

New Marlborough 5 Village News

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Clayton • Hartsville • Mill River • New Marlborough • Southfield

The following article on Southfield is the final installment of John Sisson's series of village cameos, written in 2000, the first year of the New Marlborough 5 Village News' existence. We are also including a sidebar story on the Turner and Cook whip shop from that same issue. Naturally, changes in the village, and to what is now called simply The Whip Shop, have transpired over the last nineteen years, and we attempt to bring these stories up to date with addenda.

SOUTH NEW MARLBOROUGH

Or, How a Break-Away Parish with an Unwieldy Name Became, Simply, Southfield

By John D. Sisson



A panoramic view of Southfield, most likely taken in the late 1800's. The Baptist church is visible just left of center, and the spire of the Congregational church stands to the right of center. Note the lack of trees on East Hill, and what appear to be grazing pastures.

The role the church played in the lives of the earliest settlers was extremely important and largely positive, but it could also become the cause of dissent. In most cases, the dissent was the result of the autocratic policies of the church leaders. Another frequent source of friction was the distance parishioners had to travel to attend Sunday meetings. In the case of New Marlborough, seeds of dissent were planted when the first Congregational church was established in 1741. The site was chosen almost before the first settlers arrived in what was then Township Number

Two. Half a century later, the congregation had outgrown its first meeting house, and when, in 1793, a committee was established to oversee the erection of a new building, the only site they considered was the one on which the original building stood (and where the present New Marlborough Meeting House now stands).

It didn't take long before a group of stalwart church members from southern New Marlborough decided to build their own meeting house. They organized on April 25, 1794, and were soon driving their ox-drawn sledges through New Marlborough to collect rock from Dry Hill for the foundation of their new South New Marlborough meeting house. Then, as if to bless this decision, the General Court of Massachusetts divided the Town into two parts of nearly equal size, decreeing that "the southerly part should be set off as a separate parish, to be called the South Parish in New Marlborough." An examination of a map will show that today's Southfield is indeed almost exactly in the geographic center of the Town.

While the church played a major role in establishing this village, it took the

INSIDE:

Turner and Cook	4
Board of Selectmen	5
Planning Board Business	10
Broadband Update	13
Neighbors	16
Wildlife Neighbors.....	17
Recipe of the Month.....	19
The Log	20
Harvesting Deer	22
Victoria Aldam.....	24
School News.....	25
Library.....	26

photo by Larry Burke



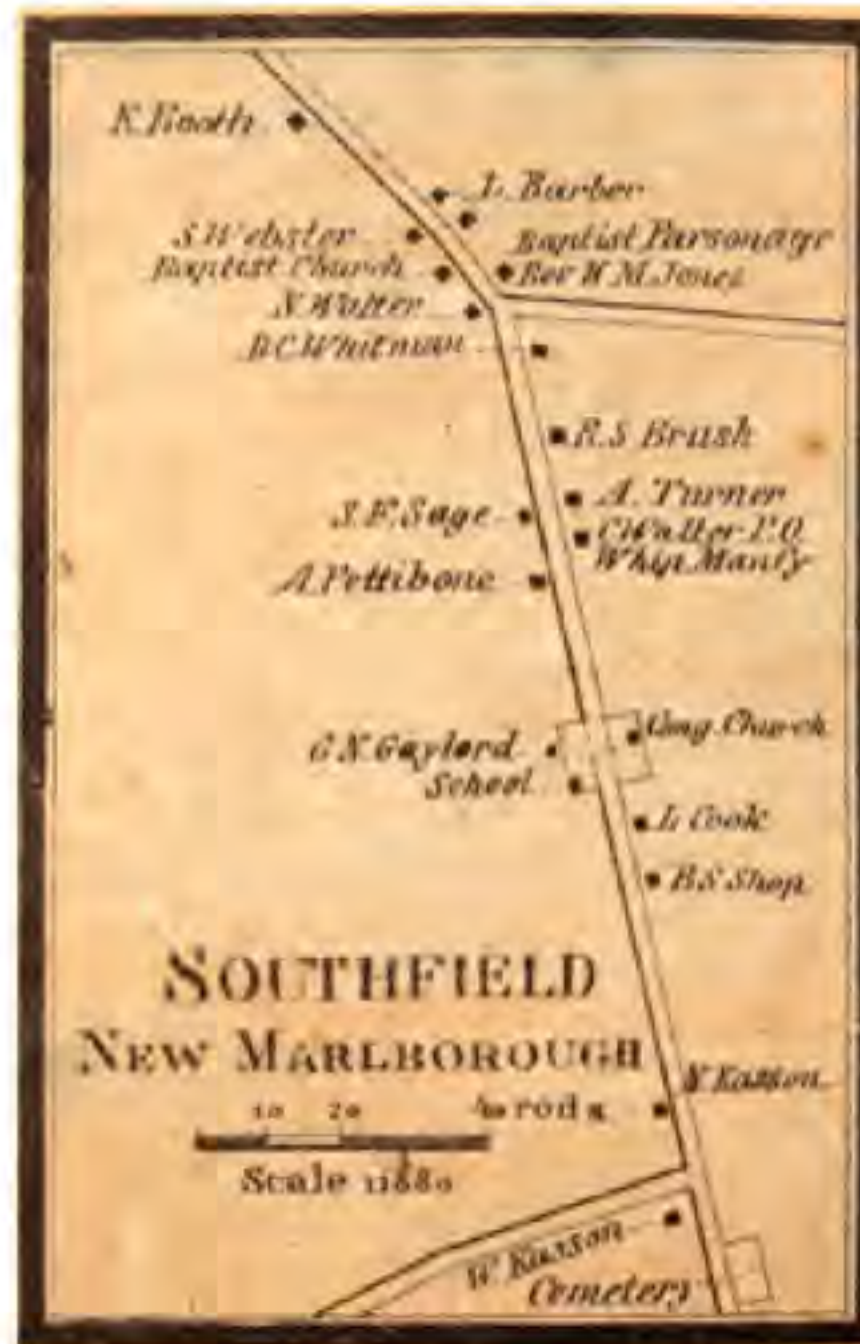
The South Parish Congregational Church, now known as the United Church of New Marlborough, has been the anchor of Southfield for 225 years. Left: A current view of the church. Right: The Southfield Church, overlooking the Turner and Cook factory, circa 1890.

