

New Marlborough 5 Village News

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Clayton • Hartsville • Mill River • New Marlborough • Southfield



NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR AN OLD GRANGE

By Robbi Hartt

Brittany Bailey is breathing new life into the old Umpachene Grange in Hartsville with the energy of a lifelong dancer and intentionality of an artist philosopher. The property, originally purchased from the Mohican Indians in 1736 by proprietors from Marlborough, Massachusetts, sits near the Umpachene River at the intersection of Routes 57/183 and Hartsville Mill River Road. Once home to the Methodist Church of New Marlborough, it later became the Grange Hall, part of the National Grange Movement established in 1867 to assist farmers with purchasing machinery, building grain elevators, lobbying for government regulation of railroad shipping fees, and providing a support network for farm families. By the 1870s, it boasted more than 1,000,000 members nationwide.



Ford and Bailey on the porch of the Umpachene Grange, with their dogs Odette and Merce

photo by Robbi Hartt

Its original 1875 lithograph illustrates the “each for all” mantra that has characterized the Grange, with the farmer as the central character on which all society relies (“I feed you all!”), surrounded by scenes of professionals, laborers, and military and government agents. Its longstanding commitment to the “development of the potential in families, youth, and adults of all ages through dynamic programs and experiences that educate, engage, and enrich lives” dovetails beautifully with Bailey’s vision for the next iteration of the Umpachene Grange.

INSIDE:	
Volunteerism.....	3
Board of Selectmen	4
Conservation Commission..	7
Planning Board	8
Then and Now	10
Neighbors	12
Wildlife Neighbors.....	15
The Log	16
Recipe of the Month.....	18
Land Trust.....	19
School News.....	20
Library News	22

Bailey admits that a building project of this magnitude is new to her but has no doubt it will grow into something transformative for individuals and families — a “relevant, caring, and involved” part of the surrounding community. Both she and partner Walton Ford, who purchased the property in late June, visit the property on quiet weekend mornings to take in the space. This is an important part of the overall process, as Bailey points out, connected to her belief that the space will guide them in renovating the building. It is also a conscious effort not to limit their expectations but boldly pursue all of the possibilities. Whether approaching a blank canvas or choreographing a dance routine, both Walton Ford and Brittany Bailey are aware of the importance of not rushing the creative process. This has clearly benefited them both in their careers, his as a painter and hers in the world of dance, and they trust that their instincts and thoughtful curating will guide them on the right path in Hartsville as well.

Since her first introduction to dance when she was two-and-a-half years old at a local studio in Hickory, North Carolina, Bailey has devoted herself to her art, graduat-

continued

An Old Grange, continued

ing high school from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, a top-ranked creative and performing arts conservatory in Winston-Salem, and moved to New York City in 2008 to work as a dancer/choreographer. Her performance resume includes, among other achievements, performances of early works of Marina Abramovic and Yvonne Rainer in retrospectives at the Museum of Modern Art, performing with the Michael Clark Company at the Tate Modern, collaborating with Robert Wilson, and whirling with the dervishes of the Mevlevi Order in Israel and Turkey.

Bailey and Ford bought the grange from owner Kevin Regan, who did significant restoration work and used the space for many years as his carpentry workshop. “Kevin really loved that space,” Bailey recalls. “We could feel it as soon as we walked in.” The online listing noted that the roughly 3,000-square-foot, .81-acre property could be used as “an artist’s retreat, an entrepreneur’s dream space, a photographer’s gallery, and a large-scale sculpture studio with an outdoor sculpture park. The possibilities are endless in this charming historical old church... what its next incarnation will be is up to you!”

Driving past the building for the first time, Bailey was drawn to the high, open ceilings, the windows filling the space with light from both sides, and the bucolic village setting along the river. The space reminded her of the Westbeth Studio in New York City where she first trained with Merce Cunningham, one of the most influential choreographers of the 20th century, whose innovation forever changed the landscape of dance, music, and contemporary art. “The quality of the dancing was undoubtedly influenced by the unique space we trained in,” Bailey explains. As part of her continuing exploration of movement technique, Bailey has also frequently collaborated with composer Bryce Hackford, focusing on dancing “in the full space” — using both sound and space to create open, unobstructed feeling and movement.

The Grange was an important historic gathering place for many past and current New Marlborough residents, including Henry and Martha Eggenberger, who were active members and helped out at the Grange dinners. “I have some memories of the building being

used for additional functions like my wedding and some birthday parties and dance parties,” daughter Silvia Eggenberger recalls. Maurice and Linda Brazie were also active members of the Grange.

Bailey hopes the building will continue to be a gathering place for the community in the years to come. “I know there are more people who can benefit from this space,” she states. Although her training is concentrated in ballet and classical dance, Bailey’s vision includes having a space where people from the community can come to decompress, taking different types of dance classes (perhaps also yoga and pilates classes), moving freely in the open space, and reconnecting with their minds and bodies. Her long-term goals include creating a sanctuary where a repertory dance company could teach lessons, partner with area



Bailey, inside the Grange, taking in the work ahead while basking in the light.

photo by Robbi Hartt

schools, hold recitals, and have an inspiring presence in the community. “Dance has so much more to offer than the formal qualities and aesthetics,” she stresses.

Her vision is not limited to dance, however. Film? Discussions? Art gallery? Community Center? The new meetinghouse for our current times? “There are many other leisure activities that invite you to take your time and invest in yourself that are worth considering.” Bailey is eager to hear ideas from the local community as she begins more formal planning in the coming months. She is also excited about continuing the basic concept of the Grange and its rich social and cultural history of family-style dinners. There is a sign currently resting on a side table that she promises will be hung once again to alert the community to upcoming dinners, an old-fashioned way of bringing people together and building connections. “There’s no ‘I’ in ‘we,’” she states. “This space is amazing because a lot of people in the community cared for it and put in the work to create it.” She hopes the community will be involved in creating the next iteration of the Grange as well, helping to shape the vision by sharing passions and imagining possibilities. (You can email her at umpachenegrange@gmail.com)

Stay tuned for updates on the evolution of this renovation! □

ANY VOLUNTEERS? SEEKING RENEWAL OF COMMUNITY SPIRIT

By Steven Nester

Volunteerism is the lifeblood of a small town's welfare and government. From the EMT who makes house calls to the members of the Finance Committee who ensure residents' tax dollars are spent wisely, the people who attend to these essential public services are dedicated and for the most part unpaid. Lately, though, there seems to be a shortage of residents willing to give their time to the many boards and committees that keep New Marlborough and its villages running. Volunteerism isn't dead, but it seems to be ailing, and this puts stress on those who do step forward to answer the needs of the town. The causes are easy to point out; but finding the cure is a challenge.

Michele McAuley sees part of the problem as an increased need for professionalism in committee member skills and abilities. A former member of the Finance Committee, she cites the Finance Committee to make her point: "As budgets and line items grow, residents need a committee that is able to be strategic in order to balance meeting resident expectations, complying with requirements, and controlling tax growth," she says. What's also needed, she stresses, is capital planning with a "certain level of financial literacy." This begs the question: with an influx of new residents, people either new to the area or weekenders turned full-timers, there must be a few who have worked in, or now work in, finance. Wouldn't a new neighbor with this acumen be a perfect committee person to plan and watch over town finances?

Ms. McAuley says that expectations of residents have increased. Added to that is the growing complexity of Town government. Unfortunately, there is no county government agency to aid and assist, says Ms. McAuley, other than the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. While the BRPC has taken on some of the workload, particularly for the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board, solutions close to home may work best. The obvious answer is not to hire more paid staff, says Ms. McAuley, but to get more volunteers. Spreading the work around among committees, she says, is another strategy.

