



# New Marlborough 5 Village News

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Clayton • Hartsville • Mill River • New Marlborough • Southfield

## *A Little Wisdom on Valentine's Day*

In honor of Valentine's Day, 2015, the 5 Village News has gone in search of an answer to a question that has eluded philosophers and poets throughout the ages: What is the secret to a long and happy marriage? We went to the source: a few folks around town whose decades-long marriages marked them as more qualified than the rest of us to speak on the subject. Here is what they said.



Illustration: Ann Getsinger

**Donna and Courtney Turner** of Southfield, who will be married forty-nine years in June: From Donna, "Talk and listen, and give each other some room." From Courtney, "Patience and drink lots of wine. Open your ears and speak wisely. Give and take, and don't forget to pursue your own interests. The only way you don't get through a problem is to decide beforehand you aren't going to get through it."

**Louise and Nat Yohalem** of Mill River, married to each other for fifty-four years in July: Louise: "I would say patience. Being friends and enjoying each other's company. Each should bring his or her own thing to the relationship." Nat: "What's the secret? Here it is: Every night, I kiss my wife goodnight and tell her I love her.

That starts the slate new each day. Three things: kiss her; tell her you love her, and have a good sense of humor."

**Lucy and Norm Hankey** of Mill River, married sixty-three years: From Lucy, "Well, I don't know — true love, I guess. You've got to have a lot in common." From Norm, "What makes a good marriage? A good wife, and a good cook."

**Teena and Charlie Parton** of New Marlborough village, married 42 years: From Teena, "Keep a good sense of humor. Find a compatible partner — which is not always easy." And Charlie: "Teena can answer that question because she's been able to put up with me for a long time."

**Barbara and Matthew Kelly** of Mill River, who will be married fifty-seven years in May: Barbara: "Well, we don't fight. We get angry; we talk about what went south and then carry on. We have similar interests. We were blessed, I guess. A little while ago, we were listening to the song, 'True Love' from the movie *High Society*. Part of the lyric says, 'For you and I have a guardian angel.' So I guess we have a guardian angel."

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## THE CHESTNUT, THE ELM, AND NOW THE ASH

### Another American Hardwood Is Under attack

By Barry R. Shapiro

Fair warning: what you are about to read concerns a grave threat to the world we know. This silent invasion has come to our shores from Russia, northern China, Japan, and Korea, and there may be very little we can do to stop it.

These marauders can fly, and even bitter cold winters can't stop them. And according to a number of scientists, including a research entomologist at the United States Forest Service, unless researchers can come up with a weapon to halt their spread, they are likely to destroy almost every one of the eight billion ash trees in the country, costing billions of dollars and wreaking havoc on our ecosystem. A University of Michigan researcher, noting that in some places 90 percent of mature ash trees have been killed, called it "probably the biggest ecological catastrophe that a lot of eastern forests have experienced in maybe even hundreds of years."

The menace is the emerald ash borer (formal name: *Agrilus planipennis*). It originated overseas and was likely introduced here in ash wood used for stabilizing cargo in ships or for packing or crating heavy consumer products, another consequence of our globalized economy. Not seen in North America before June 2002, it is now found in at least twenty-three states and parts of Canada. It attacks all types of ash trees, the most common of which in Massachusetts are the green and white ash (the green has spectacular yellow color in the fall while the white displays orange/red). The ash is a major component in the northern hardwood forests in Massachusetts and a common species in Berkshire County.

The borer was identified for the first time in the Berkshires when it showed up in Dalton in August 2012, but was likely here before that. On March 1, 2013, we were placed under a quarantine order, which restricts the movement of untreated ash wood out of the county. On November 17, 2014, following the discovery of the

borer elsewhere in the state, Governor Patrick made the quarantine state wide, limiting the movement of untreated ash in the entire state. Similar bans have been imposed in Columbia and Rensselaer counties, just over the state line in New York.

The borer lays its eggs on the bark of the tree. The larvae then tunnel through the bark and begin devouring the sapwood, which destroys the water and nutrient conducting tissues under the bark. As a result, the canopy dies back, usually starting at the top of the tree. A third to a half of the branches may die in one year. Most of the canopy will be gone within two years. Deprived of its water and nutrients, the tree will die within the next few years.

The borer can fly at least a half mile and reach all ash trees in that area, hop-skipping from one area to the next. According to the Massachusetts

Department of Agriculture and agencies in other states, many infestations were started, however, from the movement of infested ash tree logs, nursery stock, or, especially, firewood into un-infested areas. The state-mandated quarantines are an attempt to slow the movement of this creature.

The economic impact of falling ash trees is recognized by National Grid, which has budgeted tens of millions of dollars for removal of ash trees and power outages caused by the falling trees hitting power lines. (And as baseball fans know, most Major League bats — including the Louisville Slugger — are made from ash.)

But the loss of ash trees goes beyond economics and baseball and will be felt in our forest ecosystems, affecting other plants, animals and even our water supply. For example, when ash trees die, they leave gaps in the leaf canopy which will allow sunlight to reach previously shaded parts of the forest

floor. Into those gaps may come invasive species such as barberry and honeysuckle, which could well grow into an impenetrable thicket, crowding out native plants on which local animals and insects depend.

To determine which of your trees are ashes, look for diamond-shaped ridges on the bark (though young ash trees have smooth bark) and uniform opposite branching



The emerald Ash borer's wings are bright green.



The larvae of the borer eats into the surface of the trunk under the bark, disrupting sap flow.



of their buds and branches, which means that their buds and branches are usually directly across from one another (some branches may die off so this symmetry will not be found on every branch). Leaves are composed of five to eleven leaflets with the margins either smoothed or toothed.

An infested ash tree can be identified in a number of ways.

- First, a thin canopy may be a sign that the borer has found your tree, although that symptom is not conclusive — in recent years there have been several diseases and insects attacking ash.
- Second, look for woodpecker holes or “blonding,” which results from bark being stripped by woodpeckers peeling the bark away in search of borer larvae.
- Third, and this is a bit difficult, look for tiny, quarter-inch, D-shaped holes in the bark left by the mature borer as it “bored” out of the ash in the summer.
- Fourth, look for serpentine larval tunnels under the bark which are easy to spot once the bark falls off or is removed.
- Finally, look for the growth of new branches and leaves at the base of the tree or on the trunk. This results from the sick tree trying to grow new branches wherever it can get nutrients to them, typically below where the larvae are feeding.