United States Postal Service to bestow upon it the name we know it by today. In the spring of 1850, the Postmaster General of the United States, finding the name South New Marlborough too long, designated the post office as Southfield, and so it remains.

Natural features of Southfield (or South Parish) run the gamut from the 1,727-foot Mount Woodruff, with its steep cliffs and commanding western vistas, to the swampy lowlands about four and a half miles southeast of the village called, as a whole, East Indies. Several ponds dot this landscape. One of them is East India pond; another is East Pond sometimes called Knapp Pond, after the many people of that name who lived thereabouts; also there is Norton Pond, similarly recalling members of the Norton family, but also known as Hermit Pond. And therein lies an intriguing story. In 1769 or 1770, Timothy Leonard, a native of Fredericksburgh, New York (a tiny Dutchess County town) purchased a farm near East Pond, and lived there in solitude until his death, on June 18, 1819. It is said that the reason for this self-banishment was that he had been spurned by a member of the opposite sex, fostering a life-long hatred of all women. On this subject, he is said to have expressed himself in a terse couplet:

“They say they will, and they won’t,
What they promise to do, they don’t.”

Another striking natural feature found in Southfield



A detailed map of Southfield, as it appeared in the 1858 map of Berkshire County. The orientation has north at the top, with East Hill Road branching off to the upper right.

is Tipping Rock, about a quarter of a mile southwest of the Southfield meeting house. Deposited by the retreating glacier that covered these hills eons ago, and estimated to weigh about forty tons, it is so well balanced that it can be swayed by the pressure of a single finger.

In the extreme southern portion of this sector of our town, just above the Connecticut line, there is a magnificent waterfall named Campbell Falls. Here, volcanic forces tortured the land, twisting it into an ox-bow shape with precipitous walls, through which flows the Whiting River. While the hike to the brink of the cataract requires some effort, it is worth every sore muscle.

Today Southfield, the erstwhile South New Marlborough Parish, thrives as a center of commerce, principally because of the conversion of the former Turner and Cook

continued on page 3



Tipping Rock, a glacial erratic on the southern outskirts of Southfield.



A view from East Hill Road, with the Baptist church in the distance and a very impressive horseless carriage on the right.

Right: The bridge that crosses the Umpachene River at the north end of Southfield. Back in those horse and buggy days it was a single lane bridge. Come to think of it, it still is!



rawhide whip and mallet manufacturing plant (see accompanying article on page 4) into a unique series of antique shops, all under one roof. Visitors from far and near are drawn to the quintessential New England village to enjoy its picturesque setting, sample its wares, and maybe sit awhile on the porch of the general store, drinking coffee and reading the paper.

Back in the early 1900s, Southfield was described as being “spic and span... neat and clean looking.” It still is. These days the old parish meeting house, whose founding members were “so spirited...that they were in the woods to

Joseph and Lucy Leffingwell at Campbell Falls in the 1940s.



gather timber for the church in less than twenty-four hours after resolving to build,” is undergoing a major renovation. The project is just one example of the continuing vitality of a community founded by energetic, independent-minded people. □

Addendum: Of the points of interest mentioned in John Sisson’s article, one of them, Tipping Rock, is on private land and not accessible to the general public, but the beautiful “old parish meeting house,” welcomes one and all, and, under the guidance of Robert Olsen, is now the reinvigorated United Church of New Marlborough. The church, with its pristinely beautiful interior, offers not only the opportunity to join in worship, but also provides a space for high quality musical performances.



Recess at the Southfield school in 1915. The building, across the road from the church, is now the home of Michael and Patricia Brady.



The Southfield Store, circa 1940.

A QUICK LOOK AT TURNER AND COOK

On a visit to South Parish in 1789, Nathaniel Turner (1761-1812) of Norfolk, Connecticut, observed that the Umpachene River would be a great place to soak hides. Nathaniel, who graduated from Williams College in 1798, was ordained the following year and became the second pastor of the newly formed South Parish.

