

New Marlborough 5 Village News

VOL XXIV
NO 9
January 2024

Clayton ♦ Hartsville ♦ Mill River ♦ New Marlborough ♦ Southfield

NOBLE HEART SANCTUARY

A Place of Peace and Serenity (Hooves Optional)

By Robbi Hartt

If you've ever watched the James Herriott series "All Creatures Great and Small" on Masterpiece (PBS), there's a local version of the story that offers equal inspiration and joy. It's called Noble Heart Sanctuary (NHS), located in the heart of New Marlborough, just up the hill from the Goodnow Preserve. Julie Pizzini and her son Kyle created the sanctuary — where rescue animals and humans alike find love and support — on the farm owned by Julie's parents, Abby and the late Joe Tedesco. "We couldn't be here without this place, and this is our way of paying back," says Julie. "My parents created a place where everyone could come and feel welcome, and we're continuing that vision in their honor."



Photo by Robbi Hartt

Julie Pizzini, founder of Noble Heart Sanctuary in New Marlborough, with the animals she and her son Kyle have rescued

The name "Noble Heart" is a nod to her father Joe Tedesco's company, Noble Thread, which supplied thread and sewing notions for the knitting factories in Brooklyn. "He was the kindest human being in the world," Julie shares. "There's nothing he wouldn't do for anyone." That kindness was not always shown to him as an Italian-American, or to Julie's mom Abby as a Jewish-American, she is quick to point out.

Julie also witnessed many different forms of "segregation" as a child. She recalls watching "the most horrible situations" in the way people treated her brother, Adam, who grew up with ADHD long before people had any understanding of what it was, and witnessed it again raising her son Kyle, who many viewed as 'different' due to his autism. "My son doesn't see anyone differently. That's the real difference," she notes.

Julie's father told her throughout her life, "If you want something bad enough, it will happen." Whenever she doubted herself, in any situation, she would miraculously spot a heart-shaped stone—which she took as a sign to keep going with her plan. That reassurance was at work with this venture as well, as Julie's collection of animals confirms.

Julie's grandfather and great grandfather Moskowitz (on her mother's side) grew up in Pittsfield, and her own Berkshire roots are strong. "My family started coming here before I was born," she explains. "As a young girl, I went to Camp Emerson [owned by her aunt's family] in Hinsdale in the summer and went skiing at Butternut in the winter." Her love of animals (especially horses) started at a

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young age. “We lived near the city when I was growing up,” she explains, “but that didn’t keep me from asking for a horse when I was in third grade.” She took riding lessons from Leslie Desmond where Cantina 221 is now located.

Kyle has also been coming here since he was very young. While he doesn’t remember exploring the Berkshire region as much, he can tell you every detail about his grandparents’ farm — especially of the turtle pond near the woods. “I used to catch toads there when I was little,” he explains. “In high school I kept a notebook with lists of reptiles I saw and cool facts I researched about each kind.”

Following a sudden divorce, Julie found herself raising and supporting two children (she also has a daughter, Kate) on her own. A friend told her about Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy in Alexandria, Virginia, a compassionate school community that accommodated families with wide-ranging needs. She found it to be “the best experience imaginable” for her son Kyle, whose autism made other school environments more challenging. “It became the number one school around,” she raves, “not only for its academic training, but even more so, for its character-building.”

She began substitute teaching there and ended up staying on for ten more years. She also worked for Kiddie Academy, creating a curriculum and running the daycare. “My lifetime experience gave me the ability to become an educator and take care of my children in school and after school so they wouldn’t have to go to daycare. Working multiple jobs was the only way I would ever have been able to raise them and keep Kyle in the schools that could serve him best,” she says.

In 2021 Julie moved from Virginia to Hewlett, Long Island, where she took care of her brother Adam (who had ALS) for the last six months of his life. When he passed away, she moved to the Berkshires and found “her best life.” Kyle, who had been living in a group home in Long Island, also moved up to the farm

around that time to help his grandmother and hasn’t looked back since.

The idea for the sanctuary originally came from Kyle, who told his mom, “We should rescue animals because we have the land.” They also had access to a wealth of



Some of the many heart-shaped stones Julie’s found over the years

Photo courtesy Julie Pizzini

knowledge through Kate, who works as a horse trainer in Maryland. Two years into it, Kyle (now twenty-eight years old) is fully immersing himself in the New Marlborough community, helping with the animals and daily chores on the farm seven days a week and washing dishes at the Southfield Store three days a week. What is it like for him to be living on a farm surrounded by rescue

animals? “I’m excited to get up in the morning,” he says. Feeding the animals grain and water, cleaning up after them, fixing fences, giving them health checks every few days, and (most importantly) playing with them keeps him busy — and happy.

His admiration for his mom is as palpable as his happiness. “She is a go-getter,” he smiles. “She’s always learning something new on the internet and making connections with people. Every day when I wake up,

she tells me, ‘Kyle, we’re gonna do this today...’”

The word “sanctuary” is important to Julie. “That means it’s forever,” she feels. This sanctuary is not intended to be a feeding/petting zoo, but if you want to spend time being with the animals, you’ll find plenty of willing participants — like the two sheep, Pancake and Tootsie (who were left by the previous owners), and Princess Pises, a non-conforming



Scratches and hugs are part of the routine each time Kyle Pizzini walks through the gate

Photo by Robbi Hartt

cow from High Lawn Farm, who was heading to auction when Julie agreed to take her. Add a calf that was born prematurely, a few goats in heat, and a flock of hens with a rooster mistaken for another hen, and you have a growing menagerie!

How are they financially able to maintain the farm and feed and care for the animals? “Every penny I have goes here,” Julie responds, noting that from food to fences, veterinary calls to gasoline, there is always

something that requires funding. She is also quick to acknowledge the love and support she's received from her sister Jamie and brother-in-law Wayne Cohen, who are both NHS board members, as well as some big community donors and Freddy Friedman's monthly donations of hay to feed the animals. Ever hopeful, she adds that they are looking into hosting events on the property, renting the smaller house in back of the main house, and allowing therapists to work with clients there. "I want this to be a retreat for all abilities and for whomever needs it," she says, adding "The real security isn't money, but people."

Although cows and goats don't typically get along, after a few weeks of being together, Pisces started licking the baby goats clean. The instinct for caring is strong, both in animals and humans, Julie points out — "ev-

erything needs nurturing and love." Kyle also notes that even insects instinctively look out for each other. "Did you know that ants have two stomachs, one for their own food and another for storing fluids they share with other ants in the colony?" he asks. (I did not.) "There's such diversity," he informs me, citing more facts. Watching him greet Pisces with a bear hug, then scratch all of her favorite places and receive her nuzzles in return, it's clear the love and nurturing between animals and humans is also strong.

"I feel like Kyle and I and this place make a difference," Julie stresses, adding "This is for Kyle's future. He's a leader now, and we're all part of one herd."

For more information, or to learn how you can help, visit their website, <https://nobleheartsantuary.org>. □



Julie and Kyle created a mini petting zoo at the New Marlborough Central Holiday Fair on December 2

Photo by Larry Burke

**Wishing You
a Very
Zippy New Year**
 — The Staff of the
New Marlborough 5 Village News

SUSAN M. SMITH
 Attorney At Law

38 Mahaiwe Street, Suite 1 Telephone: (413) 528-4300
 Great Barrington, MA 01230 Facsimile: (413) 528-4306
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Town Business Is Your Business

SELECT BOARD



November 27: With Tara White, chair, and Beth Dean present in person and Bill West joining via Zoom, **the meeting got under way with a decision to sell a 1986 military surplus van that had been used as a backup ambulance in anticipation of the arrival of a new ambulance within two weeks.** A decision on what to do with the current 2010 ambulance was postponed to a future meeting.

The Board then took up a notification from members of the Police Department that they had filed a petition to unionize. The email, received November 11, contained a request that the resulting union be recognized by the Board. Yielding to the inevitability of one being formed, the Board acceded to the recognition of a union, to take effect as soon as the members of the Department voted to form one. Negotiation of a contract would follow.

Next, the Board reviewed a newly devised system for dealing with recyclables brought to the Transfer Station. **As proposed by the Transfer Station Working Group and spearheaded by Group member Marc Trachtenberg (who was present at the meeting via Zoom), the Town would hire Raw Material Recovery Corp. (RMR) to recycle mattresses and furniture.** The proposed contract from RMR, a Gardner, Massachusetts firm, offers considerable savings compared to the Town's current recycling costs. The cost burden will be further eased by a grant from the state Department of Environmental Protection for the collection of mattresses. The Board expects to receive a separate DEP grant to pay for eighty hours of design consultancy that will help determine how the Transfer Station should be laid out for optimal efficiency. (For a look at how a reorganized Transfer Station will affect users, see page 7.)