A collaborative effort between the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture and the University of Massachusetts, along with other state agencies, is exploring ways to combat the borer, including the possible release of three varieties of parasitic wasps from the borer’s native range in Asia (none of these wasps is capable of stinging people). The Department urges property owners to inspect their ash trees and report suspected infestation, either to [massnrc.org/pests/eabreport.htm](http://massnrc.org/pests/eabreport.htm) or the toll-free EAB hotline at 1-866-322-4512.

What is clear now is that early detection is critical to defend against the borer. Once found, the infested tree can be removed. Healthy trees can be treated with an insecticide, though effectiveness varies and treatment may not be practical in rural areas or for landowners with large amounts of acreage. Insecticides range from soil-applied systemic insecticides to trunk-injected insecticides to non-invasive, systemic basal trunk sprays, to protective cover sprays. Timing and application rates are critical to success and it’s important to note that multiple applications may be required.

Ron Yapple, owner of Race Mountain Tree Services in Sheffield and a certified arborist, noted that “The borer has been found in South Pittsfield

and it is already very likely in South County as well, although there have been no finds yet in traps or infested trees. I recommend that specimen ash trees be treated now with a systemic insecticide, since trees need a healthy vascular system to move the insecticide up into the tree. We started treating specimen ash two years ago for clients who do not want to lose their trees and, when a tree is sick, whether from the borer or other reasons, you can’t really treat it. The treatment lasts, depending on the product, for one to two years and then must be repeated.” Clearly, this is an expensive process that may not be economically feasible for many land owners.

What we can all do, however, is survey the ash trees in our woods and check them for signs of infestation. Remove heavily infested trees that cannot be saved. Make sure that the wood is properly disposed of. Come up with a viable plan to treat the woods around your home or to harvest the ash while it is still healthy and has economic value. Don’t transport firewood from your property beyond the immediate area and be certain to buy your firewood near where you are going to burn it.

“Our forests are beloved in the Berkshires and the borer is the leading edge of a growing threat of invasive insects and disease,” says Frank Lowenstein, deputy director of the New England Forestry Foundation. “Working together we can slow the borer’s progress and give science more time to give us a cure. Unfortunately, as of now, there is none.”

David T. Kaplan, retired Associate Deputy Administrator for Science and Technology, Animal, Plant Health Inspection Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, echoes Mr. Lowenstein’s sentiment. “The government supports many activities including study of the borer in its native Asia and in North America to learn more in hopes of mitigating its impact and to address other invasive pests. While the borer attacks ash in Asia, it does not appear to kill them, as it does in North America. In the future, researchers may be able to breed EAB-resistant ash trees that would allow them to flourish in the presence of the borer or identify other methods to minimize their impact on our forests.”

There was a time when the Northeast was covered in forests of American chestnut, a species which all but disappeared in the mid-1900s. The Elm that graced so many Main Streets is gone as well. We now face another threat to our forests that merits the attention of each of us. The danger is here, and the time for action is now. □



## Town Business Is Your Business



### BOARD OF SELECTMEN

**December 22:** Tara White and Michele Shalaby were present, while Nat Yohalem was conferenced in by phone for what turned out to be a brief pre-holiday meeting. The first order of business, after approving last week's minutes, was the approval of liquor license renewals for the Old Inn on the Green, the Southfield Store, and Gedney Farm and a package store license renewal for the Mill River General Store.

The Board voted to award a trash-hauling contract for the transfer station to Valley Roll-Off Dumpster Service of Lee. The bid was for a five-year guaranteed-price contract, with Valley waiving any charges for hauling single stream recyclables. The firm will also be buying the Town's new single stream recycling container for \$4,000, which is what the Town paid for it, and using its own containers for recyclables. This will allow Valley to bring in an empty container at the same time it's picking up a full one, saving the Town transportation costs. The other bidders were Allied Waste Services of Chatham and Master Garbologist of Westfield.

Chairman White reported the Town is set to finance

the larger of the two highway trucks approved at last May's Annual Town Meeting with a five-year, \$223,000 loan. The note carries an interest rate of 2 percent and runs from 2015 through 2019. The first payment of \$44,600 is due next December.

**January 5:** The first meeting since the holidays was convened with all three selectmen present. Ms. White introduced the Board's new part-time administrative assistant, Joe Kellogg, who was attending his first board meeting. As previously reported, Mr. Kellogg will be serving on an interim basis while the Board searches for a permanent replacement for Mike Skorput, who retired January 2. He'll be working from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. day on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

Chairman White reported that performance bonds have been posted for the Town's new tax collector, Mari Enoch, and for Jennifer Goewey, the new treasurer.

The remainder of the meeting was taken up with a discussion of the proposed school bond issue and the Board's frustration with how the process has been handled by the Southern Berkshire Regional School District's Buildings, Grounds and Technology Subcommittee. The main issue for the Board, as outlined by Selectman Yohalem, continues to be why the cost to replace the roof and three boilers on the main Sheffield campus escalated first from \$3 million to \$6 million and then from \$6 million to \$7.7 million. In addition, there's unhappiness on the Board's part that other, possibly less expensive, approaches to replacing the roof were not considered. (For more on the proposed bond issue, see story page 14).

**January 12:** The meeting, at which all three selectmen were present, was joined by Fran Lartigue and Kristen Sparhawk, who were welcomed as New Marlborough's members of the School Committee of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District.

A major portion of the meeting returned to a discussion of the proposed borrowing for boilers and a new roof on the Mount Everett High School building. Chairman White expressed her dissatisfaction with the School Committee's decision to hold an all-District vote on the bond. Originally, it was to have been considered in town meetings in each of the five District towns. She pointed out that a single vote would eliminate each town's ability to decide for itself whether to permit a 2 1/2 percent tax increase override to accommodate the bond issue. Without the override, said Ms. White, New Marlborough would have to absorb the debt service, projected to be \$128,756 a year, into a budget capped by a 2 1/2 percent increase, thereby imperiling normal increases in town services.