It was his brother Isaac who, following up on Nathaniel's tip, established what a couple of generations later would become the Turner and Cook manufactory. In Isaac's day, buckskin was in much demand, and Isaac's chief business was tanning, but he also offered for sale buckskin whips, made by South County women in their homes on a piecework basis.

In 1888, Julius Turner, one of Isaac's great-grandsons, formed a partnership with Howard Cook (a cousin), marking the beginning of Turner and Cook. Up to this time, the braiding of buckskin whiplashes was an entirely manual process. In 1892, Julius invented a braiding machine. Business boomed. Over the years, Turner and Cook – switching from buckskin to the more durable hides of water buffalo (imported from India) – produced a large variety of halters, whips, rawhide whip cores, industrial belt pins, and soft-faced mallets.

In 1975, 168 years after Nathaniel Turner's first visit to South Parish, the firm of Turner and Cook closed up shop and stepped into history. The building itself has continued to play a vital role in Southfield over the ensuing twenty-five years. Into the early 1980s it was occupied by Dek Tillet's fabric printing company and the Strattner Brothers' cabinetry works, whereupon it became, in succession, the home of Neuma Agins's sweater design company, The Buggy Whip Outlet stores, and, for most of the last decade, an antiques mart owned and operated by Neuma Agins and Hank Reeve. And let us not forget that it is also the



Above: The Turner and Cook manufactory, Southfield's leading employer for many years, seen here during World War I.

Left: A detailed look at the Turner and Cook braiding machine.



home of the Southfield Post Office, 01259!

Plans are now underway for the creation of a small museum at the Buggy Whip Shop, celebrating its significant place in the history of New Marlborough. According to Hank, the museum is scheduled to open during the coming winter. We will keep you posted. □



The Whip Shop – the present-day incarnation of Turner and Cook – on a cold and windy January day. photo by Larry Burke

Addendum: Ned Odegaard bought the property from Hank Reeve and Neuma Agins in 2009, renaming it The Whip Shop. He decided that the building was no longer filling either retail or manufacturing needs in the community, so, over the next year, he repurposed portions of the sprawling 19,000 square feet into studio and office space for a wide variety of artists and small businesses. Ned

vastly improved the building's infrastructure, including the introduction of high speed internet, and created a park-like feeling with the landscaping. He has maintained the museum aspect mentioned in the 2000 piece, and it is available to be viewed upon request. Peter Murkett's New England Modern furniture business is the largest tenant. Farm Country Soup, a long-standing tenant, maintains a small retail space, and there is even an Airbnb apartment. After eleven years of ownership, Ned and Dez Odegaard have moved from the Berkshires to warmer climes, and the property is for sale.

Town Business Is Your Business

BOARD OF SELECTMEN



January 2: Because of the New Year's holiday, the Board, with all three members present, convened its first meeting of the year at 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 2, with the first order of business being the approval of the December 17 minutes from the final meeting of last year.

In an update on the latest broadband developments, Town Administrator Mari Enoch reported the **Town has finally received a check for \$100 from Charter Communications covering its Form 100 filing fee. This completes Charter's cable franchise application.** As previously reported, the Form 100 specifies the cable-related services Charter will be providing to the Town.

This sets the stage for a public hearing where Charter can elaborate on its proposed offerings and answer questions from residents. That hearing is set for Friday, January 11, at 7:00 p.m., with a snow date the following day, Saturday, at noon. Ms. Enoch said the hearing has been advertised twice, as required, in the *Berkshire Eagle*, and that a notice of the hearing has been posted on the Town website and will soon go out on the Town's News and Notices service.

Ms. Enoch also updated the Board on the Building Department's transition, following the retirement on December 31 of Building Inspector Tom Carmody. She said Owen Wright, the Town's conditional local building inspector, has not yet achieved the state certification he needs to be appointed Provisional Building Commissioner. What this means, with Mr. Carmody's departure, is there's no one in the department who can sign off on a Certificate of Occupancy (CO). Ms. Enoch said she's waiting to hear back from Mr. Wright as to when he expects to take the third and final certification exam and also whether there's anyone with an outstanding CO waiting to be signed.

As reported earlier, the Town is also looking to add an Alternate Inspector to the department, someone who can fill in when the regular building inspector is not available. Ms. Enoch will be placing an ad to that effect in one of the local papers. But Ms. Enoch also suggested that since there's a very limited pool of people qualified for the position, the Town will be "networking" with other area building departments "to let them know we're looking for an alternate."

Because of accessibility issues at Town Hall, the Board has decided to hold this year's Annual Town Meeting at the Southern Berkshire Regional School District's Sheffield campus, where an auditorium and two cafeterias available. Town voters at last year's Annual Town Meeting approved a bylaw allowing the Town, at the discretion of the Board, to hold the annual meeting in another town, providing it is adjacent to New Marlborough.