Jane Burke, an educator who established Flying Cloud Institute in New Marlborough and is currently the chair of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District School Committee and one of the Town's three representatives to the Regional School District Planning Board, is no stranger to volunteer work. She suggests that a lack of affordable housing in New Marlborough could be a factor in reducing the volunteer talent pool. The uncertainty of Covid's spread and how to prevent it, the sacrifice of one's personal time, obstinacy, and the lost art of compromise may be other factors making volunteers

harder to find. Finally, most of New Marlborough's churches, once focal points of community awareness and dependable reservoirs of willing individuals, have become inactive. Only two still offer pastoral services.

For people interested in rolling up their sleeves, a good place to start is with New Marlborough's volunteer emergency services. Fire Company President David Smith says that while the current number of firefighters is adequate, there is certainly room for more, and there is a real need for daytime EMT coverage.

New Marlborough Fire and Rescue Medical Director Maureen Krejci adds, "Our New Marlborough community has many dedicated volunteers who give tirelessly of their time both day and night. Our town's population has increased over the past years, which has naturally resulted in a rising call volume. A definite strain on our human resources is being felt. Responding is not as difficult at night, when volunteers are home from their day jobs, but during the day, when most of our volunteers are at work outside of the town, we are left with marginal availability of staff for both firefighting and EMS response." Ms. Krejci points out that the reliance on help from neighboring towns, when New Marlborough Fire and Rescue is unable to rally a sufficient crew for a call, may not last. "This model is less and less sustainable because volunteerism, especially in Fire and EMS, is in a state of national crisis," she says.

At the local level, the need is increasing annually – there were 262 emergency calls this year compared to 232 last. "I am amazed and proud of the coverage our group has been able to provide the community during these challenging times," says Fire Chief Chuck Loring. But he sees an urgent need to ease the strain and is putting together a proposal for the Board of Selectman and the Finance Committee to hire part-time staff for daytime coverage. Chief Loring asks that those wishing to become a Firefighter/EMT contact him at 229-8100 or Maureen Krejci at nmrescue@gmail.com. The department, he says, will provide volunteers with all necessary training, adding there is an EMT class starting soon in Great Barrington.

For those who may be unable to take on the demands of firefighting or emergency medical response but are nevertheless interested in helping out, browsing the New Marlborough town website (www.newmarlboroughma.gov) and clicking on the Boards and Commissions dropdown menu might just provide the appropriate entry point.

Six decades ago, a new president beseeched the nation, "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country." In New Marlborough, that call to action may be more relevant than ever. □

Town Business Is Your Business

BOARD OF SELECTMEN



November 29: The first item of business was the **appointment of a tax collector** to replace Gina Campbell, who is moving on. Chairman Richard Long voiced his accord with Selectman Mark Carson's choice, between two well-qualified candidates, of Jessica Horan as having an edge in experience for the job. (Selectman Tara White, who serves as Town accountant, abstained from voicing an opinion on the appointment.) Ms. Horan is currently Town treasurer, a position she will retain as she adds tax collector duties.

Following a lengthy salary discussion, the Board settled on a starting rate of \$23.61 an hour, to be raised to \$24.47 an hour assuming Ms. Horan successfully completes a probationary ninety days in the position. Messrs Long and Carson then voted to offer the position to Ms. Horan.

The Board moved on to the **nomination of Sheila Baird to the Capital Planning Committee**. Ms. White noted that Ms. Baird has deep experience in finance as a long-time officer of a financial management firm and added that "she is a lovely person and easy to get along with." The vote to appoint her to a three-year term was unanimous.

The Board happily approved the installation of tree lighting on the New Marlborough Village Green by John W. Field Tree Service — the cost of which is being contributed by Greg and Anupama Poole. Then, noting that the United Public Service Employees Local, unit 424, had accepted its draft of a bargaining agreement, the Board closed the circle by accepting its acceptance. The agreement covers pay rates of Highway Department employees.

In a brief round of selectmen updates, Ms. White reminded her fellow members that the Board needed to rescind its emergency declaration of storm damage,

which it had put in place last July to assist in road repair. She also urged the Board to **begin the search for a chair of the Board of Assessors to replace Marsha Pshenishny, who has announced her intention to leave the position**. The Board agreed to consult with other members of the Board of Assessors. Finally, Mr. Carson said that the Fire Department had located a dealer to replace the turbo on a truck damaged a year ago.

Following a review of the minutes of past meetings — bringing the Board, for the first time in months, fully up to date on its acceptance of these records — the meeting was adjourned.

December 6: The meeting got underway with the **renewal of alcohol licenses** for New Marlborough's four restaurants: Old Inn on the Green, Gedney Farm, Southfield Store, and Cantina 229. (At this writing, a decision on whether to continue operation of Cantina was still being considered.)

In a related matter, Administrative Secretary Sharon Fleck asked the selectmen to sign off on a report, requested by the state's Alcohol Beverage Control Commission (ABCC), that estimates the increase in the town's summertime population. As presently written, the report foresees a doubling of the seasonal population with an addition of 1,550 residents. Chairman Richard Long broke in to question the magnitude of this increase and asked how it was arrived at. Ms. Fleck said that 100 percent was the figure reported in recent past years and that Town Clerk Kathy Chretien was sticking with it for consistency. Mr. Long was dubious, saying that to his knowledge the increase was less than 50 percent. He suggested that it be based on the number of non-resident properties in town. The reported figure of

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500 properties does not, however, distinguish between houses and undeveloped plots of land. Mr. Long returned to the 50 percent increase, which put the number of seasonal residences at 775, then rounded it up to 800 and received unanimous assent to entering this figure on the ABCC report.

The Board then voted to **renew the package store license for the Mill River General Store.**

Next item on the agenda: **staffing of the Police Department.** Joining the meeting by phone, Police Chief Graham Frank explained that hiring has been exacerbated by the closing of the Bridge Academy to part-time officers. Training by the state-run academy is mandatory for police officer certification. As a result, said Chief Frank, he could no longer hire part-timers and is now having difficulty staffing scheduled shifts.

Explaining that there is a good deal of mobility among qualified candidates in surrounding towns, Chief Frank asserted that New Marlborough "is an exceptionally good town to work in," because of the opportunity for training and the high volume of call activity. In response to a question from Mr. Long, Chief Frank said he had not approached the Finance Committee with a request to add payroll and was told that would be a necessary step toward approval at a town meeting. He then asked if he could advertise for an already-trained part-time officer. "Absolutely," answered Chairman Long.

The selectmen moved on a **renewal of a Memo of Understanding with the towns of Great Barrington, Alford, and Monterey for elderly transportation.** Prue Spaulding, director of senior services on the Council on Aging, said the assessment for 2022 would be \$5,400, a \$432 decrease from the current charge. The Board approved the assessment. It also approved a Fire Department grant application, prepared by John Halbreich, for \$10,500 to pay for an appliance specially designed to dry protective gear.

In yet another update on the repair of the fire truck damaged more than a year ago, Mark Carson said that a replacement turbo had finally arrived but that a connection hose had failed. To allay fears that the repair project was fatally snake-bitten, Mr. Carson quickly added that a new hose was expected by week's end. "Keep fingers crossed," he said.

Moving on, Mr. Carson said that an opening for a Highway Department driver remained unfilled. He suggested that a recruitment company and additional advertising be considered. Following approval of the November 29 minutes, the meeting, about an hour long, was adjourned.

Part-time police officers may no longer receive training at state-run Bridge Academy; Chief Frank will advertise for an already-trained part-time officer.

December 13: The full Board, along with Town Administrative Mari Enoch and Board Secretary Sharon Fleck, met via Zoom at 6:00 p.m. Chairman Richard Long asked Ms. Enoch to review the result of the online auction of seven items of Highway Department surplus equipment. She said that auction brought in \$21,991, with a 2003 Amman roller going for far and away the highest sum, \$19,200.