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As for the bond itself, Mr. Yohalem stated that the Board fully supported it, but not the way it is currently structured. Limiting the bond to ten years, he said, "puts an incredible tax burden on the Town," one that would be eased by a fifteen- or twenty-year bond. Both Ms. Sparhawk and Ms. Lartigue stated they would bring the Town's concerns before the School Committee in order to enact changes in the way the vote is taken and the structure of the bond. Mr. Yohalem asked that a draft of the school budget be made available before the bond issue is presented to the towns.

Discussion then turned to long-term trends that will affect the school district. Ms. Shalaby pointed out that the population in Berkshire County is declining, and so too, at an even faster rate, is the number of school-age children. In the face of this decline, said Ms. Shalaby, the District is saddled with the maintenance of six buildings. The high school, she reminded the Board, was built to accommodate 1,500 students. Present high-school enrollment: approximately 725 — less than half of capacity. And this is the building that needs \$7.7 million in renovation. Ms. Shalaby's point was that maintaining excess capacity comes potentially at the cost of educational excellence.

Selectman Shalaby noted that State Representative Smitty Pignatelli continually warns of the threat of the state usurping local decision making in the matter of education and the importance of long-term planning by the School Committee to prevent losing control to

the state. Ms. Shalaby said she would like to see more meaningful consolidation of administrative services. Selectman Yohalem advised of a greater need for shared services for vocational and technical education.

Mr. Kellogg reported that he had discussed with District Business Manager Bruce Turner the possibility that replacement of the high school roof may have to be put off until the summer of 2016, if the start date of April 2015 is missed. Alternatively, the school may use portable classrooms to allow roof construction to proceed this year. **The Board requested that a letter be sent to Superintendent David Hastings and School Committee Chairman Carl Stewart requesting that the 2016 school budget, including all operating, capital, and debt expenditures, be level funded.** If it were, New Marlborough's share would be \$2,505,996.

Moving on to other matters, Mr. Kellogg said he is in correspondence with members of the boards of selectmen in Monterey and Sheffield to discuss sharing a town administrator and the joint purchase of a mower to be used by the three towns. Mr. Kellogg was appointed to the post of procurement officer. The Board agreed, at the request of Police Chief Graham Frank, to interview Joseph Keffner as a potential new hire in the Police Department to help reduce the work load presently carried by Officer John Mullen. Finally, the Board agreed to pay a Berkshire County Communications Center assessment to the Town of \$9,100. The payment was originally due last August. □

*Peter Schuyten*

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## CONSERVATION COMMISSION

**December 20:** With Commission members Ned Wilson and John Schreiber present, the meeting started with an update from resident Marc Gourevitch on the progress of the work at his residence on 98 Lumbert Cross Road, regarding the open Enforcement Order issued to the residents, the well drilling company, and the project contractor in September 2014 for drilling a well.

Mr. Gourevitch was available to answer any questions or concerns the Commission might have. He explained that at the end of October 2014, the overflow of silted water from outside the casing of the newly drilled well was successfully stopped by a plugging and sealing method proposed by the engineers. He reported that the remaining overflow from the well is crystal clear and is currently routed to flow into the Umpachene River. He explained that continued consideration would be given to finding a permanent route for this overflow. He went on to say that further investigative drilling indicated that the silt that had overflowed the well casing had not created any underground cavities. Mr. Gourevitch expressed his relief that the "crisis" was over and that he was very pleased with the results.

He then outlined the timing for the remaining cleanup of the site. He explained that a decision was made to wait for frozen ground to start the cleanup, so as to minimize disruption to the site from machinery and to allow for easier access. The Commission thanked Mr. Gourevitch for his diligence in dealing with the wetlands issues and for keeping it informed of the progress at the site.

With nothing else on the formal agenda the Commission reviewed the mail. It was noted that a Certificate of Compliance for Lot #7 on New Marlborough Hill Road was submitted. The members agreed that they needed guidance from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to clarify what role the Commission had over any further review of the New Marlborough Hill project. Commission Secretary Kathy Chretien agreed to contact Karen Hirschberg of the DEP for her advice. Finally it was noted that an application for a Notice of Intent from Foresight Land Services for a project at 62 Hadsell Street was received. Given the timing of the submission, it was agreed that the review would need to wait until next month.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned. □

*Martha Bryan*

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

**January 8:** Present at a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen were John Pshenishny, Mark Carson, Burt Imberman, Ira Yohalem, David Herrick, and Prudence Spaulding of the Finance Committee, and selectmen Michele Shalaby, Tara White, and Nat Yohalem. Joe Kellogg, who is temporarily filling in for the retired Michael Skorput, was also present. The purpose of the meeting was to establish new methods and policies for creating the annual budget. The meeting also contemplated establishing separate accounts for specific expenditures, such as fire trucks, highway trucks, and police vehicles. For instance when the new fire truck arrives, the proceeds from the sale of the old one could be deposited into an account earmarked for the next fire truck. Another source of cash for targeted stabilization funds is the \$380,000 raised in 2014 sales of properties seized by the Town for non-payment of taxes.

In past years, the Finance Committee waited until the end of the budget approval process to determine whether or not total expenditures were within the 2 ½ percent increase allowed by law. Ms Shalaby reported that the Capital Planning Committee has recommended that the budget be revenue-based. Mr. Kellogg presented a spread sheet showing both anticipated 2016 expenditures and expected revenues.

Discussion moved to the Southern Berkshire Regional School District (SBRSD) budget, the New Marlborough allocation of which amounts to about half the Town's budget. It was suggested that the Town provide parameters for guidance to the Finance Subcommittee of the School Committee. Those attending the joint meeting pointed out that the school budgeting process needs to recognize the fact that the population of school-age children in the district and surrounding areas has been in decline. Mr. Yohalem asked that the Town's recommendation to the School Committee be delayed two weeks to give time for an analysis of District needs.

Ms Shalaby, noting that Lee and Lenox were discussing sharing a superintendent, expressed a hope that Berkshire

Hills Regional School District and SBRSD would eventually join with Lee and Lenox to create a single district. Recognizing the resistance to this consolidation, Ms. Shalaby pointed out the potential economies that could be realized by sharing administrative staff. She also noted that competition for students choosing to go to a school outside their district would be eliminated and that some school buildings could be converted to commercial use, affordable housing, or homes for the elderly.

The meeting's attention then turned to the District's request to borrow \$4.6 million to replace the Mount Everett High School roof and its three boilers (see pages 4 and 14 for detailed accounts of this request).