In the evening's final bits of business, the Board appointed Jonathan James to the Capital Planning Committee, for a term beginning immediately and ending June 30, 2026, and Shaun Kelleher to the Cultural Council for a three-year term beginning January 1.

Town Administrator Mari Enoch confirmed the receipt of a federal grant of \$16,922, intended to help communities achieve public safety priorities, for the purchase of two Police Department two-way radios. Ms. White alerted her fellow selectmen to a recent glitch in transport services being offered by TriTown Connector, the Great Barrington organization that supplies transportation for area seniors. Because of staffing shortages, non-medical rides during December will be restricted to the hours of 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays. Additionally, until further notice, a wheel-chair-accessible vehicle will be unavailable.

Before moving on to the approval of meeting minutes, the Board recognized the passing of two life-long residents of New Marlborough: Jerry Stevens, who served as a selectman in the 1970s, and Doloris Davis, mother of Town Clerk Kathy Chretien.

December 11: The meeting, with all three selectmen present, opened to a request from Andrea, Sarah, and Marion Wasserman to place 125 acres of their property on Cross Road to Canaan Valley Road into an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR). Following an extended discussion, in which it was made clear that any use of the land other than farming would be prohibited, the Board voted to grant the APR. The Wassermans have elected to have the Berkshire Natural Resources Council and the New Marlborough Land



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Trust oversee the APR. Since the acreage under consideration was already under an agricultural restriction, its tax burden will remain essentially unchanged.

Moving on, the Board formally dissolved the Inter-Municipal Agreement under which it had shared the services of Sophia Bletsoe with Great Barrington, Monterey, Stockbridge, and West Stockbridge to provide human resources consulting. Ms. Bletsoe resigned from the consortium on October 31 to take a full-time position with Great Barrington. The remaining four towns have insufficient human resource needs to warrant the hire of a full-time consultant, and the selectmen postponed to the new year a decision as to how to fill whatever need arises. One option discussed was to reach an agreement with an independent HR consultant to offer when-needed services on an hourly basis.

Updating her fellow selectmen on the acquisition of land on which to place war memorials, Ms. White said that the Land Trust had rejected the Town's request that it donate the small triangle of land across Hartsville New Marlborough Road from the Meeting House, part of a larger Land Trust holding at that location. The conditions under which the parcel was donated to the Land Trust prohibited excavation or the placement of permanent structures, explained Land Trust President Paula Hatch in a letter to the Board. Selectman Bill West reiterated his hope that the monuments be erected next to a new town hall, wherever it is eventually located. Ms. White said that the issue would go back on the agenda early next year.

The Board then granted a request from Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring to carry over seventy-nine hours of unused vacation time until May 2024 and a similar request from Treasurer Jessica Horan for a carry-over of twenty-six hours to be used by next June.

Finally, it okayed a transfer of \$1,998 from the Reserve Fund to pay for hardware that will greatly expand connectivity in the Town's two police cruisers.

December 21: With its regular meeting day falling on Christmas, the Select Board moved its final session of the year to the prior Thursday morning. Then, with **Tara White and Bill West present in person and Beth Dean tuning in via Zoom**, the Board voted to renew alcohol service licenses to **Gedney Farm, The Old Inn on the Green, and The Southfield Store** and a package store license to the **Mill River General Store**. It also granted the request of the former Cantina restaurant to discontinue the alcohol service license previously granted it.

In answer to a question from Bill West, Town Administrator Mari Enoch said that the state allows New Marlborough (based on its population) to issue up to twelve service and two package store licenses. Responding to a request from the state, the Board affirmed that the town's year-round population of 1,350 increases by 800 during the summer months.

Moving on, the Board signed off on two book-keeping matters: It voted to renew the variable, fifteen-year \$500,000 bond it initiated last year for capital road projects at a rate of 4.76 percent — up from 4.5 percent last year. The current balance is \$466,666. It then gave its blessing to a Highway Department request to put a 1983 military surplus truck and a 2014 dump truck out to bid and to transfer title of a 1996 military cargo truck (originally acquired at no cost) to the Fire Department.

Finally, discussion turned to what might go into a District Local Technical Assistance grant request issued by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. **The Board agreed to accept the recommendation of the Planning Board that grant money be sought to study how the town's changing demographic is affecting housing needs and what the town can do to promote affordability.** On the suggestion of Ms. Enoch, the Board agreed that the Housing Committee should become involved.

With that, the meeting was adjourned, yielding to an executive session to discuss a PILOT agreement with one of the town's solar field operators and to prepare for negotiations with non-union employees. □

Joe Poindexter

Selectman Bill West reiterated his hope that the monuments be erected next to a new town hall, wherever it is eventually located.



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CONSERVATION COMMISSION

November 16: With Commission members Fredy Friedman, Doug Hyde, and John Schreiber present, the meeting opened with a Request For Determination (RDA) presented by Mike Parsons of Kelly, Granger, Parsons and Associates for his client, David Johnson of 35 Hartsville Mill River Road. At issue is a failed septic system. The Commission recognized that the proposed new system results in a significant upgrade and that the new location is the best option given the site constraints. The permit was approved with a negative determination, meaning no further permitting is necessary. There were two conditions included in the approval: that both a silt fence and straw wattles be installed at the work site and that the landowner move a nearby wood-pile to allow easy access to the proposed location for the new system.

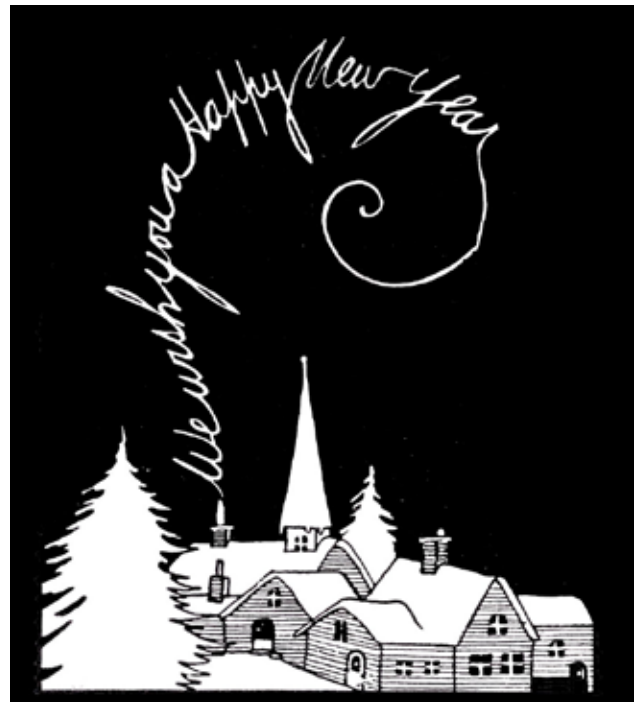
Mr. Parsons then presented an RDA for his client Jared Kelly for property at 422 Clayton Mill River Road. The permit involves: replacing the crumbling hardscape around the existing pool with new concrete; installing a split-rail fence around the pool; adding a new deck roughly twelve by twenty-eight feet on the side of the house facing the Konkapot River; removing a white pine tree and a Norway maple. The permit was given a negative determination with the following conditions: that both straw wattle and silt fencing be installed along the side nearest the river; that there be no heavy equipment used at the river side; that the stumps remain when the trees are taken down; and that native trees greater than ten feet tall are planted to replace those taken down.

Next, John Field of John W. Field Tree Service presented an RDA for his customer, Andrew Weinberger of 86 Downs Road. He proposed the removal of five very compromised trees. The work was approved with conditions that the stumps remain and that the five trees be replaced with two native trees and three native shrubs.

Finally, Brian Siter of Foresight Land Services submitted requests that the Commission sign off on two Certificates of Compliance for the O'Connor Brothers at 1270 Hartsville New Marlborough Road. The certificates reference past permitting and need to be signed off for a pending real estate sale of the property. The Commission verified that the work was accomplished and accepted the Certificates of Compliance.

New business was reviewed. The Commission is in receipt of a Certificate of Compliance for work completed at the Hartsville Grange. The Commission then returned to the prospect of hiring a consultant for assistance. It was agreed to wait until the December 20 meeting to finalize their contract with the consultant. □

Martha Bryan



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TRASH TALK

Reorganizing Recycling at the Transfer Station

In December, the Select Board was in the midst of ironing out details of a new hauling contract for recyclables with Raw Materials Recovery (RMR) of Gardner, Massachusetts, that looks as if it will save the town money. The prospective contract calls for a fee of \$500 per container for hauling away mattresses, furniture, and construction materials. If, for example, a container were able to hold twenty mattresses and box-springs, the hauling price per-mattress works out to be \$25. Even if residents were charged \$35 (a fee currently under consideration to help pay for other recyclables), the cost saving would take a big bite out of the \$125 the Town now charges for disposal of mattresses.