Moving briskly on with the evening's agenda, Ms. Enoch said that the signing off on the elderly transportation memo would be delayed until the selectmen received a copy with the correct wording on the cost of a round-trip ticket, which will be \$10. Next, Chairman Long briefed the Board on the state's recommendation that all municipalities sign on to a nation-wide opioid settlement with Janssen Pharmaceuticals. He said it's unclear whether the Town will get any funds out of the settlement, but if that proved true, the money would be earmarked for drug rehabilitation. Following that, Ms. Enoch reported that **Michele McAuley had sent notification that she would be resigning from the Finance Committee, effective immediately.** Tara White added that Ms. McAuley's seat will up for election in June.

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Mr. Long then reminded the Board that there would be a meeting on December 16 with the Sheffield Board of Selectmen to begin discussing the issue of cooperation between the two towns' police departments.

Under selectmen's updates, Tara White said that there appear to be **two good candidates for the Human Resources position that will be shared by the towns of New Marlborough, Monterey, Great Barrington, Egremont, and Sheffield.** Great Barrington will be the official employer for the HR officer; Ms. White expected that the position will be in the \$60,000 to \$70,000 range, and that the person would be putting in somewhere around six hours a week for New Marlborough. The state had awarded the five towns \$75,000 for a regional human resources grant back in May, on top of which each town appropriated additional funds for the position. Ms. White reported, "We requested a grant extension and it was approved, so if we hire in January 2022, we will have enough money until the end of the year, but would then need to appropriate the amount needed to get us to June, 2023."

The Board was unanimous in agreeing to carry over ten vacation days that Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring was unable to use in the past year, due to the demands of his job. Mr. Loring hopes to put them to good use with some well-earned time off in March.

After reviewing the minutes of the November 29 meeting, Richard Long adjourned this streamlined meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Larry Burke

December 16: The 9:00 a.m. Zoom meeting opened by **adopting the proposed single tax rate of \$9.30 per \$1,000 of property value for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022.** The reduction of 64 cents from the current rate takes account of an increase in the total value of New Marlborough properties. Tara White observed that the rise in home values was a temporary response to the competition for homes created by those seeking a haven from the Covid-19 pandemic. Tax Assessor Marsha Pshenishny responded that the state requires current figures without regard to possibly anomalous market trends.

The session moved on to endorsing a nomination put forward by Mark Walker of Richard Butt to a two-year term as a member of the Capital Planning Committee. Mr. Butt, a former advertising executive with J. Walter Thompson and Leo Burnett, recently moved to Southfield. With that, the meeting was adjourned at 9:07 a.m., very possibly making it the shortest on record.

At 5:00 p.m., Tara White, in person, and Richard Long and Mark Carson by phone met at the Sheffield

Town Hall with the Sheffield Board of Selectmen to **discuss the ramifications of a merger of police departments.** Officials in both towns concur that at present staffing levels their departments are unable to put the recommended number of personnel on patrol. The supposition is that a single combined department could staff up to recommended levels at a lesser cost than if the departments remained independent of each other.

New Marlborough Police Chief Graham Frank and his Sheffield counterpart, Eric Munson, laid out three possible models for a combined department. In all of them, two officers from each town would be on patrol in all three daily shifts — 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m. to midnight, and midnight to 8:00 a.m. The third model would increase coverage in the day and evening shifts to three patrolmen, one from New Marlborough, two from Sheffield. Additionally, a chief or a sergeant would be assigned to the day and evening shifts.

The selectmen present **expressed muted enthusiasm,** with the exception of Sheffield's Robert Kilmer. He pointed to the administrative complexity of a merger, as well as the logistical difficulty presented by a paucity of connecting roads between the two towns. After Rene Wood, chair of the Sheffield Board, asked the police chiefs to provide detailed costs of merger, the assembled selectmen — with only Ms. White physically present, the New Marlborough Board was not officially represented — agreed to reconvene on the matter in late January.

December 20: A 6:00 p.m. special permit hearing called at the request of Ingo Schweers for a ruling on his application to build on the lot that lies between the Southfield Store and the Baptist Church was postponed to February 1 to allow Mr. Schweers to gather needed documentation. □

Joe Poindexter

Merging police departments with Sheffield is administratively complex and logistically difficult due to the paucity of roads connecting the two towns.

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CONSERVATION COMMISSION

November 18: All Commission members – John Schreiber, Freddy Friedman, Nanci Worthington, and Doug Hyde – convened on Zoom to address the month's agenda.

Mike Kulig of Berkshire Engineering started by reviewing the scope of work for the continued hearing for a Notice of Intent (NOI) for Wilkinson Excavating on 15 Konkapot Road. Mr. Kulig addressed the comments from the Department of Environmental Protection concerning water management for the new driveway including erosion controls, three new culverts, and an appropriate replication area. The Commission voted to approve the NOI with a condition that the Commission be allowed a site visit to inspect the mitigation.

Mr. Kulig then continued with a Request for Determination (RDA) for his client Berkshire Springs of 772 Norfolk Road. At issue was a failed leach field at the facility. The New Marlborough Board of Health required an upgrade. Mr. Kulig described the newly-engineered leach field. The Commission approved the work with a condition that any trees removed be replaced one-to-one with native species and that the Commission be allowed to work with Mr. Kulig to locate the new trees.

Next, Mike Parsons of Kelly, Granger, Parsons and Associates submitted an RDA for Michael Levi of 170 Adsit Crosby Road. The septic system needs to be brought to code. Mr. Parsons reviewed the newly-designed system and the Commission approved the RDA without requiring any further permitting.

Shannon Boomsma of White Engineering then reviewed an NOI for the Town of New Marlborough to restore the Campbell Falls Bridge. Dr. Schreiber recused himself from the discussion as he is chair of the New Marlborough Historical Commission organizing the restoration. Ms. Boomsma reviewed the first phase of the restoration, which seeks to manage the water and runoff that has degraded the integrity of the bridge. She explained that newly-installed catch basins are designed

to control the water and discharge the runoff on riprap and flat stones adjacent to the river. In addition, the road is to be regraded to redirect the runoff. The NOI was approved with a condition that the Town regularly maintain the new catch basins.

Residents Jill and Charles Leone then addressed the Commission with an RDA to remove several trees threatening their house. The Commission approved removal of the trees and asked that the trees adjacent to the dock not be removed. The Commission asked that three native hardwood trees greater than ten feet tall replace the ones removed. No further permitting was required.

Next, Emily Stockman of Stockman Associates addressed the Commission regarding the enforcement order issued to Grassmarket LLC at 0 Konkapot Road. Ms. Stockman reviewed the corrections made per the enforcement order. The Commission was satisfied with the work and issued a letter of compliance to the property owner.

Jonah Harshbarger of 26-28-30 Mill River Great Barrington Road then addressed the Commission regarding the enforcement order issued to him for work done within the riverfront area. The Commission reviewed the compensatory work and agreed to send him a letter of compliance.

Finally, Emily Stockman returned on behalf of her client Eastern States Well and Pump Services. At issue was the enforcement order issued to Timothy Martin of Cross to Canaan Valley Road Lots 3, 4, and 5 for lack of containment when drilling a new well, which resulted in runoff and slurry into the wetlands on the adjacent property. Ms. Stockman reviewed the remediation to the site and explained that only hand tools would be used for the site work. The Commission asked to inspect the work during the remediation.

The minutes from last month's meeting were approved and the meeting adjourned. □

Martha Bryan

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PLANNING BOARD

December 8: With the full Board present via teleconference, Chairman Mark Carson called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Joining the call was Alana Chain, Director of Construction for Altus Power, the company that has been building two solar fields on a former gravel bed across from the Town Garage on the Mill River Southfield Road. The purpose of Ms. Chain's presence on the call was to invite the members of the Planning Board to a site visit, now that the project is near completion. She said that she hoped a walk through the facility would result in answers to any questions that might remain about the project. She added that this is part of her "getting her ducks in a row," with the ultimate aim of receiving a sign-off from the building inspector.