In the matter of bridge repair, the state is requiring further engineering studies on the Clayton Mill River Road Bridge so that the \$180,000 designated out of Free Cash at the 2014 Annual Town Meeting for its repair may have to be augmented. Repair of the Southfield bridge, the cost of which is to be borne by the state, awaits scheduling by the state.

It was decided that a decision on whether to increase or decrease the annual allocations to the Reserve Fund be determined by an analysis of the historical use of this fund. According to Mrs. Spaulding, most of the \$50,000 deposited in the fund in past years has been needed.

Regarding raises to Town employees in the next fiscal year, the Board of Selectmen suggested a 1.7 percent increase, which is tied to the cost of living. Last year the raise was 2 percent. Mr. Kellogg said he would calculate the dollar amounts at both levels and check with the surrounding towns to see what they were offering their staffs. Mr. Yohalem reminded the group that some employees were working under contracts that will expire with the fiscal year and that raises in the renewal of those contracts will need to be included in the estimate of total labor costs. □

*Joe Poindexter from minutes prepared  
by Finance Committee Secretary Prudence Spaulding*

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## PARTY ON — FOR A CAUSE



Tom Ingersoll provided music.

On January 10, the Great Barrington Rotary and the Sheffield Kiwanis threw the best bash of the year (admittedly, it's still young) to raise scholarship funds for South County teens headed to college. Some three hundred locals were welcomed at Gedney Farm in New Marlborough village with an endless array of hors d'oeuvres, wine, beer, and spirits — provided by Naji's, Rawson Brook Farm, The Neighborhood Diner, Domaney's, Les Trois Emme, Marty & Jim's Sandwiches, Berkshire Mountain Bakery, ENA, Plaza Package, Fairview Hospital, Berkshire Mountain Distillery, Barrington Brewery, and Big Elm. Tom Ingersoll of Sheffield on guitar provided the tunes and called out the raffle winners. The folks at Gedney passed around their classic Cha

Cha Chicken legs and, to the delight of the football fanatics who had put community spirit ahead of fandom, provided a big-screen viewing of the Patriots-Ravens playoff game. □

Joe Poindexter



Photos by Joe Poindexter

The main room in Gedney's barn bustled with activity.

## OUT OF THE PAST



No down jackets or snow-boots, but has there ever been a more stylish snow-ball fight? This undated and uncaptioned photo comes from the New Marlborough Historical Society photo archive, which is now on discs and available for viewing at the New Marlborough Public Library. Please let us know if you recognize any of the combatants. We can be reached at 5villagenews@gmail.com or P.O. Box 243, Southfield, MA, 01259. □

Joe Poindexter

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## UPCOMING: *Events Calendar February and March*

**February 15: Calliope** completes the New Marlborough Village Association's Winter House Concerts with a program of Italian renaissance dances and songs and twentieth century rags; 4:00 p.m. at Gedney Farm, New Marlborough Village, wine and hors d'oeuvres to follow the concert, \$25, \$20 to members of the Village Association

**March 31: Annual Town Caucus**, to determine nominees to various Town offices; top two vote getters will be placed on the ballot, 7:00 p.m., downstairs in the Town Hall; nominees intending to run must sign with the Town Clerk by April 3.

## SPIRITS OLD AND NEW

Shortly after Thanksgiving, The Old Inn on the Green unveiled a completely refurbished taproom that looks as if it might have been around since the stagecoach stop opened its doors around 1760. For Peter Platt and Meredith Kennard, owners of the Old Inn, it has been a labor of love.

Furniture maker Peter Murkett was at the Old Inn last May when Mr. Platt mentioned he wanted to redo the barroom and was looking for a contractor. Mr. Murkett recommended Mike White, the New Marlborough village builder who has long experience in restoring old houses. Mr. Platt had already brought in Framingham, Massachusetts, architect Lennard Roberts, a specialist in historic renovation. Thus was formed a troika of craftsmen steeped in the art of making new things look old.

Mr. Murkett, whose company, New England Modern, is located in the



Whip Shop in Southfield, used ash he had cut from his own property in Monterey to create a half dozen high-backed bar stools. The seats are fashioned from strips of hickory bark, three-quarters of an inch to an inch wide and soaked in water to make them pliable. The woven strands are bent around the seat frames and sewed together on the underside. In addition to the bar area itself, Mike White built an eight-by-eight foot pantry connecting the taproom to the kitchen and making use of space that had been lost over the centuries.

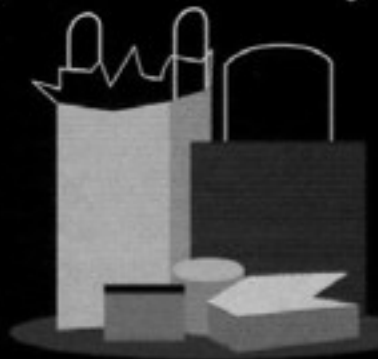
The showiest element of the renovation is a gleaming piece of Goshen schist. Ms. Kennard traveled to Goshen, Massachusetts, where the stone is quarried, and personally chose the piece she wanted.

So once again — and for the first time under present management — there's beer on tap at the old stagecoach stop. □

*Joe Poindexter*

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## WINTER FINERY

Trees, stripped of the green of summer and gold of autumn and laid bare as seasons shift, awake one morning bejeweled. Light caught by snow in the filigree of plum or willow or in the dunce hats of pointed pines turns the landscape into theater. Snow performs the magic. The camera need only be nearby. □

Holly McNeely



## FROM THE VILLAGE ASSOCIATION, THANKS

The New Marlborough Village Association gratefully thanks all of our friends who so generously gave to the 175th Anniversary Capital Campaign. As of the end of 2014, gifts and pledges to the campaign total \$144,451. A matching grant of \$60,000 has been awarded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council Cultural Facilities Fund, bringing the total for the campaign to \$204,451.

Just as the New Marlborough Village Association was completing its very successful 175th Anniversary capital campaign, however, we received a report on the condition of the Meeting House identifying needs we had not anticipated. It reminds me of the children's story, *Too Much Noise*. You might remember it: An old man lives in a house where the floors creak and the roof leaks, making so much noise that he cannot think. A wise man recommends that he acquire many animals, which with their oinks, moos, baas, and squawks, only add to the cacophony. When they are finally sent away, however, the remaining sounds of creak and leak seem blessedly quiet.