As Chairman Michele Shalaby explained, while the ground floor at Town Hall, where voting takes place during an election, is reasonably accessible, the upstairs, where Town Meetings are held, is problematic due to the lack of an elevator or lift. She said the Board has actually heard from people who are not attending town meetings because of the lack of accessibility. "This is of particular concern," she said, "because a person has to be there in person to represent themselves; there's no absentee voting. So to me, the obvious place to hold the meeting is the school campus in Sheffield," she said. "They have the room, the parking and it's fully accessible," noting that Sheffield and Egremont both hold their annual meetings there.

In fact, as was pointed out, Sheffield's meeting is held at the same time as New Marlborough's. However, Ms. Enoch said she's already contacted the school district



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and “the superintendent has assured me that they would find us a space if we chose to hold our meeting there.”

In a related matter, Ms. Enoch said the Town’s Commission on Disabilities has applied for and received a grant for hearing assistance at Town Meeting, although she doesn’t yet have any details on what that would entail, but is assuming it’s a headset of some kind that can be connected to the sound system.

In other matters, Ms. Enoch said the Board has received a special permit application from CPV Mill River Solar Project LLC for a 4.4-megawatt ground-mounted solar array, which will occupy approximately 21.3 acres of a sixty-nine-acre site at 100 Hartsville Mill River Road. She said once the application has been vetted and is determined to be complete, the Town will set a hearing date.

Separately, she said the Planning Board is asking the Board of Selectmen to sign off on its application for a District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) grant from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission pertaining to the creation of marijuana bylaws. However, the application, according to Ms. Enoch, is somewhat

broader than originally envisioned. Instead of proposing simply to use the DLTA to work on bylaws for the adult use of marijuana, **the Planning Board would like to do two things with it, the other being to define the Town’s five village centers as one zone and to create a second zone for rural agriculture**, a zoning change similar to a Planning Board proposal not adopted by voters in 2013 and 2016.

As the Board will be meeting in joint session with the Planning Board next week to discuss the marijuana bylaws, Ms. Shalaby suggested holding off on approving the DLTA application until then. “I think that’s a big undertaking,” she said, “establishing the village districts. So I think we need to talk with them about it at our joint meeting.”

Finally, Ms. Enoch reminded the Board that all state, county, and municipal employees are required by the state Ethics Commission to take the Online Conflict of Interest Law Training every two years. She said this applies to anyone holding public office, paid or unpaid, any appointed position including membership on a board or committee, paid or unpaid, and any part-time, seasonal, and intermittent position. She said Town Clerk Kathy Chretien keeps the certificates of completion on file. “So you can check with her to see when your latest certificate is dated.”

During public comments, resident Doug Newman again brought up the missing “Low Salt Area” sign near his Adsit Crosby Road home, saying there’s now a much smaller sign that simply says “ICE.” He also wants an acknowledgement “perhaps through the Board” that the Highway Department understands it’s a low salt area because of the wetlands there.”

Ms. Shalaby indicated that although delayed a bit by the holiday, the Board has been looking into it, trying to determine how the area came to be so designated, and how far it extends, even checking with the state Department of Transportation up in Lenox, but so far they’ve come up with nothing. “We’re looking,” she said, but in the meantime, “if you find out anything, please share it with us.” Ms. Enoch suggested to Mr. Newman that Highway Superintendent Loring would be more than happy to sit down with him and explain the use of salt by the Highway Department on Town roads. “Chuck is very willing to talk to you about his salt program, about how over the years the technology has changed. It’s all computerized now,” she added.

And with that the meeting was adjourned.

Peter Schuyten

January 9: Board of Selectmen Chairman Michele

Because of accessibility issues at Town Hall, the Board has decided to hold this year’s Annual Town Meeting at the Southern Berkshire Regional School District’s Sheffield campus.

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Shalaby called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m. The minutes of the January 2 meeting were approved as amended.

Prompted by an earlier letter from Jane Burke, Town Administrator Mari Enoch did research to determine if all members of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District's School Committee must be designated as Special Municipal Employees, who must complete financial disclosure forms. The designation, which the selectmen approved by a two-to-one vote, refers to the positions, not to individual school committee members. The New Marlborough designation covers committee members from all towns, not just our own representatives.

In related business, the selectmen approved an exemption for School Committee representative Jane Burke, who disclosed that she would benefit from a small grant to Flying Cloud Institute, with which she is still associated. The \$1,200 grant will fund a multi-disciplinary arts program at Mount Everett. Ms. Burke will be teaching the ceramics class.

Although conditional Local Building Inspector Owen Wright has passed all certification exams necessary to be named the Town Building Commissioner, Ms. Enoch reported he cannot be officially appointed until early February. The delay is due to the need for Mr. Wright to be approved by the state licensing board, which will not meet again until February 5. The vote on his credentials, Ms. Enoch noted, is pro forma but necessary.

This delay is problematic for the Town as the former Building Inspector Tom Carmody resigned on December 31, and the Town does not now have an inspector qualified to grant certificates of occupancy. The Town will be advertising for a certified Alternate Inspector. At present, there are no properties/projects being held up by the lack of an inspector. The Town is networking

with the State Building Inspector to identify an alternate.