The new recycling strategy, developed by the Transfer Station Working Group, was incentivized by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection to pay for a mattress recycling bin. Another MassDEP grant in the pipeline would pay for a so-called universal waste shed that would serve as the repository for such small recyclables as batteries, fluorescent light tubes, and



The refurbished interior of the Swap Shop, awaiting the arrival of new “treasures”

Photos by Joe Poindexter



thermometers. Chairs and sofas will also be accepted. Finally, the Select Board is also seeking a DEP stipend to pay a consultant for eighty hours of design and layout work to improve the flow of traffic through the Transfer Station.

Welcome to the brave new world of trash. □

Joe Poindexter

Transfer Station attendant Bobby Litchfield at the entrance to the recently re-opened Swap Shop



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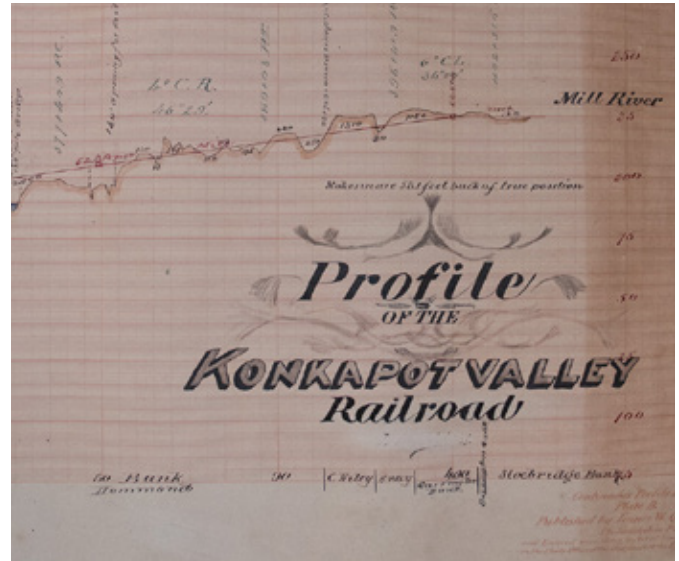
FORGOTTEN RAIL PLANS: THE PROPOSED KONKAPOT VALLEY RAILROAD MAP OF 1891

By Rachel Perera Weingeist

A box in the New Marlborough Historical Society yielded a treasure unlike any other: a hand-drawn, eight-foot panorama of ambition unfulfilled. Dated 1891 and intricately rendered in fiery red and black, this map charts the phantom course of the Konkapot Valley Railroad, a rail line that never saw the light of day. The map is in the form of an elevation drawing that delineates a path, roughly following the course of the Konkapot River, from Canaan, Connecticut, to Mill River.

Published by James W. Queen & Co of Philadelphia, the map is approximately sixteen by ninety-six inches. It charts a northerly course across private properties, hills, bridges, and a mill pond. Some local family names and businesses, such as Wolf, Riley, Rhodes, Keyes, Barrington Bank, and Stockbridge Bank, appear along the path that was under consideration for the railroad track. Any plan to cut through the existing landscape of farms and homes must have been complex. Building a new rail system from Canaan to Mill River would require many families, farms, and even a few banks to sell property to accommodate a new Konkapot Valley Railroad line.

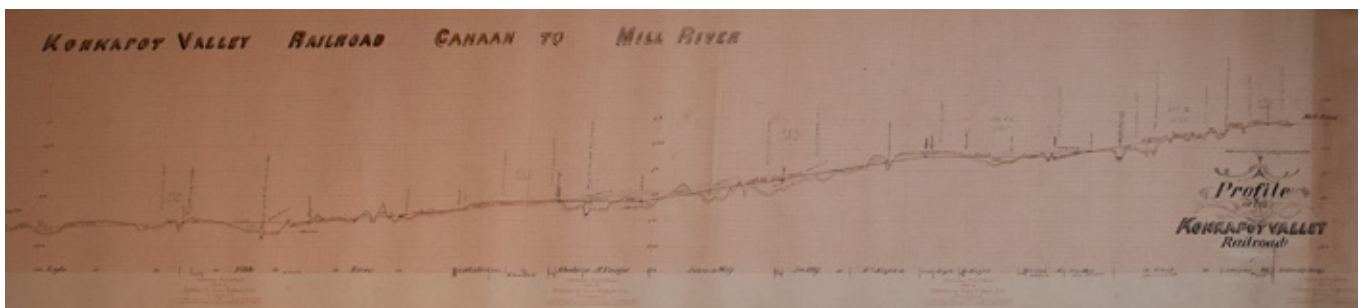
More than just ink on paper, this map is a portal to a forgotten era, but there are many questions unanswered. Was the plan produced as a potential prospectus for a new railroad line to serve the paper mills in the area? Was the cost prohibitive? Did public opposition derail the project? Did something else go wrong? Unraveling the web of decisions that led to the proposed railroad's demise seemed to be an unsolved puzzle. Even the present-day Housatonic Railroad Company, a stalwart presence in the region, could offer little insight. A friendly dispatcher shared, "I am sorry we don't know much about that, but as a history buff I would love to know more." Douglas E. Humes, President of the Connecticut Railroad Historical Association, which restored and now operates the Canaan



A close view of the highly detailed 1891 Konkapot Valley Railway plan

Depot Station, looked over the Konkapot Valley Railroad profile with interest and agreed that he, too, was not familiar with the plan.

It turns out that one local historian, Bernie Drew, knew of a piece of writing by another wonderful local historian, Gerald Chapman, that supplies most, if not all, the answers we were seeking. In the March 9, 1982 *Berkshire Eagle*, Mr. Chapman (himself a former resident of Mill River), wrote an extensive article on the history of the ill-fated Konkapot Valley Railway. Using the annals of *The Berkshire Courier* (founded by Mill River's own Marcus Rodgers) as his primary source, Mr. Chapman wrote that attempts to bring the railroad to Mill River predated the Civil War, when various businesses along the river – paper mills, lime kilns, lumber mills, marble quarries – were booming. The wind went out of the sails of the local economy after the war ended. Nevertheless, a second attempt was made in 1871, but that failed after the Carroll paper



Approximately one-half of the eight-foot long scroll that charts the rise in elevation from Canaan to Mill River

mill burned, which “dealt a stunning blow to the business life of the place.” Yet another attempt followed in 1886, but was doomed by a series of “disastrous fires and the rapid depreciation in the value of real estate.”

The final attempt to bring the railroad to Mill River came about in 1892 with the formation of a new organization, interestingly composed of some old New Marlborough names – Sisson and Keyes to name two – along with some newer names representing New York wealth – Langhaar, Bloodgood, and Willets. To quote again from *The Berkshire Courier* of that time, “The recent influx of wealthy city people into the town as permanent or summer residents has drawn the attention of the capitalists among them to the wonderful facilities for manufacturing purposes furnished by the Konkapot River.” It turned out in the end, though,

that the consortium could not muster the interest of potential investors, and that was the final nail in un-built train track for the Konkapot Valley Railroad.

One thing is certain: the dream was ambitious. Commissioning such a map must have involved skilled engineers and surveyors, who must have spent countless hours plotting a course through the rugged valley. The detail of this plan is a testament to the ingenuity and ambition of an earlier generation. It is an insight into what was achieved with simple measurement tools and dedication. It shows us that history is found in the small towns and forgotten corners of our communities. It is a reminder that history isn’t confined to textbooks and granite monuments. It lives in the forgotten corners of our homes, in archives, in the names penned on maps, and in dreams unrealized. □

A VISION OF MILL RIVER FROM 1928

Editor’s Note: The following is an excerpt from an article titled “From a Berkshire Mountain Top: A Plea for the Planning of Holiday Regions,” by Walter Prichard Eaton, which was published in Landscape Architecture Magazine, Vol. 18, No. 2, January, 1928. The conceit of this piece, dating back ninety-six years, is that the reader is taken to the summit of Mount Everett and from that vantage is invited by the author to gaze out upon the Berkshires and to embrace the wondrous possibilities of this area. As you will see, the author waxes poetic on the touristic possibilities of quaint (and lacking a railroad) Mill River, Massachusetts. (In the opening of this portion of the article, the word “Barrier” refers to the high ground east of the Housatonic River.)