Would that such a simple solution sufficed for the Meeting House. An assessment of the Village Association's Building and Grounds Committee, in preparation for letting out bids on renovation projects, revealed that there are leaks in the roof and that the columns supporting the belfry have suffered damage. Berkshire winters are hard on

wood-frame buildings.

Replacing the roof and buttressing the belfry will make the Meeting House renovation far more expensive than originally anticipated. The good news is that the generous support of the community, together with the state grant, exceeded the goal of the capital campaign. We raised more than \$204,000. This gives us a good start to meeting the extra cost of the renovation. In addition to replacing the roof and columns, this includes winterizing the gallery, improving storage, and muting the sound; repairing the foundation and installing curtain drains around the perimeter of the building to divert water away from it; new front steps; and interior and exterior painting.

While our 175th birthday year has passed, the Village Association is still seeking and accepting gifts to the capital campaign. Gifts can be made over several years. When the work is completed, a gala celebration will take place to which all donors will be invited. Further information can be found on the Village Association website: [www.newmarlborough.org](http://www.newmarlborough.org). Telephone calls to me at (413) 528-1409 are also welcome. □

*Louise Yohalem,*

*President, New Marlborough Village Association*

## REQUEST FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS

*From the Berkshire Taconic Foundation*

### For nonprofits:

**H**arvard Business School's 'Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management' program (SPNM) is an intensive six-day program for nonprofit CEOs, presidents or executive directors who are responsible for shaping the direction, policies and major programs of their organizations. Taught by a team of Harvard faculty members who specialize in nonprofit management, the program is valued at \$5,250. Applications are due March 1 and the program runs July 12 - 18.

**The Green Pastures Fund** supports nonprofit organizations or public entities that encourage or preserve small, community-based agricultural ventures. Grants range from \$1,000 - \$3,000. Applications are due March 1.

### For students:

**The Alice and Richard Henriquez Memorial Fund/Youth World Awareness Program** supports grants to students ages fourteen to twenty-two for international travel and service to help promote international peace and justice.

Grants generally range from \$500 - \$1,500 for individual applicants, and larger grants may be considered for groups. Applications are due February 1.

**The Simple Gifts Fund** awards grants to young people ages thirteen to twenty-one for participation in cultural or creative summer programs, such as internships, music and art camps, or language immersion programs. Grants range from \$200 - \$800. Applications are due March 15.

### For schools:

**The James C. Kapteyn Endowment Fund** honors excellence in teaching with a \$10,000 prize for study or travel. Nominations from school principals or chief administrators are due February 2.

Grant application forms for all the funds are online and can be found at [www.berkshiretaconic.org/SearchGrants](http://www.berkshiretaconic.org/SearchGrants). □

**Southern Berkshire Regional School District Early Childhood Programs,  
including: Pre-Kindergarten, Early Kindergarten & Kindergarten  
REGISTRATION - THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2015**

Times will be: 8:30 – 9:30 11:30 – 12:30 2:30 – 4:00

-Registration for the Egremont School and Undermountain Elementary  
will be held at **Undermountain Elementary**

-Registration for the Monterey School and New Marlborough Central  
will be held at **New Marlborough Central**

*Information will be provided and registrations accepted for the following programs:*

**Pre-Kindergarten:** An integrated Pre-Kindergarten program is offered for students, ages 3 to 5, who have special needs and for all students who turn 4 by December 31st of the school year in which they wish to enroll.

**Early Kindergarten:** An early kindergarten program for children who turn age 5 between October 1, 2015 and March 1, 2016.

**Kindergarten:** This program is for children who will be 5 years old before October 1, 2015. This is a full day kindergarten program.

**SCHOOLS WHERE THE ABOVE PROGRAMS ARE AVAILABLE**

**Undermountain Elementary**

Pre-Kindergarten  
Kindergarten/1st Grade  
Early Kindergarten  
Kindergarten

**New Marlborough Central**

Pre-Kindergarten  
Early Kindergarten  
Kindergarten

**Monterey/ South Egremont**

Early Kindergarten  
Kindergarten

*If you live in a neighboring community you are invited to attend the workshop  
and apply through School Choice to have your child enrolled in our Early Childhood Programs.*

*We invite you to visit our schools, to meet and talk with our teachers. Call Rose at 229-8754, ext. 377  
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# NEIGHBORS



**Fresh Air:** Vanessa Walter, a resident of The Bronx, New York, hit the slopes with Peter, left, and Honey Fields, right, in a return visit to the Berkshires. She spent a week with Kenzie and Shawn Fields and family last summer as a participant in the Fresh Air Fund, a non-profit that sends 4,000 low-income city kids to host families in the country each summer. Kenzie, who described Vanessa's visit as "incredibly positive," plans to invite her back this summer. To learn how to become a host family in the Great Barrington area, call Lelia Bruun at 413-528-6701 or visit The Fresh Air Fund online at [www.freshair.org](http://www.freshair.org).



photo by Kenzie Fields

It has been nine decades in the making, so it's hardly breaking news that **Charlie Parton** turned ninety last month. But — organized by his wife, **Teena**, of course — he did it in style, inviting all New Marlborough to a Southfield Church Hall birthday party. There were warm toasts and there were hopes among attendees that they, too, might arrive at this august time of life in such robust good health.

Congratulations to **Jaimi-Lyn Scheib**, who is a Southern Berkshire Regional School District nominee for an exceptional teacher award, given annually to Berkshire County teachers by the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. Ms. Scheib teaches grades 1 and 2 at New Marlborough Central School. Award winners will be announced in May.



photo by Barry Shapiro

photo by Diane Williams



**Poster Kids:** The Trailblazers are not only energetic hikers, they are also prize-winning designers. Their trifold poster, featuring three Trustees of Reservations properties, won blue ribbons last year at the Berkshire County Fair and Goshen Fair. This year, the group, which includes (seated from left to right in picture at left) New Marlborough Central seventh-graders **Angus Kerr** and **Audrey Bartzsch**, both from Mill River, and **Charlotte Smith** of New Marlborough village (standing are Marley Zorn of South Egremont and Thomas Williams of Sheffield), plans to hike all the Sheffield Land Trust properties. □

Compiled by Barbara Lowman: [deeuell@yahoo.com](mailto:deeuell@yahoo.com)

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## OUR WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS

On December 30, **Larry Burke**, who lives on Route 183, writes: I'd been dealing with a cold and hadn't been out of the house for a number of days, but on Sunday I got in my car to run down to the Mill River Store. Something lying on the passenger seat caught my eye. Peering closer, I realized it was some sort of animal scat, an inch and a half or more long, and maybe an eighth to a quarter inch in diameter — definitely not a mouse! I had a thought that it might be **weasel** poop, and, though it didn't seem likely to me that a weasel could get into a closed car, I had a fairly unnerving ride to and from Mill River, with the possibility of a weasel appearing from under the seat and shooting up my trousers!

