229-0050
- ♦ **One call does it all!:** Vinyl siding cleaning; pressure washing; deck refinishing; floors refinished; window washing; odd landscape jobs; all odd jobs. David Goewey, (413)229-2787
- ♦ **Susan M. Smith:** Attorney At Law; Concentrating in the areas of Estate Planning, Estate Administration, Elder Law, Real Estate and Zoning Matters. ssmithlaw@hughes.net or 229-7080
- ♦ **Reiner White:** General Contractor; 413-229-8450
- ♦ **Ter Mar Triangle Farm:** 106 Sandy Brook Turnpike (Rte 183), Sandisfield; 413-258-2898; fruits and vegetables in season; pork; jam; eggs; honey; sawmill; kiln milling; firewood
- ♦ **Woodruff Mountain Landscaping:** Excavation and landscape contracting, all forms of stone work and masonry, and outdoor services, including lawn mowing and yard work. 413-229-2919 woodruffmountain@aol.com

To list your business here, contact Barbara Lowman 229-2369