There is a little valley I wish you could see from the mountain top where we stand. But you can’t. It is tucked away behind the first wall of the Barrier, directly across the Sheffield plain. It is known as the valley of the Konkapot. The Konkapot rises in the Beartown Forest and flows south for fifteen miles or so, down a gracious little intervalle, finally to enter the Housatonic. It is a natural trout stream, with brown water rippling over golden pebbles. And, in addition to the century-old farms which border it, there is one ancient village on its banks – the village of Mill River, a part of the township of New Marlboro. The stream at Mill River was once broken by several dams, and below each one was a mill of some sort – made our Yankee ancestors self-sufficient in their communities. There is also a good secondary road running up the valley. Now, of course, these industries show no indication of revival. The dams are broken down, the mills are falling to pieces. The stream is insufficient for a modern factory, and there is no railroad. But I never ride up that lovely, gracious little valley beside the brown Konkapot, and through the drowsing village, without reflecting what an ideal spot it would be for a colony of artists and craftsmen. One or two of the dams, restored, would make swimming pools. There would be power for wood turning, or a potter’s wheel. And the old village street along the stream side, and the surrounding valley, would offer simple and charming summer homes. It is easy enough to say that under present conditions there is small danger of the Konkapot becoming polluted; but, alas! you can never be sure. It is, to-day, one of those streams in Mr. Hoover’s third division. He says, you recall, that our streams are of three sorts: those hopelessly polluted by industry, which has grown to such proportions that moving it, or disposing of its waste, is out of the question; second, those which might, by control of industry, be brought back (in which class I would put the Housatonic); and third, those streams which have not yet been polluted and should be protected against the future. Such a stream is the Konkapot. By regional zoning or planning — call it what you like — it should be possible to safeguard this stream from any village or private sewage, and from any industrial pollution, such as a portable sawmill, thus maintaining its salubrity for man and fish alike, while the community makes the effort to develop the beautiful valley toward its most fitting destiny.

WINTER HOUSE CONCERTS

The New Marlborough Meeting House is happily returning to its previous format of two Winter House Concerts in January and February. The first concert on **January 14**, Martin Luther King weekend, will feature the violinist, Sarah Vonsattel, and pianist, Anna Stoytcheva, performing works of Bach, Schnittke, Tchaikovsky, and Franck. Sarah has played in the Winter House Concert series several times in the past and is a member of the Metropolitan Opera orches-



tra. The second concert, on **February 18**, will feature a string quartet composed of members of the orchestra's string sections, led by violist, Dov Scheindlin.

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 at private homes. Seating is limited so please make reservations by calling 413-229-5054 or going online at www.nmmeetinghouse.org. □

Lucy Bardo

THE SANDISFIELD STATE FOREST CCC CAMP MEMORIAL GATHERING



The December 16 gathering in memory of the Sandisfield State Forest CCC men who lost their lives.

Photo courtesy of the Western Mass Hilltown Hikers

December 16 was the date, eighty-nine years ago, that five Civilian Conservation Corps men died in a vehicular accident, and it was on that date this past month that the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation held its annual memorial service at the CCC camp site, just south of the entrance to York Lake on Route 183. There were about forty people there for the ceremony, including a contingent from the Western Mass Hilltown Hikers. The Town of New Marlborough was represented by Select Board Chair Tara White. Following a hike around York Lake, DCR officials dressed in period uniforms had the crowd gather at the monument, where Taps was played as the flag was raised and lowered. There were artifacts from the CCC camp, a layout of what the camp looked like at that time, and articles regarding the accident

and then the trial of the driver of one of the trucks.

The five members were traveling to Great Barrington to attend services at St. Peter's Church. There were three trucks and it is believed that the front one braked on the ice as they descended the hill on Route 23 by Butternut Basin, causing the second truck to lose control, throwing the five men from the back of the truck. To compound the tragedy, the driver of the first truck, after a trial in which charges were eventually dismissed, ended up taking his own life.

For more coverage of the ceremony, and a wealth of information on the CCC Camp and the creation of York Lake, visit <https://westernmasshilltownhikers.com/2023/12/22/sandisfield-york-lake-ccc-ceremony/> □

Larry Burke

Upcoming: Events Calendar for January and February

January 7: Art opening at the New Marlborough Library, 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.: artist Ann Getsinger will speak at 1:30 p.m.

January 13: Ann Getsinger conducts a class at the Library, Playful Overview of Drawing, for ages ten and above, all materials supplied, no experience necessary. 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Sign up in advance at the Library.

January 14: Sarah Vonsattel, violin, Anna Stoytchev, piano, sonatas by J. S. Bach, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, and Cesar Franck; a Meeting House Winter House Concert, 4:00 p.m. at a private home; for location and tickets, call (413) 229-5045

February 18: String quartets played by members of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra; a Meeting House Winter House Concert, 4:00 p.m. at a private home; for location and tickets, call (413) 229-5045



NEW MARLBOROUGH LAND TRUST

Happy 2024! Enjoy a brisk walk in the winter weather on our miles of trails.

Plan to join Tes Reed, NMLT board member, naturalist, gifted guide and storyteller, and certified citizen tracker on a walk through the woods. To learn more about Tes please visit tesreed.com.

Winter Tracking at 1000 Acre Swamp Sunday February 18, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Together we will find and identify animal tracks and signs that will help us read the story of the land and the creatures that live there. It's a magical, wild world, waiting for us to explore. Appropriate for ages ten and up.

Next time you are walking the Goodnow Preserve, take the Lower Carroll Mill Trail to try out the new footbridge that was built by Greenagers for everyone's safe passage. Projects like this one are ongoing and cost money and time. If you are interested in lending a helping hand or contributing to our efforts please email nmlandtrust@gmail.com or donate at <https://www.nmlandtrust.org/support-our-mission>. □

Silvia Eggenberger, Executive Director, New Marlborough Land Trust



Photo by Silvia Eggenberger

New Lower Carroll Mill footbridge

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T'is the season! The snow is in short supply, but holiday spirits have not suffered from the absence of the white stuff. The smiles on our neighbors' faces told the story of the season at the various gatherings that have brought us together. Two events occurred on the same day, December 2 – the PTA Holiday Fair at New Marlborough Central School and the Holiday Market at the Southfield Church, and both were successful and happy celebrations, as evidenced in the photos on these pages. Another sign of the times, perhaps becoming an annual event to look forward to, are the holiday lights that adorn the New Marlborough Village Green, thanks to the generosity of a member of our community. Perhaps a little snow will finally fall in January, setting the lights off to best advantage – well worth a stroll on a winter's night.



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Photos by Larry Burke and Robert Olsen





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NEIGHBORS



Deloris Davis, of Mill River, passed away at home on November 17 at the age of seventy-eight. She was born in Pittsfield and attended elementary schools in Pittsfield and Pittsfield High School. She and Lawrence Davis, Jr. married in 1969; they were married for fifty-four years, and had three children: **Lawrence “Larry” Davis III, Kathy Chretien, and Angel Davis.** She is also survived by four (of fifteen) brothers, three (of four) sisters, and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

Deloris enjoyed cooking and baking, doing word searches, and was deeply involved with her church, the United Church of New Marlborough.

Several of her longtime friends share their remembrances of her:

Ramona Bauer, of Southfield, knew Deloris from both the Southfield Church and as the lady who turned the handle on the ballot box on election day at Town Hall, and shares her memories: Deloris Davis treasured her family. Her whole face would light up when she would talk about her husband, Larry, her three children, Kathy, Larry, Angel, grandchildren, Stephaine, Jordan, Tyler, and great grandchildren, Mason and Noah.

I have many fond memories of Deloris. She loved the holidays, especially Christmas. She would always wear a beautiful holiday dress. Either before or after the church service Deloris would give away her famous homemade lasagna with meat and her Christmas cookies to people whom she thought needed a little extra holiday cheer. Also, on Mother’s Day she would pass out red carnations to all of the moms in church. She would also do the same for both Father’s Day and Veteran’s Day. Also, during the summer Deloris would bring in vegetables and other surpluses from her husband’s garden to share with her church family. I will miss the twinkle in Deloris’ eyes, her warm smile, laughter, and her kind heart.

Robert Olsen, pastor of the Southfield Church, shares memories that demonstrate Deloris’ strength and character: My memories of Deloris will be like the times I got to spend with her – brief, fleeting, yet enduring. Most of my time with Deloris was spent inside the Southfield Church. I will always see her in her place, in her pew. I will always see her eyes, sometimes mischievous, often times approving, sometimes both at once.