I made it home without incident, and checked in our wildlife book and found that, in fact, the scat was a gift left by a weasel. I went back to give the car a thorough search, and, in popping the cover on the air filter, discovered a nice big nest of hay, containing three field mice and one big fat vole, all recently deceased — no doubt due to conditions I created by driving the car. So, no sign of the weasel, but I am now guessing it was on a mission to get a few more of those smaller rodents.

On December 31, **Don Beauchamp**, of Clayton, writes: I have had **bluebirds** almost every day since Christmas, around the house, feeding on something on the ground. I have put dry mealworms in the cup to help them out. The **red-shafted flicker** was back today, and so was the big **beaver**, in the Konkapot.

**Matthew Wright**, who lives on Canaan Valley Road, writes: I caught these **fish** through the ice at Thousand Acre Swamp — the bass, right, on a jigging rod and the perch, above right, on a tip-up.

On January 12, **Don Beauchamp** writes: Today I watched a **red-bellied woodpecker** pick up seeds off the ground, and deposit them in a hole in a tree, saving them for another time. He made several trips. □



photos by Matthew Wright

photo by Don Beauchamp



Compiled by Jon Swan, joncswan@gmail.com

## NEWS FROM THE LAND TRUST



photo by Larry Burke

On January 3, the Land Trust hosted a hike to explore the property of Jane and Larry Burke and the home of Flying Cloud Institute. Twenty-two hearty folks hiked for an hour and a half while Larry and Jane shared the history of the property, the house, and the landscape. Of the property's 200 acres, roughly half is preserved by a conservation restriction. One outstanding environmental feature of the property is that the watershed that begins on the property branches in opposite directions: east into the Whiting River and eventually into the Housatonic River in Massachusetts and west into Sandy Brook and into the Farmington River in Connecticut. The group tromped through field and forest, visiting along the way a beaver pond, several early nineteenth century charcoal kiln sites, and Flying Cloud's "Enchanted Forest," a stand of trees much beloved and explored by children attending the summer program.

The Land Trust's monthly calendar for 2015 hikes is posted on our website, nmlandtrust.org. Come out and join us! Explore the wonderful natural resources we all share in New Marlborough. □

Martha Bryan

## BIG ROOF, BIG REPAIR BILL

*A Call for Special Town Meetings To Decide if Mount Everett Stays High and Dry*

By Joe Poindexter

"If you get your car inspected and they say you need new tires, you're not happy about it, but you know you have to do it." The analogy is to autos, but Vito Valentini's real concern is the roof over the Mount Everett High School. "The roof is twelve to thirteen years beyond its useful life," says the chairman of the Buildings, Grounds and Technology Subcommittee of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District School Committee. "We made seven test cuts; two showed moisture in the insulation. We need a new roof." At four-and-a-quarter acres in size, this is no handyman's special.

Unhappily, the roof problem is occurring at the same time as two of the three boilers in the building have failed. "One is leaking," says Mr. Valentini, "and the other is on the floor in pieces." None of this comes as a surprise. The surprise is the cost of the two projects. Originally pegged roughly at \$3 million, and then \$6 million as late as December, the total cost is now estimated to be \$7.7 million.

What happened? "Unfortunately, without malice, a bunch of suggested prices were tossed out there, but it turns out not to be all that simple" says Mr. Valentini. As he explains it, significant ancillary expenses were overlooked. These include "soft" costs, fees for engineers, architects, project managers, lawyers, and other non-construction items; "mark-up" costs, principally the contractor's profit; and finally, a 10 percent contingency, a buffer for cost overruns.

Further, the initial estimate failed to account for state-imposed requirements if the project were to meet so-called "stretch-code" standards for improving energy efficiency by 20 percent. This meant replacing the four inches of insulation currently under the roof membrane with six inches. By following the stretch code, the District would be eligible for a \$360,000 SAPHIRE (Schools and Public Housing Integrating Renewables and Efficiency) grant to help buy two biofuel boilers, plus a new oil-burner as back-up.

When all the numbers were totaled, "the reality of the project surfaced," as Mr. Valentini puts it. Add to the bare construction costs of \$5.1 million (\$1.6 million for the boilers and \$3.5 million for the roof) \$1.2 million of mark-up costs and \$712,000 of

soft costs, and you get a pre-contingency cost of \$7.1 million. With the contingency, the figure tops out at 7.7 million.

A state grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority promises to defray a part of the cost. Based on the combined EQV of the district's five towns (EQV, or equivalent valuation, is a formula for gauging the relative wealth of all the towns in the commonwealth), the grant would pay 39.21 percent of the total (minus certain non-qualifying upgrades to the boilers), reducing the amount the district will have to pay to \$4.6 million. "This is a worst-case scenario, assuming no efficiencies," says Mr. Valentini, but he is wary of once again low-balling the cost of the project.

At present, the district's plan is to borrow this amount in a ten-year general obligation bond at what it hopes will be a 3 percent or less interest rate. New

Marlborough's share of the principal, 20.8 percent, would come to \$956,800, with an annual debt service, by Mr. Valentini's calculation, of \$128,756 starting in 2016. On January 8, the School Committee voted to appropriate \$7.7 million to pay for the new roof and boilers. But it changed the authorization process from a town-by-town vote to an all-district vote. Under this provision, a vote on a warrant written by the School Committee would be held at places throughout the District designated by the Committee, all on the same day.



*The Mount Everett High School roof spans four and a quarter acres.*

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In an email to the towns' selectmen, followed a week later by a letter, District Superintendent David Hastings said that the School Committee is conferring with legal counsel on the possibility that each town could add related questions to the ballot and that absentee and early voting be made available. Noting that the Committee would like a vote by early March, Mr. Hastings wrote that he plans to consult with the boards of selectmen on the timing.