Mr. Carson asked if the company would be getting in touch with the Town's Board of Assessors to verify details of the Payment In Lieu of Taxes agreement. Member Bob Hartt expressed his interest in knowing if there would be a secondary containment system to back up any hazardous situation that might result from the inverters and batteries that are on location. Ms. Chain said the primary containment is similar to a large shipping container, and that further protection could be discussed during the site visit. The date of December 20 at 3:00 p.m. was agreed upon.

After accepting the minutes of three previous meetings, the Board was informed by Mr. Carson of an inquiry from Mill River resident Steven Nester as to the procedure involved in putting up a Tiny House™ on his property. Mr. Carson let Mr. Nester know that the building could not be on a trailer, since that is not allowed by right in New Marlborough, and would therefore need a foundation and would need to meet the Town's building codes. Mr. Carson said that it was his impression that, seeing the complexity of what would be involved, Mr. Nester has put the idea on hold.

Following up on an abutter's complaint over noise emitted from the solar field on Knight Road, Mr. Carson

said it had been determined that the sound came from fans that are activated on hot days to cool components in the solar panels. The company intends to remedy the problem. This issue, along with the concern voiced earlier in the meeting over the potential hazards of large storage batteries on the solar fields, led Bob Hartt to ask that the Board make it a goal to keep up on "best practices" regarding solar arrays, so that modifications to the Town's bylaw on commercial solar fields can be made as needed.

The next item on the agenda was to be the draft of a Dark Sky bylaw, but, wondering if it might be too involved a discussion to start at this point in the evening, Mr. Carson suggested to Mr. Hartt and the others that the Board should wait until the next meeting to tackle the subject. He also asked that the meeting be in-person, which will be the first time the Board will gather at Town Hall since the beginning of the pandemic. The members agreed, and the date of the meeting was set for December 20.

Mr. Carson then wrapped up the meeting with two items of old business, the first, that progress is being made in putting together a flow chart for landowners who are considering developing their property. This flow chart will be a joint effort of all the boards and commissions in New Marlborough, plus the building inspector. The second item, regarding riverbank erosion along the Konkapot in Hartsville, after some discussion, was decided not to be in the purview of the Planning Board. The meeting was then adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

December 20: Following a site visit to the Altus Power solar fields on the Mill River Southfield Road, all five members of the Planning Board sat down together in the meeting room of Town Hall. This was the first time the Board had met in person since March 2020. Socially distanced and masked, the members, along with Secretary Sharon Fleck, began the meeting at 4:05 p.m. with Chairman Mark Carson saying that he thought the site visit went well, and was personally impressed by the look of the two former gravel pits that have been repurposed



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to generate clean electricity. He also had praise for how well concealed the arrays are from public view.

Moving directly into the main order of business for this meeting – discussion of a potential Dark Sky bylaw for the town – Bob Hartt distributed copies of a document that he said was based on model Dark Sky bylaw language that he had obtained from the internet. He cautioned the group not to jump to the conclusion that the provisions of this particular bylaw were goals he endorsed, or that the Planning Board should necessarily adhere to.

Mr. Hartt then talked the Board through the various articles contained in the document, including sections on the establishment of four zones with different ambient lighting parameters, limits on light intensity and color temperature, nighttime curfew on bright lighting, lighting plans that would be required to obtain a building permit, and the illumination of exterior signage.

Mr. Carson commented that the language of the document was really complicated, to which Mr. Hartt responded, “This is a first cut, something to work with. Yes, it’s too complicated, and what we need is to research

what other comparably-sized towns have done with their bylaws.” There was general agreement among the Board members that the aim should be to build a bylaw draft that is appropriate for New Marlborough. One point that everyone seemed to agree on was downward facing, or shielded, exterior lighting.

Questions began to arise as to enforcement of a Dark Sky bylaw, whether it would be the building inspector, or perhaps the electrical inspector, or some other Town authority. Who would be “grandfathered” and for how long was another topic that the Board decided needed careful consideration. During the course of the discussion, Mr. Hartt assigned the individual members certain sections of the model bylaw he had distributed for further research, to be brought forward for discussion in upcoming meetings. All agreed that this was just the opening round of what might be many months of fashioning the right bylaw for New Marlborough. With that sentiment, and a “Happy Holiday to all,” the meeting was adjourned at 4:58 p.m. □

Larry Burke



photos by Barry R. Shapiro


Residents slowing down to gaze at the spectacular show of holiday lights in front of the Meeting House and Old Inn can thank Greg and Anupama Poole of New Marlborough.

“We’ve been part time residents for fifteen years and love this place,” said Greg. “We wanted to do something nice for the town, so we hired John Field, who we think is incredible, to do something beautiful and creative, and we think he did a fantastic job. We hope that everyone enjoys it, and we extend our best wishes to all for the holidays and New Year.”



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THEN & NOW

The following article first appeared in the Summer, 1986 issue of *Then & Now*, a bi-annual periodical of the Historical Society, published from 1978 through 1997.

SCHOOL MEMORIES OF NEW MARLBORO

By Mary Rooney, Class of 1936

Our family moved to New Marlboro from Great Barrington in the summer of 1929. That September I entered sixth grade at the Village School, which later became the American Legion Hall. [The Legion Hall in New Marlborough Village is now owned by Mike White.] The teacher was Miss Gertrude Oschmann, daughter of the Chief of Police William Oschmann of Great Barrington. Music was taught by Mr. Edward Cockaday, a rotund little man who went to all the schools in the area, giving lessons. School nursing was handled by ladies from the Southern Berkshire Visiting Nurses Association. The superintendent was Mr. Charles Stephenson, a former army colonel.

Attending school in New Marlboro was pleasant. My first experience with school in Great Barrington had been in a similar one-room schoolhouse, the old Seekonk School, but then I was sent to the William Cullen Bryant School, where I had been in a class of about forty-five students.

One thing I remember of the Village School was the interest taken by the wealthy ladies of the village in the school and its students. These ladies, Mrs. Willets, Mrs. Hoyt, and Mrs. Ogle, used to give parties and prizes to the youngsters. Mrs. Willets and Mrs. Hoyt used to take turns furnishing refreshments for the Christmas and Closing exercises at the school. At each Christmas, each student received a 1-pound box of candy and fruit, as well as the ice cream and cookies at the party. Mrs. Ogle furnished prizes for the Closing exercises. There was a prize for the boy with the best attendance record, and also one for the girl with the best attendance.



The New Marlborough High School graduating class of 1936. Assembled on the steps of the then brand-new Mill River School, front row, left to right, Mary Rooney, Olive Crine Emprimo, and Margaret Hayes Semler; back row, left to right, Hilton Whitney, Joseph Daley, and Merritt Rowley.

Photos courtesy of the
New Marlborough Historical Society

There were also prizes for the boy and girl who had shown the most achievement scholastically during the school year. These were lovely prizes. I still have a yellow and white gold bar pin with a sapphire chip which I won. The pin came from the Tiffany Store in New York City, as did the other prizes she gave.

When I was in eighth grade, I was transferred to the Mill River School. Going to Mill River meant a bus trip, a new experience for me. Mr. Harry Alexander, who lived in the red house near the Southfield bridge, had the bus contract for our route. The vehicle he used was unique! He had fabricated a wooden body with windows on each side and a wide open back. This was mounted on a Reo truck chassis. In winter we got wet from ice and snow, and cold, cold, cold. No heater, of course. In summer we were hot and dusty from the dust that blew in from the dirt roads we traveled. There were long wooden seats on each side – four in all. There

were some leather cushions on the seats, salvaged from one of the local churches, but they didn't extend the full length of the seats, so usually the youngsters who got one of the last were pushed down so they had to sit on the bare wood.