Positions she held on certain beliefs, shared with me in quiet confidence, will never be forgotten. Every summer, I’ll see her, in my mind’s eye, walking through the church door with an armload of beautiful gladiolas from Larry’s garden. I enjoyed sitting next to her eating, whether at a church potluck or a time or two at the Fire House Pig Roast, always an opportunity to share observations about those around us.

I’ll always remember sitting next to her at a town meeting and exchanging with each other who we voted for – and I’m sure you can guess we did not vote the same way – but what was remarkable was that we could hear each other, understand, and go with each other’s decisions without one ounce of derision. If only more Americans could do the same.

I’ll always remember, too, the pride she had in her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and the immense pride and love she showed whenever they and Kathy accompanied her to Sunday worship. I did not know Deloris as long or as deeply as I wish I had, but I can assure you that she is one of the dearest, sweetest souls I’ve ever known.

Mary Hastings, also of Southfield, reflects on her friendship with Deloris: Deloris was a dear friend and confidant, and I miss her greatly. She had a sweet and generous soul. She always had a gift of home-grown vegetables, fresh-cut flowers, or a store-bought gift to offer. She loved giving gifts, especially to my kids and grandkids. We had bonded over our trials of motherhood and marriage. Deloris had a rock-solid core of beliefs from which she never wavered, but yet she allowed that yours might not be the same, without judgment. Deloris loved her family fiercely, and extended her love to her church family too. She often told me she was praying for my family, and I felt privileged to have such a caring friend.



Deloris Davis



Jerry and Yvonne Stevens

Jerry Stephens passed away at the age of ninety-three on November 10. Born in Pittsfield, he was a 1948 graduate of Dalton High School, and received an associate degree from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. He served in the army in Germany, and later moved to New Marlborough.

For decades he was caretaker for the estate of Peter and Beatrice Cookson in Southfield, and was a truck driver and heavy equipment operator for Tallon Lumber Company in Canaan. He was the chief engineer of the New Marlborough Fire Department for many years, and served on the New Marlborough Board of Selectmen, 1976-78. Most important, as you will read in the tributes from family and friends, he was a steady source of guidance for many with his extensive knowledge of building construction, machinery, and auto repair. He was also a quiet mentor, teacher, and adviser, always willing to help someone in need.

Peter and Karla Alfano, of New Marlborough, remember Jerry's thoughtfulness in helping newcomers to the area: We met Jerry in 1974 after we bought our property here. From the start he opened doors for us into the community. His advice and knowledge are probably the only reason we're still here, not knowing anything about this way of life – and thinking we did. He was kind, gentle and never made us feel stupid (which we were). I could write so much about Jerry's friendship over the years: his advice and quiet help – even when not asked for – when he saw what needed to be done, he did it. He'd help anyone, without fanfare or credit. Like shoveling off my roof when we first built the cabin and plowing the North Road to our house in the 80's when it was closed during the winter. When my wife and daughter got stranded with a flat tire one winter night, he came out to change it – and he didn't like the cold. He had so much knowledge in him – a passive resource – and the only judgment you could get out of Jerry was a wince. He never talked much, but the next day he'd be there with a solution. He never worked at anything he didn't like. His first passion was farming. He'd get a little frustrated with me at my lack of knowledge, but never diminished me in any way. He rarely went to church but was the most spiritual man I know. He lived the golden rule his whole life. We were fortunate to have him in our lives as a teacher, mentor, brother, friend, and grandfather figure to our children.

John Ormsbee of Mill River has always known Jerry, since his father and Jerry were friends going back to their days in college: One of the nicest men you could meet, I've known Jerry my entire life. Jerry met my father at UMass Amherst in agriculture school. Dad befriended Jerry, who was from Dalton, and invited him to the Ormsbee farm in New Marlborough. Jerry would always comment on how he ate steak for breakfast on the farm. Their friendship led Jerry to meeting his beautiful wife, Yvonne. Jerry ended up moving to New Marlborough, first farming and then caretaking for the Cookson estate. The place was pristine under Jerry's care. Jerry was a very meticulous and hard worker at whatever he did. There wasn't anything he couldn't fix or figure out. I cut 12,000 feet of pine to build my log cabin in 1983. Jerry picked up the logs (three truck loads) and brought them to Charlie Wyman to mill out. I tried to pay Jerry, but he wouldn't accept anything! I will have a Manhattan tonight in his honor; cheers to a great man and a great life.

Brion Tallon was a child in Canaan, Connecticut, when Jerry worked for Tallon Lumber: I remember when I was six or seven years old and Jerry backed the log truck over my bike and bent it. He asked why I parked it behind the truck. I was so mad, but he was so right. He made it make perfect sense, acting just like my second father; he showed me where I went wrong. I miss him in the afternoon with my dad having a Guinness. Jerry was always viewed as a family member and never an employee. My dad loved him as one of his best friends and appreciated his knowledge and insight. He would have never made it as far as he did without Jerry.



photos courtesy of the Stephens family

Jerry Stephens with grandsons Cody and Hunter and daughter Tiffany

Jerry was with Tallon Lumber Company from its beginning in 1970, helping to set up machinery, trucking logs, and whatever else needed to be done. The company needed to expand, and moved to Canaan in 1984 to the old drive-in theater location. Facing the large lot with a huge movie screen, broken-up pavement, and hundreds of speaker stands, a bulldozer was needed and obtained – and there was Jerry, grading the old theater into what it is today. He had vision in understanding layout and drainage. They say a house is only as good as its foundation; we have Jerry to thank for ours, as he was there for all of it.

Stephen Hastedt, now of Warner Robins, Georgia, worked with Jerry at the former sawmill on the Cookson property in Southfield: In the summer of 1974, we had a large pile of brush and wood debris in a pit near the old sawmill. At some point white-faced hornets had built a nest in the tree next to the pit, and they would sting us every time we went to push the pile back. Jerry told me I should try to eliminate the nest, so one night I went up with hornet spray and a torch. I completely doused the nest with the flammable hornet spray and put the torch to it. It was quite a sight. The whole nest was completely engulfed, flames shooting six to eight feet in the air, charring the limbs of the tree. Then something happened I wasn't counting on. The angry hornets started pouring out of the nest engulfed in flame. I ran back about fifty yards and then realized they were crashing and burning on the debris pile – little fires erupting everywhere. Soon the whole pile was on fire, and I was afraid it would spread to the sawmill. I really didn't want to call the fire department, because I knew who would be leading the charge, but I ran to the shop and made the call. As predicted, Jerry was in the lead truck along with half the men in Southfield. They made quick work of the blaze. After it was out, I looked up and Jerry was walking toward me and I thought "Here we go, I'm going to get it now." He walked past me and simply said, "Next time just use the spray."

Anita Ormsbee Cook, of Mill River, recalls the close, long-term connections of the Ormsbee and Stephens families: Jerry has been a life-long friend of our family. My dad, John Ormsbee, and Jerry met during their first year at the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. They became friends right away. My dad invited Jerry to come visit the family farm one weekend. Jerry loved the area so much that he requested that the Stockbridge School assign his six-month placement on a farm run by the Kuhn family on Brewer Hill. This was the start of his love of New Marlborough. My parents married in 1957, and they moved into a small house on Norfolk Road. After Jerry had served in the Army, my parents offered him a place to stay. My mom, Anita, was friends with Yvonne Fehn and her family. Both families lived and worked on the Williams Estate. That is when the two women became close friends, and my mom introduced Jerry to Yvonne. As a young girl, I always enjoyed listening to my dad and Jerry reminisce about days gone by. Jerry was soft-spoken and always had a twinkle in his eye. I remember his hands were stained from years of hard work. He enjoyed Guinness and a nightly ritual of a Manhattan...or two. Jerry was a proud husband, father, grandfather, and most recently, a great-grandfather. His family was his life, and he loved each of them dearly, as they do him. Our legacy is really about the lives we touch and the inspiration and love we give. Thank you, Jerry. You will forever be in our hearts.

Robert Miller, of Mill River, was also part of the Ormsbee-Stephens connection: When I turned sixteen, Jerry asked me if I wanted to come work with him as a caretaker's helper on the Cookson estate in Southfield. I had been working at the Southfield Store and jumped at the opportunity to work outdoors. Now, looking back on the many years I spent working with Jerry, I realize how precious that time was. Jerry was my boss, teacher, mentor, friend, and more. Years later our relationship became much closer when I moved next door to Jerry and Yvonne on the estate. As Jerry and I worked together, he observed and instructed me in the safe operation, repair, and maintenance of a vast variety of equipment. We had bulldozers, backhoes, dump trucks, tractors, haying equipment, lawn equipment, chainsaws, etc. etc. After a full day of work, we would often return to a well-equipped shop to do vehicle restoration projects well into the evenings – with the help of brewed beverages! My fondest memory was when I was given a 1961 Ford Galaxie by Mr. Cookson. Jerry rolled up his sleeves, and I helped him completely restore my car. I ended up with a car that reflected a deep human connection; it felt like a part of me and Jerry. I realize that so much of who I have become as an adult has been the result of the time I spent under Jerry's watch. I am eternally grateful for all the time and care that Jerry gave me, and he will be deeply missed.