To allow the Umpachene Falls Road Bridge repair project to proceed, the selectmen voted to accept a five-year licensing agreement from the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife for a parcel of land that abuts the repair zone. The agreement allows temporary use of the land, including tree cutting for bridge construction. Fisheries is intent on protecting the park's fishing areas and keeping them open to the public while work is being done.

With regard to the ongoing negotiations with Charter, Ms. Shalaby drafted a letter to Charter confirming that its Form 100 License application had been reviewed and accepted. No further amendments were

requested. The selectmen voted that the letter should be sent. In response to a public question, Mr. Yohalem noted that declaring the application complete does not mean the Town agrees to what has been proposed.

The selectmen then turned to the signing of an application to the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission for a 2019 District Local Technical Assistance Program Grant. The grant will allow New Marlborough, which is leading a partnership including five other towns – Washington, Monterey, Stockbridge, Great Barrington, and North Adams – to create or update hazard mitigation plans. This will be done in accordance with Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) guidelines.

While New Marlborough needs to update its mitigation plans, one of the partner towns will be starting from scratch. Some of the towns, Ms. Enoch reported, have been much more affected by flooding attributed to climate change than we have to date. The work on the plans is to be completed by June, 2020.

In her Town Administrator update, Ms. Enoch reported that, while the Lumbert Cross Road bridge will

The Board of Selectmen will be meeting on January 9 in joint session with the Planning Board to discuss the marijuana bylaws, as well as the possibility of establishing two property zones: village centers and rural agriculture.

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not be replaced this year, it was necessary earlier in the day for some boring to take place. The drilling hit an artesian well so the bridge will be closed until Thursday morning, January 10.

In Board of Selectmen updates, Ms. Shalaby said she had met with Finance Committee Chair Steve Klein, and they had agreed it was time to begin budget talks for the 2020 Fiscal Year. A joint meeting of the selectmen and the Finance Committee was proposed for January 24 at 7:00 p.m. As the Board of Selectmen will not be meeting on January 21, due to the Martin Luther King holiday, its meeting will be held the same night at 6:00 p.m.

The selectmen approved a letter that contained a vote of confidence for Fire Department Chief Chuck Loring.

The selectmen then took up approvals of two treasury warrants (one for \$18,000, the other for \$22,000), and business licenses that ranged from carpentry and farming to a general law practice.

During the public comment period, Tom Stalker announced that the Town's Commission on Disabilities had received a \$5,500 improvement grant through the Massachusetts Office on Disabilities.

Just prior to the meeting's close, Lucinda Shmulsky asked the selectmen to consider the content of a letter she'd co-written dealing with possible by-laws for the cannabis businesses that may potentially open in Town. As her letter was not on the agenda, the selectmen could not speak to the issues raised in the letter. Ms. Shalaby did, however, read the letter out loud to those assembled.

The meeting concluded at 7:00 p.m.

Anne Sommers

January 14: With all three selectmen present, the Board met with Will Sikula of Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC), which will be **assisting the Town in applying for a Community Development Block Grant.** This will be the second such grant the Town has applied for in as many years. Last year, working through BRPC, it successfully partnered with the town of Cheshire on a \$1 million housing rehabilitation grant, with the Town's share coming to around \$200,000. **This year the Town will be partnering with Sheffield and Otis on a \$1.3 million grant application.**

Community Development Block Grants, as previously reported, are funded by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) but administered by the states. **They are generally awarded for repairs to low- and middle-income housing, but can also be used for municipal infrastructure work or to bring buildings into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).**

The application, according to Mr. Sikula, will cover two separate activities for New Marlborough. One will be a continuation of the housing rehab effort started under the previous Community Development Grant, while the other will fund a design project for Town Hall accessibility improvements, otherwise known in ADA parlance as architectural barrier removals.

To get started, the Board reviewed and signed two documents, the first being a Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and BRPC, which in effect states BRPC will prepare and submit the grant application, and in return the Town agrees that BRPC will administer the grant. For its efforts BRPC, according to HUD guidelines, will be entitled to as much as 27 percent of the value of the grant, which could total upwards of \$350,000.

The Board also signed what is known as an Interlocal Agreement, outlining the relationship between the three towns under which Sheffield would receive 40 percent of the housing rehab funds, while New Marlborough and Otis will split the remaining 60 percent, after netting out BRPC's administrative and project delivery fees. The application is due March 1, with the grants awarded in July.

In a much-anticipated development, the Board approved and signed documents finalizing the Town's agreement with broadband provider Charter

NEED HOME REPAIRS?

Applications are now being accepted for the Housing Rehabilitation Program.

Up to \$40,000 is available to income-eligible New Marlborough homeowners for critical home repairs through a deferred payment forgivable loan.

Examples of eligible projects are roof replacements, new siding, correcting code violations, replacing windows and doors, septic systems, handicap accessibility, etc.

Funds are available on a first come/first served basis.