Mr. Alexander himself drove, or had Harvey Rugg fill in for him. Mr. Alexander smoked noxious cigars. He also kept a tin can on the floor beside him, which he used as a spittoon. When he lighted up, one smart boy used to holler, "Phew! Who's cooking cauliflower?"

At Mill River School, the eighth grade was in a room downstairs. Next to it was the Primary room, and the upstairs was devoted to the high school. There was no



The former New Marlborough School in Mill River, which was torn down in 1932 to make way for the brick building, now known as New Marlborough Central School.

hot lunch. Bus students all carried lunch boxes. After the present building was up, a hot lunch program was instituted through the efforts of the P.T.A. At first one hot dish was offered daily, plus milk or ice cream cups. Miss Nellie Sisson, who lived across the street from the school, was the cook.

The P.T.A. was active. Their meeting room was the area in the Public Library basement. One method of raising funds that was popular with all the organizations in town was to stage card parties. Whist and pinochle were the games usually played. If you belonged to any of the groups sponsoring a card party, you'd be asked to "get up a table." Card parties were held in private homes for various causes, and you could agree to be a hostess for such.

It was the era before ball point pens, and leaky fountain pens and bottles of ink were standard equipment. Kids came home from school with ink-stained hands and clothes.

There wasn't a school library, but the local library loaned a couple of shelves of books to the school. Buses stopped every Tuesday and Thursday to allow the students to take out books. There was no TV of course, just radio, so kids did read! The librarians were Miss Frances Rhoades and Miss Lavinia Pease. Later, Mrs. Ruth Rhoades took over. Janitors who worked at the school were Mr. Alton Dinan, Sr. and Mr. John Johnston.

Graduations were held at the Town Hall, and diplomas were presented to the eighth graders at the same time as the high school students got theirs. The stage would be decorated with flowers of the season, taken from local gardens. The smell of roses, peonies, syringas, and laurel still remind me of June nights at Mill River Town Hall.

New Marlboro High had a song which was written to the tune of Cornell's "Far above Cayuga's Waters." It was always sung at graduation. Usually, one of the teachers served as pianist and got us into the hall to "Pomp and

Circumstance." It wasn't yet the age of school bands for New Marlboro!

Following are the lyrics of "New Marlboro High Alma Mater":

*Far up in the dear old Berkshires
With their hill of blue
Stands our noble Alma Mater –
To her we'll be true.
Duty calls us; we must leave you
Though for you we'll sigh;
Memory's leaflets round us closing,
Dear old New Marlboro High.
Lift the chorus, speed it onward,
May our praises rise
Here's to thee, our Alma Mater
Dear old New Marlboro High.
High School life at best is passing
Gliding swiftly by.
Let us pledge in word and deed
Love for New Marlboro High
May that love undimmed and constant
Ever with us dwell
Is the wish of nineteen thirty-six
In their fond farewell.*

(Chorus repeated)

While the present building was being constructed, we had classes in the Town Hall and Public Library. The main hall served for assembly. When classes began, we might have French being taught on the stage, history in the Selectmen's office, and mathematics downstairs. It was great fun for the students but must have been miserable for the teachers.

When I finally got my high school diploma and went away to nurse's training, I had the opportunity to compare my school with others, as I was competing with girls from much larger schools. New Marlboro had offered only two college and preparatory courses when I was there. Though the other girls had had other courses offered to them which I didn't have access to, I found that I had the basics in the college prep course I'd taken. I was as well grounded, if not better grounded, than my classmates who'd taken the post-graduate courses to get into training. The requirements for nurse's training are set by the state, not just the individual school. I felt that, though small and maybe even a bit comic, New Marlboro High School had done just fine for me. □

The Class of 1936 was composed of the following graduates: Olive May Crine, Joseph Francis Daley, Marguerite Patricia Hayes, Mary Agnes Rooney, Merritt Clinton Rowley, Hilton Raymond Whitney. Their class motto was: Succeed: We Can, We Must. Class colors were Blue and Gold, and the class flower was the American Beauty Rose.

NEIGHBORS



Howard Nourse, of New Marlborough and Monterey, died at home on November 26 at the age of eighty-five. Howard moved to New Marlborough before he entered first grade at New Marlborough Central School in 1943 as part of a class of just five students. They all graduated from New Marlborough High School in 1955, and have remained lifelong friends.

Howard and Patricia Stanton married in 1957, and remained together for sixty-four years. He worked in the Mill River General Store until 1968. He then worked for E. Caligari & Son in Great Barrington as manager of the Taylor Rental Store. For more than thirty years he managed the increasing inventory and kept it all in good working order; he retired in 2003.

Howard was very active in town affairs in New Marlborough, serving for nearly thirty years in the New Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department, including four years as its chief. He served on the New Marlborough Finance Committee for twenty-six years. He served in the United States Army Reserves for six years, and was an active member of the Harold D. Rood American Legion Post 350 in New Marlborough. Two of Howard's first-grade classmates share their memories of him, along with two other longtime friends:


David Sheldon's friendship with Howard goes back to elementary school: I have known Howard since starting first grade at New Marlborough Central School in the fall of 1943. We were a class of five students, three boys and two girls. World War II was raging, black out curtains were used at night, an airplane observation structure was located in Southfield, all unknown aircraft were reported and rationing was in full stride. Howard lived about a mile away from the Sheldon & Corser Farm where I grew up. He was always well dressed, polite, and very neat in his school work. Howard was the first in our class to have a car. It was a Model A Ford and provided real fun transportation. After completing high school at New Marlborough High School, we received our diplomas and went our separate ways, Howard to work at the Mill River Store and I to the University of Massachusetts to study agriculture.

Howard excelled at the store, which at the time was owned by Mr. Barnes and Mr. Ware. He did everything with promptness and accuracy. The farm sold eggs to the store by the case, plus dressed chickens as requested. Whenever I was back at the farm, I would usually see Howard bringing up groceries for my aunt (Mrs. Corser) and picking up a case or two of eggs for the store. One summer day in the late 1950s, I was working at the farm when the heifer barn caught fire. Howard happened to be there to pick up eggs at the time, and I quickly learned that he was also a firefighter for the Town of New Marlborough. Howard jumped into action to help put out the fire. Soon the remaining New Marlborough firefighters arrived; the barn ended up being a total loss, but the big milking barn was saved. Howard worked valiantly fighting the fire to the point that he suffered burns on both arms since he didn't have his firemen's equipment when he started fighting it. I also learned that Howard was a long-time member of the New Marlborough Finance Committee and he served his country in the United States Army Reserves.

After completing ten years at the Mill River Store, Howard took a position managing the Taylor Rental Center



Howard Nourse



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in Great Barrington. I would see Howard fairly often as I rented a wallpapering kit many times. Howard worked there for over thirty years, and he continued his very polite and personable approach to everyone. Howard was a true people person.

Howard loved his wife Pat, all his family members, his town, and his country. Howard was a true patriot.

Winnie Veretto also goes back to the first day of first grade: I have known Howard since September 8, 1943. On that day we entered first grade at New Marlborough Central School. As a student, Howard was always diligent and focused; he knew where he was going and worked hard to achieve his goals. Twelve years after entering NMCS our class of nine students graduated, each of us looking forward to following our dreams. By then it was obvious to us that Pat Stanton would be with Howard as he traveled down “the road of life.”

After living over forty years in the Boston area, I returned to the Berkshires and soon realized how fortunate I was to have Pat and Howard as friends. They quickly welcomed me back to the Berkshires and were always willing to lend a helping hand. For example, who but Howard would trudge through deep snow to clean out my furnace vent so I would not be overcome by carbon monoxide as I recovered from surgery??

In 1955 Howard was described in our high school yearbook as “business-minded, neat, quiet, and courteous.” How accurate we were! Now, sixty-six years later, in addition to those four words, I think of him as having been family-oriented, civic-minded, hard-working, honest, and wise.