Grandson **Hunter Lucey**, of Ashley Falls: To most, my grandfather was Jerry or Gerald, but to me he was Gappy. When my grandmother (Gammy) asked me to share a story or memory I had of Gappy, I was honored but also overwhelmed because I had no clue how I could encompass everything he meant to me in just one story. I ultimately narrowed it down to this and I hope it does him justice.

I had just received my permit and was learning how to drive, when Gappy decided that he was going to teach me how to drive a stick shift in his old blue Chevy one-ton truck. He explained the general concept of a clutch and shifter, and we started off from his house heading to Tallon Lumber. I thought I was doing great, not stalling or grinding gears, but what I didn't consider was that most of the ride had been downhill at that point. This continued until we reached the intersection of Tobey Hill and Canaan Valley Roads, at which point I came to a lawful and complete stop at the stop sign by the top of the hill. I don't remember if Gappy warned me or not, but I learned quickly that starting from a stop on a hill was a little different from flat ground. The truck immediately stalled and rolled halfway down the hill before I found the brake pedal. Gappy kept telling me to let out the clutch slowly. After many tries, we both gave up and I just ran the stop sign. I remember being flustered at the time, not understanding why he kept telling me to go slower. What I realized later is that I was under the impression that the clutch had to be either all the way in or all the way out, so each time I was jumping off the clutch and brake, and onto the throttle...poor truck.

I chose this story because it resembled a lot of the times I spent with him – Gappy trying to teach me something and me not understanding or thinking I knew better. Ultimately, I would realize that he was right and probably knew more than I ever would. Many of my most memorable lessons came this way, and I could never thank him enough for that. He will be missed more than I could ever explain. We love you, Gappy!

Grandson **Cody Lucey**, of Baldwinsville, New York, remembers the constancy of his grandfather's presence: To think of just one great memory of my grandfather is impossible. For almost every important moment of my life, he was always there and a part of it. Some of my earliest memories were of him helping my brother and me to build our pinewood derby cars for Boy Scouts. Whenever anyone needed help fixing or building something, everyone knew to go see my grandfather. Going into high school, I can't remember a baseball game of mine when he and my grandmother were not present and cheering me on. All of this carried over into college, as well, as he was there for every parents weekend, and, of course, at my graduation. I recently got engaged, and although he will not be able to physically attend my wedding, I know he is going to be there in spirit and show up as he always did. I am the man I am today because of what my grandfather has taught me, and I would be grateful to become even half the man he was. □



photo by Larry Burke

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OUR WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS

On November 16, **Tom Brazie** caught sight of a pair of **bald eagles** feasting on the carcass of a deer that had been hit by a car alongside the field uphill from The Farm New Marlborough barn. On December 6, **Liz Goodman** and **Don Cook** saw another bald eagle along the Konkapot near their home in Clayton.

As it is the time of year to feed the avian friends who stick around, Liz also wrote, “I put two bird feeders filled with “no waste” seed, outside a second story window. After a couple of days all the usual suspects came back — **chickadees, titmice, juncos, woodpeckers, house finches, and gold finches**. This kind of solves the bear problem, as long as they don’t try to scale our house! I still have a dehydrated worm feeder out below for **bluebirds** and others as well, but the gold finches and house finches only come to the seed.”



photo by Lerry Burke

A pair of chickadees taking advantage of bird-feeding season

steps out onto the road in front of me. I have not broken my step, as I do not want to alarm him with a change in my behavior. I mean no harm, nor am I frightened, and he acts the same. He waits until I am within twenty feet of him before he looks over his shoulder and, with a twinkle and a nod, joins me on my walk. For over fifty feet we travel in line down the center of the road, this young buck leading the way. As we come upon a neighbor’s driveway he gives one last glance over his shoulder and communicates, ‘Nice walking with you, enjoy your day.’ He veers off down the driveway and hops off into the field. I wish him safety and thank him for his company, never breaking my stride.

“Three days later I am once again on my walk when I come upon the same young buck on a patch of grass by the road. I know him more intimately now than I have any other deer. I know he senses me approaching long before I come into view. When I do, and see him, he doesn’t even pause in his nibbling. There is no alarm. Again, he is close to the road. Again, it is mid to late morning. Again, I do not break stride. Again, I am in a meditative zone. Again, we come to within ten feet of each other. And again, he raises his head, we briefly lock eyes, know each other, and send each other greetings and appreciation. This time, he does not leave the grassy area where he is feeding. I wait until I am at least thirty feet down the road before I look over my shoulder, and I see that he is doing the same. I am so thankful for this new friend.

“More than a week has passed. I am wanting more of this one young buck, but I am not in charge. I need to accept the gift and let go. And then I hear it. In the woods across from the lawn of our second meeting. A distant

On December 6, **John Schreiber**, who lives near New Marlborough Village, wrote: “A hunter on our property took this great pic with his iPhone of a **bobcat** while up in his stand.” Clearly, the hunter, Walter Selkirk, cropped in on the photo he sent John – to the degree that it looks almost like a beautiful impressionist painting.

And, on the outskirts of Hartsville, two neighbors, **Tes Reed** and **Ben Webster**, had separate, nearly mystical, encounters with a third neighbor. Here’s what happened, in their own words:

Tes Reed: “It’s an early December morning and I’m taking my daily walk. I’ve been traveling this dirt road for a mindful and exercise routine for over thirty years. I know that land and its wild inhabitants, and I have had all sorts of magical wild encounters. But not one like this.

“I am on the return end of this three-mile journey. I don’t see him until he makes a slight move. Off to my right, just a few steps beyond the side of the road a **young buck** takes one step to awaken me from my meditative zone. We lock eyes, and in this moment there is nothing transferred except appreciation and curiosity. The experts say that the majority of the time we see a wild creature it is because they want us to. This was exactly that. A few seconds go by and he



photo by Walter Selkirk

A curious and very photogenic bobcat

shot. It is hunting season. I have been sending my new friend 'safety and peace energy and wishes,' but my heart stops. I pause in my stride and I feel a loss in my gut that I don't want to be true. Those two brief, but magical encounters will stay with me forever. Thank you, Young Buck. Your presence and life have made all the difference."

Ben Webster: "I was on my Sunday morning walkabout, inspecting the progress the beavers were making in their expanded foraging area, when I came around a corner on the grassy path. There stood a **young buck, a four-pointer**. From a distance of about forty feet we stood motionless looking at each other. After a couple of minutes, his ears started to swivel and he shifted his feet and then stretched his back, so I did the same. After a couple of minutes more I started speaking to him. I inquired if he understood that I wasn't going to hurt him and that was why he didn't run. I asked if he was injured, but he seemed healthy enough. I asked if he had a lady friend nearby. I then thought that he might want to head down the path I was blocking, so I told him I would move over on to another path, which I did. I walked about ten feet in another direction but rather than moving along he bent over and started grazing the still-green grass around one of my young apple trees. After a few minutes more I went along my way and looked back to see him happily grazing. Hope he is still out there." □



photo by Larry Burke

Deer feeding, caught by a trail camera

Compiled by Larry Burke;
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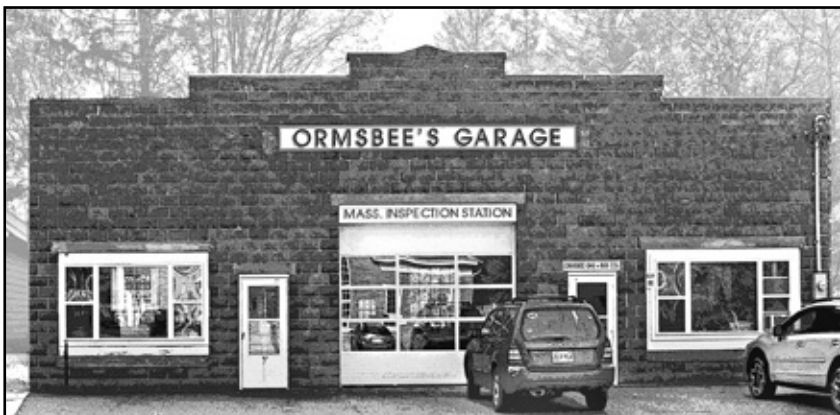