Contact Rebecca Haight at Berkshire Regional Planning Commission:

413-442-1521 x23 or

rhaight@berkshireplanning.org

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Communications. With very little ceremony and only ten or so people in attendance, the selectmen signed a cable license agreement between the Town and Charter governing the television services Charter will be providing to the Town. The Board also signed a Contribution and Assessment Agreement between the Town and the state, setting forth the repayment terms on the Town's \$720,000 financial obligation to the state, which is the Town's contribution towards the cost of the network.

There's a third document, as well, which covers the grant agreement between Charter and the state and also relates to the provision of internet and phone services, which was previously signed but is contingent on the signing of the other two documents.

In addition, the Board approved and Ms. Shalaby signed a letter to the state Department of Telecommunications and Cable requesting a waiver from the Department on the issuance of a provisional cable license, normally the next step in the process, since construction of the network cannot begin under a provisional license, and the Board wants Charter to be able to get started as quickly as possible.

And that was it. After not quite a decade of false starts, blind alleys, and dashed expectations the Town finally has a deal for high-speed internet service. (For more detail on the signing and stipulations of the landmark agreement see *Broadband Update* on page 13).

Next item on the agenda was a discussion of next steps for dealing with the recreational marijuana question, including the timing of the opt-out votes, but after nearly an hour of discussion with no resolution at hand the Board moved on to the next agenda item. (For details on the opt votes and other marijuana-related issues see *It's Complicated, Two Town Boards Meet to Work on the Cannabis Issue* on page 10).

The Board signed an "order of taking" for three parcels of land in connection with obtaining a secure right of way for the construction of road improvements for the Umpachene Falls Road bridge project. The taking comprises both permanent and temporary easements.

Three of the easements are in a parcel owned by Mary Smith of Clayton Mill River Road, who is donating them to the Town, and two are owned by Jay Moses of Umpachene Falls Road, who opted to receive compensation in the amount of \$120 and \$1,570, respectively, for a permanent easement on a 129-square-foot plot and a temporary easement on a 3,043-square foot plot. It was noted during the discussion that the appraisals necessary to determine these amounts cost the Town an additional \$3,975. The Board asked that a

letter of thanks be sent to Mary Smith for her donation.

In addition, the Town donated to itself a 5,300-square-foot plot of Town-owned land for a temporary easement also related to the work on the bridge.

According to Ms. Enoch, the bridge project will be put out to bid in late February, but whether or not the work will get underway this summer is still not clear, she said. Other than costs associated with right-of-way, the bridge is being replaced by the state at no cost to the Town.

Separately, the Board set a date of Monday, February 25, for a special permit hearing for the proposed 4.4-megawatt CPV Mill River solar field to be located on 21.3 acres at 100 Hartsville Mill River Road. The snow date is February 26.

The Board also voted to **authorize Ms. Enoch to sign paperwork for a \$5,500 grant to**

be used to purchase twenty hearing assistance devices for public meetings at Town Hall. The grant is from the Massachusetts Office on Disability. According Tom Stalker of the Town's Commission on Disabilities, the devices can be used with or without a hearing aid and will connect to the public sound system in the upstairs Great Hall. He said there's also money in the grant to purchase a 180-degree microphone that can be set up on the selectmen's table downstairs to transmit proceedings of the Board's meetings to the hearing-assist devices.

For the final item of the evening the Board approved annual business license renewals for the following local businesses: Property management firm BDL Enterprises, David M. Weiss Antiques, PJS Maintenance LLC and Windemere Lake Corp., Les Trois Emme Vineyard and Winery, and Peerless Since 1945 arborists.

Since there were no town administrator or selectmen updates and no public comments, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m. □

Peter Schuyten

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IT'S COMPLICATED

Two Town Boards Meet to Work on the Cannabis Issue

By Larry Burke

On the evening of January 9, the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board met together for more than two hours at Town Hall in an attempt to fashion a strategy to deal with the potential uses of legalized cannabis in New Marlborough, as the June 30 ending of the moratorium on marijuana businesses begins to seem not so very far off.

Only minutes into the meeting, it became apparent that the Board of Selectmen had already arrived at something of a consensus on the primary task, that being to schedule an opt-out vote. Chairman Michele Shalaby gave the floor to Town Administrator Mari Enoch, who rolled out a white board on which she had listed three options that used various combinations of special elections, special town meetings, and the Annual Town Meeting in May in order to arrive at a successful conclusion before the moratorium expired. One scenario would involve a special election ballot, followed by a special town meeting, both with the purpose of deciding which, if any, legal uses of marijuana will not be allowed, and then a vote on protective bylaws for the remaining uses at the Annual Town Meeting, followed finally by a ballot vote on May 13. A second option would be to deal with the opt-out votes in May, followed by a special town meeting on the bylaws themselves just prior to the June 30 deadline.



The January 9 joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board included, left to right, Lonny Combs, Town Administrator Mari Enoch (standing), Tara White, Nat Yohalem, Michele Shalaby, James Mullen, and Peter Tiso. Present but not seen in this photo was Mark Carson.

photo by Larry Burke

The third option would use only special town meetings and special election ballots. (The eight commercial uses of marijuana that are permissible in Massachusetts are: craft cooperative, cultivator, micro-business, product manufacturer, research facility, retailer, testing laboratory, and transporter.)