Many people will remember Howard for the many contributions he made to his community. I will always remember him for his everlasting love of Pat Stanton Nourse, a romance that began many years ago during our school days in Mill River.

Ned MacDowell didn't start first grade with Howard, but has been a friend for sixty years: Of the many good friends I've made in New Marlborough over more than fifty years, Howard stands out. We met on a chilly April day in 1960, while Harry VanDuesen and I were putting in the foundation of our house. Howard drove up the muddy driveway with steaming cups of delicious hot coffee, the first of many meaningful acts of kindness. In those days Howard was working at the Mill River General Store, serving the community behind the counter, pumping gas or delivering groceries, a right-hand man to owners Jim Ware and Lee Barnes. Since that early time our families became close friends and neighbors while sharing many common interests, including home maintenance, construction projects, and lawn care (we've both been accused of tending too large a lawn). Howard was always ready to lend a hand, enthusiastically pitching in on projects of all kinds; hoisting trusses to a roof or screeding cement in a basement, he was there helping out. For decades Taylor Rental depended on his leadership and remarkable ability to keep the huge inventory of tools and machines up and running. While the Nourses have lived in nearby Monterey in recent years, many will remember Howard's commitment to New Marlborough, most notably as a dedicated volunteer firefighter and then fire chief. (One of our sons recently told us that as a little boy he took great pride in “knowing the fire chief!”) We will miss Howard's consistent good cheer, honesty, sense of humor, and friendship. He was a good man, one of a special breed.

Courtney Turner remembers Howard Nourse from their years together in the American Legion Post 350: Howard Nourse was a member of the Harold D. Rood American Legion Post 350 for over forty-five years. He was a member who could always be counted on when projects or duties arose that that needed a steady hand and willingness to help.

He had served in the United States Army Reserves for six years with active duty in 1959. As a long-term member of Post 350, we will respectfully remember him as a friend and “fallen comrade.” (Colonel Turner is the Commander of Post 350.) □



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NEIGHBORS



Rachel Weingeist and Jeff Wallman welcomed their new neighbors in Southfield: Three generations of the **Albano** family moved in next door. What a gift to have kids, dogs, grandparents and family friends abuzz, boisterous, bellowing dreams for the yard, the house, and the community. Ideas abound, creativity alive, embodied in each generation.

Suddenly, thoughtful Halloween costumes, kids headed to the Southfield Store on foot, the frog pond, the back acres, apple trees, and long weekend holidays seem relevant again. Activated by youth and wonder, there are new people to share these experiences with and children to watch grow and discover.

The house next door is lovely and we have enjoyed many neighbors who have added so much to the community. Elegantly coiffed and decorated and innovatively shored up with old and new techniques, the home is stunning. The grounds are full of mature perennials, fruit trees bursting with the largest blossoms in the area. Everything seems prehistoric in scale, the secret we have yet to learn.

The Albanos anonymously dropped off a bowl of quinces from their tree for Jeff and Rachel, more than they could consume. The remainder found their way into the Thanksgiving stuffing, providing new texture and flavor.



Quince, from the prolific and healthy tree in the Albanos' yard.

Photo by Kim Albano



Award-winner Danny Wilkinson

Danny Wilkinson of Southfield is a freshman at Mount Everett Regional School. He is the youngest award winner in the Bridging Divides, Healing Communities Youth Film Challenge, which is a partnership of the Civic Life Project and the Berkshire Film and Media Collaborative, with funding from Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation. Danny's film was screened at the Crandell Theatre in Chatham, New York, on December 4 and at the Daniel Arts Center at Simon's Rock on December 12. He received his check for placing third for his film "Self Image," which explores the issue of body image and self-esteem. With him from left are Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation President Peter Taylor, Civic Life Project co-founders Catherine Tatge and Dominique Lasseur, and Berkshire Film and Media Collaborative Executive Director Diane Pearlman. □

compiled by Barbara Lowman: deeuell@yahoo.com




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WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS



photo by Chris Hyde

A Thanksgiving guest wannabe

During the course of the day, the hawk returned often to the same perch, which must be pretty ideal for spotting prey.

Ed Harvey spotted a blond **coyote** in the “mile-long” field down in Clayton on December 10. There seems to be a number of very light-colored coyotes around town. Larry Burke sees one every so often in the fields around his house, probably on the hunt for voles and mice. Unfortunately, this same coyote was spotted on the 15th making off with one of the Burkes’ favorite hens.

And more on coyotes, which seem to be present all over New Marlborough in greater numbers this year than any in recent memory, from **Barry Shapiro**, over by Brewer Hill: “At 5:00 a.m., it took a few moments for the loud, deep-throated growls to penetrate through the layers of sleep, but when they did, my first thoughts were, ‘Uh-oh, whatever that is, it’s big, it’s directly under our open bedroom window, and it seems like it’s almost in the room with us.’ A bit of adrenaline suddenly pumping through my veins, I quickly got out of bed, stumbled in the dark into the next room, and turned on the outside floodlights.

“There, just a foot or two away from our window, were two very large coyotes, ghostlike in the early morning fog. They stood there for a moment, absolutely still and somewhat imperiously, ignoring the lights that now illuminated them, and then slowly and silently trotted away down the hill, disappearing into the mist like two apparitions. I suddenly felt very cold. I turned off the lights and quietly got back into bed, not wanting to disturb Margie, who somehow slept through the entire thing, but sleep didn’t return easily for me.

“In the morning I wondered whether this visitation had actually happened. The very grainy pictures on my trail camera confirmed it had. And, by the way, Rusty, our trusty twelve-pound Havanese who was with us in our bedroom, no doubt realizing that discretion is the better part of valor, never made a sound.”

When asked what was up with leaving the windows open in December, Barry explained, “Margie, aka Nanook, is a big fan of frigid breezes; my shivering doesn’t seem to disturb her sleep.”

Here’s to a happy, healthy new year, full of great wildlife sightings, which, we hope, will be shared with our readers. □

In early December, **Sandra Walker** checked in from the Hartsville end of town: “Sending along a photo of our uninvited Thanksgiving visitor. I’m guessing he was looking for some turkey. He’s a very young **bear** and wasn’t really afraid of us or our Bernese mountain dog, though we were sitting right near the window and Merlin was barking. We took down the birdfeeders (which were empty and he can’t reach anyway). We also threw out the frozen pumpkin and mum decoration he decided to try, though after one bite he decided it wasn’t worth the effort. Hopefully, he’s learned there’s no dinner being served for him here at the Walkers, and has gone into hibernation.”

Liz Goodman wrote on December 8, “So far this month all I have is a bear destroying our bird feeders after we started putting them out again. (Now I’m back to bringing them in at night, but all summer and fall we didn’t have them out at all.) And we spotted a large flock of **cedar waxwings** down by the river eating dried up berries.”