There is, not surprisingly, some push-back. Tara White, chairman of the New Marlborough Board of Selectmen, has concerns with both the term of the financing and the timing of a vote to authorize it. "We are asking, why not a fifteen- or twenty-year note? We understand that the interest rate could be higher than for a ten-year bond, but annual payments would be significantly lower," she says. The Board also would like to delay a vote on the bond until it can be presented in the context of the entire school budget. Analysis by the District business office indicated that a ten-year bond would cost the owner of a \$200,000 house an additional \$40 a year in property taxes; a twenty-year bond, an additional \$22.

Finally, Ms. White is dubious about the voting change, which effectively negates the power of a single town to scuttle the borrowing. Under the new

plan (a shift from Section 16D to 16N of Chapter 71 of Massachusetts General Law), a vote to deny authorization in one or more towns would be overridden if the yeas outpolled the nays District-wide. "I don't know how well this will be accepted," says Ms. White. (At a meeting on January 20, the School Committee, yielding to pressure, called for a vote in each of the District's five towns.)

And if the bond is voted down? "It would be a nightmare," says Mr. Valentini. He foresees water damage to ceiling tiles, walls, and carpeting — not to mention mold. "If we do not proceed with the job, we would be passing on an opportunity of participation by the state," he adds. He cites the experience at Monument Mountain High School in Great Barrington, which tried to go back to the state after a renovation bond issue twice failed to get voter support and was turned down. On the plus side, the upgrade in insulation would reduce heating costs, and the switch to biomass burners would create energy credits. Together, he says, they should produce a savings of \$70,000 to \$80,000 a year.

Other than making do with inadequate heat and a leaking roof, the Building and Grounds Subcommittee doesn't have a Plan B. "This is really a case in which a stitch in time saves nine," says Mr. Valentini. □

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## THE LOG

Since last August, when Chief Scott Farrell resigned and I was appointed Acting Police Chief by the Board of Selectman, I have concentrated on setting goals for myself and the department and encouraging the other officers to set both short- and long-term individual goals as well. I am very pleased to see that our entire department is focused on bettering the community and giving back to the town in which we serve.

One of our first community efforts will be to offer a woman's self defense program, The R.A.D. (for Rape Aggression Defense) System, which will begin in February. The twelve-hour program will feature lecture, discussion and self-defense techniques, with realistic simulation training, suitable for women of all ages and abilities. The class is available free of charge to women living and working in New Marlborough and the surrounding towns. If you are interested in signing up, or if you would like more information, please contact the Police Department business line at (413) 229-8161.

Also, with the recent ice storm and power outages, I would like to make available an emergency well-being check for people who may have medical needs or special circumstances and would like to have an officer come to their home and ensure their safety during a weather-related emergency. If you would like to sign up, or know someone who would benefit from this service, please contact the business line listed above.

In addition, seeing as the winter weather is still coming on strong, I would like to remind everyone to drive appropriately for the road conditions and to please clear vehicle windows of snow and ice thoroughly before driving. Although the highway department does a great job at keeping the roads passable, by driving too fast for the conditions and having blind spots in your line of sight, you not only risk your own safety but the safety of the other motorists and pedestrians around you.

I have enjoyed my role as Police Chief these past six months, and I look forward to seeing how the Police Department and its members evolve in the months and years to come. I would like to encourage members of the community to get involved as much as possible and bring any ideas or concerns that you may have to our attention without hesitation. If you see something that doesn't seem right, it probably is not, so please call. □

*Police Chief Graham Frank*

## POLICE DEPARTMENT (SELECTED ENTRIES)

### DECEMBER

- |         |           |                                                                                                                                                                                        |         |            |                                                                                                                                               |
|---------|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dec. 1  | 3:39 p.m. | Hunter with shotgun seated in woods 20 feet from South Sandisfield Road advised that loaded weapons must be kept 500 feet from roadway.                                                | Dec. 21 | 7:33 a.m.  | Vehicle hits a telephone pole on Route 57 near Old Inn of the Green.                                                                          |
| Dec. 2  | 3:49 a.m. | Suspicious car parked on Canaan Southfield Road.                                                                                                                                       | Dec. 22 | 12:00 p.m. | Driver provides partial identification of a car he says passes him dangerously during his morning commute on New Marlborough Southfield Road. |
|         | 9:25 p.m. | Burglar alarm indicates an outside door at an East Hill Road residence is open, but snow around house is undisturbed. Check of premises leads to conclusion that wind blew door open.  | Dec. 25 | 1:22 p.m.  | Vehicle rolled over on N. Main Road, driver declines ambulance.                                                                               |
| Dec. 9  | 2:40 p.m. | Motorist complains of reckless speeding by trucks and a station wagon during her morning commute on Mill River Great Barrington Road and County Road.                                  | Dec. 27 | 11:34 a.m. | Visitor to York Lake reports a decapitated bear on a trail near the parking area. Environmental protection officer investigates.              |
| Dec. 10 | 2:00 p.m. | Resident reports a break-in to his garage on Canaan Southfield Road, in which side door was damaged, but with audible alarm presumably scaring off the intruder(s), nothing was taken. |         |            |                                                                                                                                               |
| Dec. 12 | 6:49 a.m. | Motor vehicle hits tree on Norfolk Road; driver and passenger taken to Berkshire Medical Center by New Marlborough Rescue 1.                                                           |         |            |                                                                                                                                               |
| Dec. 19 | 9:30 a.m. | Mill River Southfield Road resident reports larceny.                                                                                                                                   |         |            |                                                                                                                                               |
| Dec. 20 | 8:31 p.m. | South Sandisfield Road resident reports                                                                                                                                                |         |            |                                                                                                                                               |

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## FIRE AND RESCUE

Dec. 1	12:35 p.m.	Mill River Southfield Road Medical Call	Dec. 17	9:18 p.m.	Hartsville New Marlborough Road Fire Alarm
Dec. 8	10:59 a.m.	Norfolk Road Medical Call	Dec. 21	7:45 a.m.	New Marlborough Sandisfield Road MVA
Dec. 12	6:50 a.m.	Norfolk Road Motor Vehicle Accident	Dec. 25	3:23 p.m.	Canaan Southfield Road Wires Down
Dec. 12	1:12 p.m.	Stone Manor Drive Medical Call	Dec. 27	7:16 p.m.	Norfolk Road Medical Call
Dec. 15	9:55 a.m.	Brewer Hill Road Medical Call	Dec. 28	7:17 p.m.	Stone Manor Drive Fire Alarm
Dec. 15	12:00 p.m.	Mill River Great Barrington Road Medical Call	Dec. 29	10:28 a.m.	New Marlborough Southfield Road Medical Call
Dec. 15	4:00 p.m.	Hayes Hill Road Medical Call	Dec. 29	4:10 p.m.	York Lake Road Medical Call
Dec. 16	12:05 a.m.	Mill River Great Barrington Road Medical Call			
Dec. 17	4:20 p.m.	Mill River Southfield Road Medical Call			

There were 203 Fire and Rescue calls in all of 2014.

## THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS!

Jay & Betty Reba; Carol & Lance Liebman; Carl & Renee Sloan; Frederick & Margaret Vorck; Ray Tryon; Mary Ann McGourty; Patricia & Michael Brady; Lu Ann Bailey & Bill Rock Smith; Joyce Woodard; Peter & Maria Gay; Christopher Blair; Judith Friedlander; Philip R. Gelzer; Marc & Dawn Trachtenberg; Louis & Clare Rigali; Eugene & Elizabeth Rosenberg; Judianne O'Brien; Dennis Sears & Rene Wood; Robert Gerace; Nancy McWilliams; Miladeen Wyman; and Priscilla J. Beers



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*Insatiable Appetites*, by Stuart Woods  
*A Fine Summer's Day*, by Charles Todd  
*As Chimney Sweepers Come To Dust*, by Alan Bradley  
*Saving Grace*, by Jane Green  
*Outline*, by Rachel Cusk

### Adult Nonfiction

*The Terrorist's Son: A Story of Choice*, by Zak Ebrahim  
*The Resilient Gardner: Food Production and Self-Reliance*, by Carol Deppe  
*Small Space Vegetable Gardens: Growing Great Edibles in Containers, Raised Beds, and Small Plots*, by Andrea Bellamy

### Children's Fiction

*While You Were Napping*, by Jenny Offill  
*First Snow*, by Peter McCarty  
*Danger in the Darkest Hour*, by Mary Pope Osborne

### Children's Nonfiction

*There Goes Ted Williams: The Greatest Hitter Who Ever Lived*, by Matt Tavares  
*Henry Aaron's Dream*, by Matt Tavares



### ► Book Discussion Group

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### ► Story Hour/Playgroup

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- \* **Planning Board:** Second and fourth Wednesday at 7 p.m.
- \* **Board of Health:** First Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m.
- \* **Conservation Commission:** Last Saturday of the month at 10 a.m.
- \* **Board of Assessors:** Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
- \* **Fire Department training:** Every Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the fire station
- \* **Building Inspector:** Monday 5 - 7 p.m. Wednesday 8 - 10 a.m.
- \* **First Responders:** meeting/training: First and third Wednesday at 7 p.m. at the fire station
- \* **Cultural Council:** Second Thursday at 4:15 p.m at the library
- \* **Town Treasurer:** Wednesday 3:30 p.m. - 6 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. - 10 a.m.
- \* **Tax Collector:** Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- \* **Selectmen's Administrative Secretary:** Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- \* **Dog and Animal Control Officer:** John Springstube 413-232-7038
- \* **Town Clerk:** 229-8278; 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. weekdays; Saturday by appointment
- \* **Town Hall:** 229-8116
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Martha Bryan, Jane Burke, Larry Burke, Kenzie Fields,  
Barbara Lowman, David Lowman, Jodi Rothe,  
Peter Schuyten, Barry Shapiro, Pam Stebbins,  
Jon Swan, Marianne Swan  
Contributing writers: Ann Getsinger,  
Mary Richie Smith, Tara White. Index: Donna Weaver

### New Marlborough 5 Village News

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- ♦ **Berkshire Environmental Research Center (BERC):** Thomas Coote. Lake & pond management, wetland delineation, ecological research, rare/invasive species assessment. 413-644-4509. tcoote@simons-rock.edu
- ♦ **Campbell Falls Carpentry:** Licensed and insured contracting at campbellfallscarpentry@gmail.com (413)229-6097 and (413)429-7677. Mass Contractors # 7614140, HIC# 170377
- ♦ **Corashire Realty:** Serving New Marlborough for 40 years. Let experience, knowledge, and personal attention work for you. 528-0014
- ♦ **Dellea:** Dellea.biz offers affordable on-site Windows computer repairs, virus removals, and more to homes and small businesses in southern Berkshire County. Browse <http://www.dellea.biz> or call (413)528-1141.
- ♦ **Design+Planning:** Christopher Blair; Since 1986, creative, budget aware design. Achieve your goals for additions, alterations to an existing home or new construction. 413- 528-4960. chris@design-planning.com.
- ♦ **DesignFirstBerkshires:** Architectural design, space planning and renovation management. 413-528-6169 or info@designfirstberkshires.com.
- ♦ **Fine Jewelry:** Designers and manufacturers; custom orders/commissions welcome; expert repairs. 45 years experience. Sachs Reisman, Inc. 25 Maple Ave., Sheffield 229-0050
- ♦ **One call does it all!:** Vinyl siding cleaning; pressure washing; deck refinishing; floors refinished; window washing; odd landscape jobs; all odd jobs. David Goewey, (413)229-2787
- ♦ **Project Bee** meets on the last Saturday of every month from 10:30 until noon at the New Marlborough Library in Mill River.
- ♦ **James Edelman:** General Contractor, Real Estate Sales. Best Results. Construction License #090773. Home Improvement Registration #152035. Real Estate Sales License #9086247. 413-528-0006 or cljvedelman@aol.com
- ♦ **Susan M. Smith:** Attorney At Law; Concentrating in the areas of Estate Planning, Estate Administration, Elder Law, Real Estate and Zoning Matters. ssmithlaw@hughes.net or 229-7080
- ♦ **Reiner White:** General Contractor; 413-229-8450
- ♦ **Woodruff Mountain Landscaping:** Excavation and landscape contracting, all forms of stone work and masonry, and outdoor services, including lawn mowing and yard work. 413-229-2919 woodruffmountain@aol.com

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