Planning Board Chairman Peter Tiso asked Ms. Shalaby what had led the Board of Selectmen to see the opt-out avenue as the way to go. She replied that, in the Board's reading of the results of the Cannabis Ad Hoc Committee's (CAHC) poll, "it seems like what was desired by the majority was to opt out of some uses, not all." (In the poll, 30.5 percent of respondents were in favor of allowing all uses, 29.8 percent would allow some and prohibit others, and 38.9% would like to see all uses prohibited.) Some discussion then ensued as to the mechanics of scheduling the opt-out votes and meetings. The understanding of the Planning Board members, as well as CAHC Chairman Dan Doern, who was in attendance, is that the simple-majority ballot vote must come after the two-thirds-majority vote at town meeting. Mari Enoch, however, said that Town Counsel Jeremia Pollard believes it's just the opposite. That question remained unresolved, but it was nevertheless agreed by both boards that the Board of Selectmen would take the lead on any opt-out course of action.

The discussion then moved onto envisioning how to make an opt-out voting process a fair one; that is, how to imbed enough information on each of the eight uses into the ballot form so the voter may make an informed decision. (During the course of the evening, there was some mention of a ninth use – which would be for cafes offering on-site consumption of cannabis products – but the formulation of language for this use is not yet completed at the state level, and may or may not be included in an opt-out vote.) There was general agreement by the members of both boards that a simple yes-no ballot would not be appropriate, and, furthermore, that public informational meetings should be scheduled prior to the vote.



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Several members of the Planning Board pointed out that a vote to prohibit a given cannabis use is handicapped by a lack of specificity on what areas of town such a business might be allowed to operate, and under what restrictions. In other words, a vote on a bylaw that delineates the limitations of a given cannabis business would be a fairer, more informed vote. Planning Board member Mark Carson pointed out that New Marlborough has just one zone – residential – but in fact has villages and rural sections. In considering the eight (or nine) uses, Mr. Carson said that some could be good for the villages but not for the rural areas, and vice versa. Therefore, he continued, “it’s hard to write a bylaw in a one-zone town,” and he and his fellow members advocate for the creation of a second zone, delineating the various village centers of New Marlborough, as the means to evolving a set of protective bylaws that would govern the sensible placement of cannabis enterprises.

At this point, Selectman Nat Yohalem interjected that the previous efforts to introduce village zoning were “overwhelmingly defeated,” and therefore not a viable option. Mr. Carson replied that, no, the vote at the 2016 Town Meeting came up just five votes short of the two-thirds majority needed. Planning Board member James Mullen added that, while an earlier attempt, in 2013, to establish village center zones had, in fact, failed badly, the board had since “leaned out” the language of the proposed bylaws, making them much easier to understand, and more sensible to the voters. Mr. Carson pressed the point that the zoning bylaw was the neces-

sary first step to fashioning the cannabis bylaws, and, since practically all the legwork has already been done on the zoning bylaw, the Planning Board could devote most of its energy to the cannabis language. Peter Tiso agreed with Mr. Carson and Mr. Mullen that this would be the preferred route for the Planning Board, but he did add that, if it became apparent that the creation of the village center zoning was not to the Town’s liking, the Planning Board would be willing and able to craft a set of cannabis-related bylaws for the existing single zone.

When it came time to take questions and comments from the attending public, Daniel Doern had a question for the Board of Selectmen: “What is the logic of going for a prohibition vote? Why start there?” Ms. Shalaby replied, as she had earlier to Mr. Tiso, “because the survey indicated that.” Mr. Doern then countered, “but 60 percent voted for some or all, and, to me, it would seem like the Board of Selectman is disregarding the guidance

provided by the CAHC survey.” Other members of the now-disbanded Cannabis Ad Hoc Committee had more to add: Jackson Liscombe observed that, “as a private citizen, I would like to see a narrowing-down of the bylaw process,” by which he meant that elimination via an opt-out vote of some of the uses would streamline the writing of bylaws for the uses that remain. Barbara Marchione voiced her opinion that “the best thing would be to opt out of all cannabis uses, and then to revisit each on a case by case basis.” Another attendee, Ginny Hyde, supported Ms. Marchione, saying that an outright prohibition would be “a way to buy time to get it right.”

Dan Doern said that it was clear from the CAHC survey that townspeople particularly wanted small-scale enterprises, and they wanted specific bylaws. (In the survey, 75 percent of the respondents had indicated a preference that the Town “write new custom bylaws that specifically regulate marijuana businesses,” versus 21 percent that would be content to rely on existing bylaws and special permitting.) Barbara Marchione then suggested a compromise approach: let the Planning Board draft bylaws for the Annual Town Meeting on the three or four cannabis uses that scored better in the survey, and let there be an opt-out vote for those that were unpopular in the survey. Mr. Doern thought the idea had merit, and suggested that the Planning Board might draft some language for adult-use marijuana craft cooperative, marijuana-

continued



Members of the Cannabis Ad Hoc Committee Daniel Doern and Jackson Liscombe listen intently to the discussion.

photo by Larry Burke



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It's Complicated, continued

na micro-business, and small-scale cultivator.