On December 10, **Larry Burke** noticed a **red-shouldered hawk** perched on the branch of a larch tree.



photo by Larry Burke

A red-shoulder hawk looking for its next meal



photo by Barry Shapiro


A coyote who doesn't observe boundaries

Compiled by Larry Burke. Send your sightings to him at larryjburke@gmail.com

THE LOG

Police Department (selected entries)

- Nov. 1 12:33 p.m. A caller reports a suspicious vehicle parked outside the Southfield Church since the previous day.
- Nov. 2 10:30 a.m. An officer alerts Verizon to low-hanging wires at the intersection of Clayton Mill River and Umpachene Falls Roads.
- Nov. 4 6:59 p.m. A caller reports her concern over her son, who has been unaccountably missing since early the previous morning. (Two days later, he is located in Connecticut.)
- 8:25 p.m. A caller reports hitting a deer on Canaan Southfield Road.
- Nov. 8 5:36 p.m. A caller reports an injured deer on New Marlborough Southfield Road.
- Nov. 10 11:29 a.m. After having been advised by a New York City police officer that a report of the incident had to originate from the New Marlborough Police Department, a Hartsville resident reports the theft of a package from a UPS drop box in Brooklyn, New York, that was addressed to his New Marlborough residence.
- Nov. 11 4:48 a.m. A caller reports a motor vehicle accident at the intersection of Adsit Crosby and Mill River Great Barrington Roads.
- Nov. 12 5:40 p.m. A driver reports hitting a deer on Hartsville Mill River Road.
- Nov. 13 8:00 a.m. A resident complains of a member of the Conservation Commission trespassing on his South Sandisfield Road property, purportedly to check out a curb cut that the caller claims was cleared with the Town.
- 11:36 a.m. A caller reports that a window at his North Road residence was pierced by a gun shot.
- Nov. 15 7:31 a.m. A driver collides with a utility pole on Campbell Falls Road.
- 12:16 p.m. Two callers report as many as thirty cows loose on Farm View and Hartsville New Marlborough Roads.
- Nov. 16 12:34 p.m. A driver reports hitting a deer on Hartsville New Marlborough Road.
- Nov. 17 9:30 a.m. A New Marlborough village resident reports that checks reproduced from one of his have been cashed in amounts up to \$40,000.
- Nov. 19 4:59 p.m. A driver reports a collision with a deer on Hartsville New Marlborough Road.
- Nov. 20 10:35 p.m. An unlicensed driver, trespassing in the cornfield on Clayton Mill River Road, is arrested after failing a sobriety test.
- Nov. 21 8:01 a.m. The Highway Department is notified of two trees down on Norfolk Road.
- Nov. 23 1:11 p.m. A driver reports damage to his vehicle after he pulled up behind a car stopped in the middle of Hartsville New Marlborough and was struck by the car as it backed into him.
- Nov. 24 2:24 p.m. A fugitive from justice is located at a residence on Mill River Great Barrington Road and taken into custody.
- Nov. 26 8:17 p.m. A vehicle is reported to have run off the road at the juncture of Mill River Great Barrington and County Roads.
- Nov. 27 9:11 a.m. Icy road conditions lead to a rear-end collision at the entry to the Transfer Station on South Sandisfield Road.
- 1:44 p.m. A driver collides with a rock to the side of Norfolk Road.
- 5:52 p.m. A Clayton resident, noting an open garage door and what sounded like footsteps during a check of a neighbor's property, reports a possible break-in.
- Nov. 28 10:43 a.m. A caller reports a domestic disturbance at a Southfield residence.



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12:30 p.m. A passerby reports an illegal burn to the rear of a Hartsville residence.
 Nov. 29 9:24 a.m. An officer assists a caller in banning trespassers from hunting on his Clayton property.
 11:50 p.m. Happening upon a motor vehicle accident on New Marlborough Hill

Road, an officer notifies the Highway Department of icy conditions there.
 6:54 p.m. The Animal Control Officer issues a citation for the mistreatment of dogs kenneled at a New Marlborough village residence.

Graham Frank, Chief of Police

FIRE AND RESCUE

Nov. 1 12:23 p.m. Norfolk Road Medical Call
 Nov. 2 12:58 p.m. Canaan Southfield Road Boiler Problem
 Nov. 3 10:58 p.m. Mill River Southfield Road Medical Call
 Nov. 6 2:27 a.m. Mutual Aid to Sandisfield MVA
 Nov. 9 5:24 a.m. Norfolk Road MVA
 Nov. 9 3:38 p.m. Shunpike Road Medical Call
 Nov. 11 4:54 a.m. Mill River Great Barrington Road MVA
 Nov. 13 9:53 p.m. Mutual Aid to Great Barrington Medical Call
 Nov. 15 7:31 a.m. Campbell Falls & Canaan Valley Roads MVA

Nov. 15 1:25 p.m. Red Fox Road Medical Call
 Nov. 20 12:05 p.m. Adsit Crosby Road Fire Alarm
 Nov. 22 6:50 p.m. Shunpike Road Medical Call
 Nov. 24 3:17 p.m. Norfolk Road Fire Alarm
 Nov. 25 12:43 p.m. Hartsville New Marlborough Road Medical Call
 Nov. 27 9:12 a.m. New Marlborough South Sandisfield Road MVA
 Nov. 27 1:52 p.m. Norfolk Road MVA
 Nov. 30 1:05 p.m. Hartsville New Marlborough Road Fire Alarm
 Nov. 30 6:47 p.m. Canaan Southfield Road Medical Call

Fire Company President David Smith

Burning Season: Opens January 15 and is permitted through May 1. Please use the online application for burn permits. Permits may be obtained, as conditions allow, from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on the day of the planned burn at www.bcburnpermits.com/ or via a link on the Fire Department page of the Town website: <http://newmarlboroughma.gov/pages/index>. Burning is allowed between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. All fires must be extinguished by 4:00 p.m.

Reminders:

- Avoid burning on days with high winds.
- Keep fires at least seventy-five feet from structures.
- Have a rake and/or shovel available, and, when possible, a garden hose or other water supply.
- Do not leave fires unattended.
- Burn the fire down to coals and drown with water to extinguish.
- Burn only brush; no leaves, grass, hay, stumps, building debris, or other material.
- Call 911 to report any emergencies.

New Marlborough Fire and Rescue strongly recommends you complete your burning as soon as possible, as a dry April may require burning to be closed before May 1.

Fire Company President David Smith

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RECIPE OF THE MONTH

The long, dark days of January cry out for comfort food, and there are few dishes more comforting than this warming dish of tender, braised pork over creamy polenta. It's elegant enough for a dinner party and casual enough for a weeknight meal. Quick and easy to prepare, it will provide dinner for two for a few nights or a single dinner for four or more. It looks great with some string beans or broccoli strategically placed on a plate. Accompany it with a pinot noir or other red wine. Enjoy! □

Marjorie Shapiro



PORK RAGU WITH POLENTA

PORK

3 to 3.5 pounds boneless pork shoulder,
cut into 4 pieces
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon vegetable oil (more as needed)
1 large onion, finely chopped
6 garlic cloves, finely chopped
2 tablespoons tomato paste
2/3 cup full-bodied red wine

28-ounce can whole peeled
tomatoes
14 ounce can cherry tomatoes
3 sprigs thyme
3 sprigs rosemary
2 bay leaves
1 tsp. oregano
2 cups chicken stock

POLENTA

Kosher salt
1 cup polenta
4 tbsp. unsalted butter
1/2 cup grated Parmesan

Freshly ground black pepper
1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley
Olive oil

Directions:

PORK

- Season pork all over with salt and pepper. Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium. Cook pork, turning often, until evenly browned, 6-8 minutes. Transfer to a platter.
- To prepare the sauce, first use a paper towel to wipe out any burned bits from pot, but leave the golden-brown pieces. Add onion and garlic to pot and cook, stirring frequently, until onion is starting to brown and caramelize, 6-8 minutes. Add tomato paste and cook, stirring occasionally, until slightly darkened in color, 3-5 minutes.
- Add wine and cook, scraping up any browned bits, until reduced by about half, 3-5 minutes.
- Add whole peeled tomatoes and any juice, crushing the tomatoes with your hands, then add thyme, rosemary, bay leaves, and oregano; stir in 2 cups chicken stock and can of cherry tomatoes. Add pork with any accumulated juice; season with salt and pepper to taste.
- Bring liquid to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer, slightly uncovered, until pork is falling-apart tender, and the sauce is thickened, 2 1/2-3 hours.
- Using 2 forks, break up pork into pieces or shred it; taste and season with salt and pepper as needed.
- Pork can be cooked a day or two in advance.