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THE LOG

Police Department (selected entries)

- Nov. 1 10:58 a.m. The Department is contacted by the Connecticut State Police for information about the Southfield owner of a pickup truck, the driver of which (not the owner) was accused of causing a disturbance at a fast-food restaurant.
- Nov. 2 9:11 a.m. A cow is reported loose on Hayes Hill Road.
2:04 p.m. A caller reports a cow loose on South Sandisfield Road.
5:58 p.m. The Department is alerted to a 911 call reporting an ATV accident on Foley Hill Road.
- Nov. 3 11:15 p.m. A Mill River resident complains of a neighbor trespassing on his property and pouring beer on outdoor statuary.
- Nov. 5 12:11 p.m. An officer guides a calf off Mill River Southfield Road.
- Nov. 8 10:32 a.m. The owner of a cow loose near the New Marlborough Village Green returns the animal to its pasture.
3:38 p.m. Alerted to a Labrador retriever loose on a Clayton property, the animal control officer assists in returning the dog to its owner at a neighboring property.
- Nov. 11 10:26 a.m. A caller alerts the animal control officer to an apparently sick dog lying in the middle of a road in Clayton.
- Nov. 14 10:29 a.m. A driver, stopped on Hadsell Street, is issued a criminal complaint when an officer determines his vehicle is unregistered, uninspected, and is fitted with plates from another vehicle.
- Nov. 15 11:26 a.m. A Southfield resident reports being scammed by a fictitious loan company.
- Nov. 16 8:06 a.m. Verizon is notified of low-hanging wires on Hayes Hill Road.
- Nov. 17 5:33 p.m. A caller reports an attempted breaking and entering of an excavator parked near her Southfield property.
- Nov. 21 3:10 p.m. An officer responds to a caller who complains of tire tracks on the lawn of his Mill River residence.
- Nov. 22 7:17 p.m. A caller asks for assistance in dealing with a dead doe lying outside the garage of her Hartsville residence.
- Nov. 26 11:42 p.m. An officer removes a downed tree blocking County Road.
- Nov. 27 3:57 p.m. An officer assists a Clayton resident who has locked herself out of her car.
7:42 p.m. A Southfield resident reports having his computer hacked by a scammer purporting to be computer security specialist.
- Nov. 28 4:51 p.m. A New Marlborough resident, reporting a vehicle apparently abandoned in New Marlborough Village Cemetery, is told that it had been stuck in the mud and that a tow had been ordered for it.
8:36 p.m. Alerted to a verbal fight in which physical violence was threatened, an officer helps restore the peace at a Hartsville residence.
- Nov. 29 5:00 p.m. A caller asks for assistance in locating the owner of a terrier that had shown up on his Southfield property.
- Nov. 30 11:40 a.m. A caller reports that a truck parked by a hunter near his New Marlborough home is on fire.

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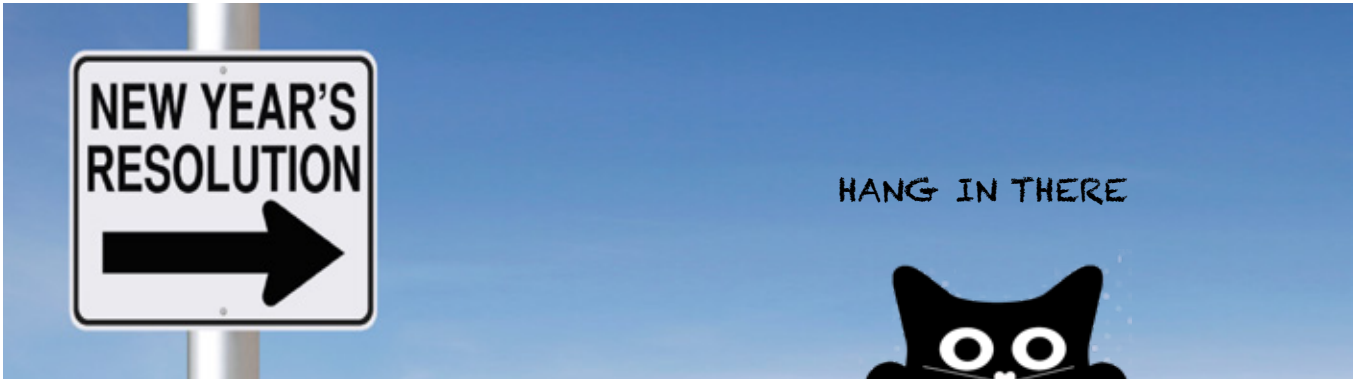
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FIRE AND RESCUE

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|---------|------------|---|---------|------------|--|
| Nov. 1 | 11:33 p.m. | Norfolk Road CO Alarm | Nov. 21 | 6:07 a.m. | Stone Manor Drive Fire Alarm |
| Nov. 2 | 5:42 p.m. | Foley Hill Road ATV Crash | Nov. 21 | 3:10 p.m. | Mutual Aid to Norfolk Structure Fire |
| Nov. 9 | 11:01 p.m. | Norfolk Road Medical Call | Nov. 21 | 5:28 p.m. | Stratford Road Medical Call |
| Nov. 11 | 8:51 p.m. | Hayes Hill Road Medical Call | Nov. 22 | 10:17 p.m. | Norfolk Road Fire Alarm |
| Nov. 12 | 12:55 a.m. | Canaan Southfield Road Fire Alarm | Nov. 23 | 5:17 p.m. | Peter Menaker Road Medical Call |
| Nov. 13 | 6:34 p.m. | Cross Road to Canaan Valley Road Fire Alarm | Nov. 27 | 2:55 p.m. | Hartsville New Marlborough Road Medical Call |
| Nov 15 | 8:40 a.m. | Hayes Hill Road Fire Alarm | Nov. 29 | 1:34 p.m. | Red Fox Road Medical Call |
| Nov. 15 | 5 p.m. | Knight Road Medical Call | Nov. 30 | 11:54 a.m. | Old North Road Vehicle Fire |
| Nov. 17 | 8:43 p.m. | Mutual Aid to Sandisfield Medical Call | | | <i>Fire Company President David Smith</i> |
| Nov. 18 | 9:46 p.m. | East Hill Road Medical Call | | | |



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SCHOOL NEWS

TRANSCENDENT CHANGE

By Jane Burke

With the merger vote no longer the primary focus of everyone's attention – educationally speaking, that is – the Southern Berkshire Regional School District is now fully engaged in the work of envisioning and enacting a reformation of its approach to educating our children, through its interaction with the community-based design organization Transcend.

As described in earlier editions of the NM5VN (see the September and November issues for a full picture), the grant received from Transcend was one given to just ten school districts nationwide, and offers a combination of financial support and guidance from expert consultants.

The ten-month process that began in August guides the design of a project to improve education that will be tested in the spring. It relies on the input from all sectors of our community. To that end, Transcend recommended the establishment of three advisory groups – the Core Team, the Design Team, and the Community Team. The Core Team is composed of three administrators and two Mount Everett teachers; the Design Team has fifteen members – students, teachers, and several community members; the Community Team, the largest and still expanding, is composed of a broad range of citizens from the five towns and even beyond. Thirty-five members attended its most recent meeting on December 12, including State Representative Smitty Pignatelli.

So what has resulted so far, four months into the process?

First of all, a great deal of data has been collected from within the school and the greater community by the Core and Design Teams, foremost of which was a survey of Mount Everett middle and high school students and teachers, focusing on the student experience. It was completed by 232 students and thirty-two teachers. While a large majority of teachers and students agreed that students feel supported by their teachers and are connected to the school community, there were glaring differences in other areas: 43 percent of teachers felt the schoolwork is relevant but only 25 percent of students agreed. And while 58 percent of teachers think students have efficient self-di-

rected learning and are getting their emotional needs met, only 39 percent of students thought the same. Middle school students were invited to review the survey data and asked to develop interview questions for their peers. They happily shared their findings with the Design Team.

As a result of that survey and other data from the



The SBRSD Core Team in Denver, left to right, Alex Izatt, Beth Regulbuto, Lindsay Brown, Transcend coach Martha Torres, and Jesse Carpenter.

photos by Cas Londergan

Community Team interviews, the Design Team met on November 6 and emerged with three guiding design principles for improving educational practice in the District: 1) Relevance – learning should be centered around student interests and goals; 2) Belonging – learners are respected, collaborate closely, and

form meaningful relationships; 3) Service to the Community – students develop impactful roles within their communities.