POLENTA AND ASSEMBLY

- Bring 4 cups salted water to a boil in a large pot. Whisking constantly, gradually add polenta; reduce heat to medium-low. Cook, continuing to whisk often, until polenta is tender and creamy, 20-25 minutes (if polenta becomes too thick, add water as needed). Add butter and 1/2 cup Parmesan to polenta and whisk until melted; season with salt and pepper.
- Spoon polenta into bowls and top with pork. Scatter parsley and more Parmesan on top and serve.



LAND TRUST NEWS

Scavenger Hunt for the Hedgehog

In the next few weeks we will be placing very playful looking hedgehogs (Bernard, pictured right) along some of the New Marlborough Land Trust trails. If you spot them, take a photo and send it to us nmlandtrust@gmail.com along with your name and address and we will send you a Land Trust hat.



Bernard will be found on some Land Trust trails

I have always had a fascination with the hedgehog. Not only are they adorable, they also have the qualities of intuition, adaptability, patience, strength, and fortitude. I think in the last eighteen months we have all had to bring these qualities into our daily living. Hedgehogs understand the need for solitude and the time for resting and relaxation. New Marlborough Land Trust properties are the stepping stone to finding inner peace for ourselves

We should all be lucky enough to have a hedgehog stop by as a “spirit animal” to spur our curiosity and activate our inner explorer. There is a whole, glorious world in which to take part in activities such as hiking, identifying plants, mushrooms and herbs, and gathering up nifty items along a trail. When you are done with your adventure sit, relax, and reflect on the importance of nature and how it makes you feel.

Recommended books to learn more about hedgehogs:

The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle - Beatrix Potter, *One Snowy Night* - M. Christina Butler, *Prickly Hedgehogs* - James McGuinness

In other news, we are getting our 2022 calendar booked for activities led by local experts in areas of birding, herbing, kid-friendly events, and the Blues Bash on April, 23 2022! How wonderful will it be to get back together for an evening of dining and dancing at Gedney Farm. As a community we will celebrate the Land Trust and special individuals that have contributed to our success. Happy Holidays to All!

Executive Director Silvia Eggenberger

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SCHOOL NEWS

A HOLIDAY GIFT FOR EVERYONE

When the house lights went down in the Thomas A. Consolati Performing Art Center at Southern Berkshire Regional Schools on Sunday, December 19, for the final performance of *A Christmas Carol*, a vivacious actor appeared under the spotlight. Dressed in a patchwork costume, she was a new face – the play’s director, Allison England. During her animated introduction, she referred to her joy in relocating to the Berkshires during the pandemic after a long career in the theater from New York to Los Angeles as an actor, director, and singer. She described how the young actors, parents, high school students, and school staff all came together to work like a family to make a show complete with great costumes, props, and lighting. She said, “I believe in finding a different way to bring children out so they feel like they’ve got something special. Being live tonight has lighted a candle in the children.”

The performances of the forty-two children from grades three through six were indeed very special. Though the pandemic required they wear masks, their performances were full of enthusiasm and confidence. Their characters came to life, and not one actor stumbled in their delivery. Fifth grade cast member Jamie Beirne-Marchione said, “The director was very energetic and fun to work with. In the first rehearsals we were confused about the plot but then she showed us the movie, which was really awesome. Then we understood the story.” The young actors had additional encouragement and support from a crew of ten assistant directors,



Play director Allison England greets the audience.



photos by Jane Burke

In the party scene where Scrooge’s nephew Fred, played by Jamie Beirne-Marchione on the far left, is entertaining guests.

including older students at Mount Everett. Odegaard Fields also lent a hand as the resident expert on all things related to the theater space. The tech crew came from all over the Berkshires, plus talented parents and staff helped to give the performance a professional look.

This was third grader Paige Prisendorf’s first time performing on this stage. She said, “We rehearsed a lot. The last week we did three hours every day to get ready. I wasn’t nervous. It was really fun to be on stage next to my best friend, Zylpha Bill, in the



With the help of parents and Shakespeare & Co., the actors were able to appear in realistic costumes. This definitely added to their performances.

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scene about Christmas past.” Jamie Bierne-Marchione had performed before in a school production as a third grader in *Annie*. He also had a role in *Merry Wives of Windsor* at Shakespeare & Company, where his mother worked. Those who have attended performances in the past might have recognized the Marchione name that has appeared in programs for three decades. He comes from a New Marlborough family of talented actors. His uncle Ryan, aunt Leigh, mother Megan, and cousin Olivia all played leading roles on the TACPAC stage during their time as students in the District. In his role as Fred, he showed leading-man potential. He appeared in many scenes, but he said, “My favorite part of my performance was the party scene.”

This live theatrical experience was a great holiday gift to audience, cast, and crew. Everyone was lifted out of the preoccupation with the challenges of the past two



The crowd of forty-two cast members waved their goodbyes to the audience. Paige Prisendorf squeezed into the front on the far left.

years. Clearly the long-standing commitment to the performing arts in the Southern Berkshire Regional School District continues despite those challenges. This belief that the arts are essential to education benefits both the students and the whole community. □

Jane Burke

Thank You to Our Contributors:

Lauren Smith for Fairview Hospital; Paul & Marsha Harvey; Jim Koneazny; Hollis Lundeen; Reiner & Jennifer White; Richard Breyer; Doug & Ginny Hyde; Houry & Mark Schmeizl; Jerome & Henrietta Berko; Janet & Martin Kaplan; Matthew Meyers & Francoise Lartigue; Julianne O'Brien; Eugene & Elizabeth Rosenberg; Maria & Eugene Cleary; Lynn Chase; Fred & Betsy Geller, in memory of David Lowman; Charles & Stephanie Rothschild; Charlie & Janice McSpirtt; Arlyn & Owen Hoberman, in memory of David Lowman; David Warmflash & Andrea Marks; Joe & Darlene Wilkinson; Patricia & Michael Brady; John Potoski; Jeff & Lori Stockwell; Sandra Contreras & Lisi DeHaas; Holly & Joe Poindexter; Antonia & Jack Grumbach; Deirdre MacGuire; Richard E. Long; Scottie Mills; Mark Thivierge, in memory of David Lowman; Howard Sheldon; Jayne M. Kurzman, and Pat Nourse and family, in loving memory of Howard Nourse

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Fear No Evil, by James Patterson

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Sheet Pan Chicken, by Cathy Erway
Eleanor, by David Michaelis

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 Tues. Thurs. 1:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
 Fri. 1:30 – 7:30 p.m.
 229-6668



photo by Larry Burke

Animal Tracks in the Snow

TRACK PATTERN

WHITE TAILED DEER 2½" to 3"	MOOSE 4½" to 5½"
DOG	COYOTE
RED FOX	GREY FOX
BOBCAT- 1 ⅞"	HOUSE CAT - 1 to 2"

TRACK PATTERN

OTTER	FISHER
MINK	WEASEL

TRACK PATTERN

SNOWSHOE HARE	COTTONTAIL RABBIT
GREY SQUIRREL	WHITE-FOOTED MOUSE



bear tracks in the snow

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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, 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

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

Building Inspector: Monday 4:30 - 6:00 p.m. or by appointment.

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

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Window hours: Monday - Friday 11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

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

Tax Collector: Monday 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Tues and Thurs 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

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

Dog and Animal Control Officer: Cassie Keeley, (413) 429-7603

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

Library: 229-6668

Transfer Station Hours:

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

NM5VN Editorial Team

Barbara Lowman, issue editor; Diane Barth, designer; Martha Bryan,

Jane Burke, Larry Burke, Robbi Hartt, Steven Nester,

Joe Poindexter, Peter Schuyten, Barry Shapiro, Rachel Perera Weingeist.

Contributing writers and artists: Ann Getsinger, Fiona Kerr.

NM5VN Board of Directors

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Joe Poindexter, Peter Schuyten, Barry Shapiro,

Nan O'Shaughnessy Smith, and Tara White

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All copy must be submitted no later than January 17.

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

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