Other areas of progress involved members of the Core Team being flown out to Colorado in November, where they had the chance to share ideas with colleagues from the other school districts in the cohort of Transcend grantees. In Denver, teachers Alex Izatt and Lindsay Brown said they were able to see firsthand the excitement and satisfaction gained by students in an innovative, project-oriented school where forty middle school students were running a downtown café, which included doing the business plan, budget, ordering, and serving. Reacting to this example of real-world engagement, Ms. Brown said, “Seeing how competent and engaged these young students were was

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really inspiring. It proved that you can innovate and have students learn at the same time.”

Back on the Sheffield campus, student voices are being heard through three newly-formed Superintendent/Student Advisory Councils. At these monthly meetings, a total of forty-seven students from elementary, middle, and high school meet with Superintendent Beth Regulbuto. Ms. Regulbuto says, “During my decades in education, giving students this opportunity to advise me is the best thing I have ever done. At the last elementary school advisory meeting, a fourth grader came with his laptop and four pages of ideas!” This group decided to do a community service project and requested help from the Mount

Everett Honor Society to make greeting cards for the senior citizens in their towns. Senior Allison Steuernagle commented about her participation, “The kids were not shy, cracking jokes and asking questions. It brought me back to my time in elementary school and brightened my day. It was inspiring to know that the kids thought up this act of kindness.” Leslye Bautista-Cruz, a member of the high school council said, “It has been great to connect with the superintendent and to get the chance to voice our opinions. As students, we don’t often interact with administration, but this reassures us that our advice matters. It is a judgment-free zone for all. I am very hopeful and excited for what this youth council will accomplish.”

All of the above was shared with the Community Team at its December 12 meeting in the Mount Everett cafeteria. The majority of the time was spent in break-out sessions led by Core Team members to get feedback on the project proposal they developed in Colorado that would become the first academic action stemming from the work with Transcend, and would address the issues of relevance, self-direction, and community relationship building. The project’s working title is “The BerkStudio Experience.” The idea is that students will choose an area of interest to them, design the goals and develop a work plan, including a process of self-assessment. While students can choose their own topic, addressing commu-

nity issues such as workforce housing, farming, and environmental challenges will be encouraged. During a designated part of each day, teachers and community mentors will be coaches to support student progress. Much of the inspiration for this proposed first step came from that Denver school visit by teacher team members Ms. Brown and Mr. Izatt, where the business of running a café created a way for students, mentors, and the community at large to work together to mutual advantage.

Responses of the participants were universally positive. Several groups discussed the damage done to students’ engagement in formal learning processes as a result of the pandemic. They felt re-engagement of student in-

terest and desire to learn as the best outcome of the work with Transcend. There was general agreement amongst the groups as to the importance of connection with the community – tapping into the resources, not just of the five towns but all of Berkshire County and even beyond, partnering with organizations and individuals, creating a solid network of internships and apprenticeships. Suggestions were made about how to make the implementation successful by starting small.

At the conclusion of the meeting, in keeping with the Transcend philosophy of incremental but meaningful change, Superintendent Regulbuto revealed that the next steps in January would be to bring the BerkStudio idea to teachers and students, then have the Design Team craft a final proposal. The community team will reconvene

in February to learn the details of the plan.

The meeting wrapped on an upbeat note, with great expectations for continued work in the new year. The process of improving education and making a sustainable district is based on building connections that allow everyone to participate. Community mentors are key to the success of this undertaking. Go to [//www.sbrsd.org/page/transcend-partnership](http://www.sbrsd.org/page/transcend-partnership), and click on Help Reimagine Education at SBRSD to join either as a Community Team member or a mentor. Success depends on all of us. □



Superintendent Beth Regulbuto and State Representative Smitty Pignatelli at the December 12 Community Team meeting



Breakout groups at the Community Team meeting on December 12

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

This hearty fish stew is ready in just thirty minutes and will take the chill out of a cold winter night. The rich broth works well with salmon as well as with a flaky white fish. Top it off with a squeeze of fresh lime and freshly chopped herbs and serve over steamed rice. Enjoy!

Marjorie Shapiro



Photo by Barry Shapiro

Fish Stew with Coconut and Miso

Serves: 4 Time: 30 minutes

Ingredients

- | | |
|---|--|
| 3 tbsp any neutral cooking oil | One 14 ounce can of coconut milk |
| 1 medium red onion, halved and thinly sliced | 1 tbsp soy sauce |
| 2-inch piece fresh ginger, minced | 1 1/2 lbs. salmon filet cut in 2-inch pieces |
| Red pepper, stemmed, seeded, and diced | 5 oz baby spinach |
| 1 jalapeno pepper, stemmed, seeded and diced
(you can leave a few seeds for some heat) | 2 limes, one zested |
| 3 garlic cloves, minced | 1/4 cup chopped basil |
| 1/4 cup white or yellow miso | 1/4 cup chopped cilantro |
| | Steamed rice for serving |

Preparation

- In a large pot, heat 3 tbsp oil over medium heat. Add onion, ginger, red pepper, and diced jalapeno. Season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally until softened. Add garlic and cook for about one minute until fragrant. Add the miso and stir into the other ingredients until incorporated.
- Add the entire can of coconut milk and bring to a boil. Cook about five minutes until the coconut milk is slightly reduced. Add soy sauce and stir. Add the salmon and stir. Reduce the heat and cook at a simmer until the fish is just cooked through which should take about five to six minutes. Remove the pot from the heat. Add the spinach a few handfuls at a time and stir until it is wilted. Then, add the lime juice and lime zest.
- Serve immediately over rice and top with chopped herbs.
- Serve with some lime wedges for squeezing to add some brightness and acidity to the dish.

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WHAT ARE YOU READING?

Kevin Hazzard's *American Sirens* leads us on a tour through the history of jazz, baseball, and the misnamed "urban renewal" to set the stage for Freedom House, a Pittsburgh ambulance service staffed by Black men that birthed the emergency medical services we all rely on today.

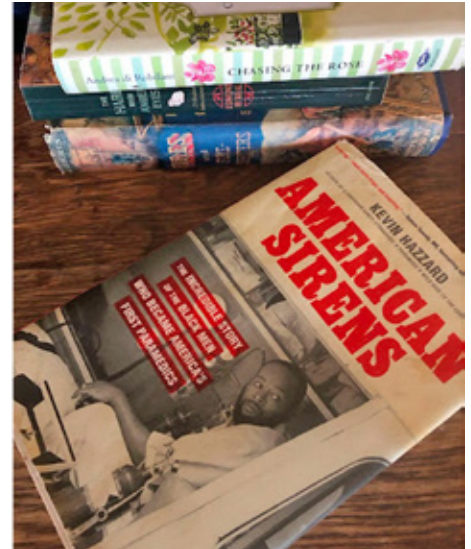
As a first responder in New Marlborough, I was fascinated to learn the history of this ambulance service, which was the first to have paramedics in the back of the ambulance, ushering in our modern system of emergency care, and yet their stories were erased from history.

— John Halbreich

Laurel Banks Road



Kenzie Fields



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Ann Getsinger Opening Reception

New Marlborough Library's JANUARY ART EXHIBIT

Please join us for an opening reception

January 7 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.



Gull Skull and Shell at Night.
 Mixed media drawing on board. 7.7" x 10.2"

'Imaginareal' Drawings

My work as a visual artist is built upon questions about reality. I explore the places where carefully observed and imaginative elements interact.

"Drawing" is a mystical word to me, suggesting wonder, experimentation, and play. It's free and available to anyone. What we experience is ours alone, be it doodle or more finished. A few seconds of doodling might open our ancient "drawing door" and lead to minutes or even hours of enjoyment – or possibly a surprise session of timelessness. Connecting with our more curious selves, it offers a chance to step out of routine and pay attention, make connections, gain understanding, and maybe by doing so, make us more vulnerable to each other. Maybe drawing even leads towards world peace?

The work in this exhibit consists of both drawings and mixed media drawings, most completed in the past ten years. On view are works which demonstrate the range of possibility found by using charcoal, graphite, pen, ink, white chalk, some water base materials like gouache, colored pencil, even some watercolor on both paper and toned board.

— Ann Getsinger

Class offered by Ann Getsinger: A Playful Overview of Drawing

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Planning Board: May - August, 2nd Wednesday at 6:00 p.m.
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Board of Health: First Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.
Conservation Commission: Third Thursday of the month at 5:00 p.m. or Zoom
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Fire Department training: Every Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. at the fire station
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 Window hours: Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
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New Marlborough 5 Village News

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The next issue will be dated February 2024.
 All copy must be submitted no later than January 17.
 For advertising, contact Barbara Lowman,
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