Lucinda Shmulsky, a resident of Hartsville, who had earlier submitted a letter to the Board of Selectmen urging them to focus on overseeing the crafting of specific marijuana bylaws, expressed the concern that the Planning Board's desire to link the village zoning to the development of cannabis bylaws might be seen by some as a "bait and switch" tactic. In listening to the Planning Board members, she thought that she was hearing a shift in priority from the mandate of the moratorium vote last May, a shift that she viewed as "disingenuous." Planning Board Chairman Tiso attempted to allay that concern, echoing the thoughts of others on the Board as to the good sense of building the cannabis bylaw with the zoning bylaw as a framing structure.

Another topic that was a thread throughout this meeting had to do with a District Local Technical Assistance grant (DLTA), for which the Planning Board needed sign-off from the Board of Selectmen, and which would give the Town professional assistance from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission on development of new bylaws. The Planning Board's approach in seeking the

grant is to look for expertise in bylaws concerning housing and growth, and incorporating language on cannabis enterprises simultaneously. The Board of Selectmen did sign off on the grant application.

As the meeting grew to a close, Mari Enoch asked Peter Tiso how soon a draft bylaw on the more popular businesses might be expected. Mr. Tiso was uncertain about how soon that could happen – perhaps inside two months – but he offered that the Planning Board would make public its intentions with the bylaws quite quickly. Dan Doern supported Mr. Tiso's statement, saying, "it's a perfect storm of complexity, but it's doable. Make your intentions public first, and that will give a better perspective on any opt-out vote." □

A correction to the article on the Planning Board meeting in the January issue of the NM5VN: It was stated that Rebecca Schreiber, a member of the Cannabis Ad Hoc Committee who was present at this meeting, was in agreement with the Planning Board's goal to "consider the reintroduction of the village zone, or overlay, initiative as an integral part of the overall effort to arrive at a cannabis bylaw." Mrs. Schreiber does not subscribe to that position.



*Happy
Valentine's Day,
New Marlborough!*

illustration by Ann Getsinger

BROADBAND UPDATE

Signed, Sealed, Delivered

By Barry R. Shapiro

New Marlborough's long wait for a high speed internet contract is now officially over.

On Monday, January 14, at about 6:45 p.m., the Board of Selectmen met and signed two of the three agreements necessary to bind Charter Communications to provide high speed internet, television and telephone service to Town. The remaining agreement between the state and Charter was signed previously but was made contingent on the Town signing the remaining documents.

Such a momentous event was accompanied by little fanfare: some brief discussion among the Board, followed by Chairman Michele Shalaby and Selectmen Nat Yohalem and Tara White signing the two agreements with a plastic ballpoint pen. There was not even a smattering of applause from the few intrepid souls who attended the meeting on a frigid Berkshire evening.

"We're very pleased to reach this milestone," said Ms. Shalaby, "and, at the same time, recognize that this is simply a 'kickoff' of the work to be done that needs to be paired with oversight and vigilance. I'm very grateful to those who have been part of getting us here, including my fellow members of the Board of Selectmen, our Town Administrator Mari Enoch and the members of the Broadband Committee, Richard Long, Steve Klein, Tom Stalker and Owen Wright. I'm also grateful to all residents who have engaged, supported, and challenged in various ways. I hope everyone will remain engaged to see to fruition this significant, modernization project that is essential to a secure future for New Marlborough."

The path leading to the legal closing of this transaction was long and tortuous with many a false start. Think WiredWest being torpedoed by MBI, Frontier showing interest and then backing away, the issuance of multiple and repeated requests for proposals, change of leadership at MBI, formation of a Municipal Lighting Plant by the Town, the "pause" imposed by MBI, consortiums with neighboring towns, the need (or not) for a "Home Rule Petition," thoughts of a town-owned network, a proposal from Matrix Communications, and others. The debate among residents was engaged and occasionally acrimonious, although it was without question everyone's foremost desire to obtain broadband service in a manner consistent with the Town's best interest, even if people could sometimes disagree as to what that was.

A final hurdle, which presented itself fairly late in the game, was the state's requirement that the Board of Selectmen hold a public hearing to allow residents to hear from and speak directly to a Charter representative.

That meeting was held Friday, January 11, before a standing room only group of more than thirty attendees.

Over a dozen residents (and one Egremont resident who rose to challenge Charter's assertion that the collapse of negotiations in that town was largely to be laid at that town's, and not Charter's, feet), asked a series of questions, all in a respectful and non-confrontational manner.

Present for Charter, and ably fielding all inquiries, were Michael Chowaniec, vice president-state government affairs, with Melinda Kinney, responsible for government affairs for New England, and Greg Garabedian, assistant vice president for field operations, on the telephone. (In a small victory for technology, the speaker phone worked well.)

Mr. Chowaniec stressed that Charter is excited about adding New Marlborough to its service area as quickly as possible and, in fact, has submitted all requests for pole licenses even though the contracts with the Town and the State are not yet effective.

Questions ranged from the technical composition of the system, installation costs, the speed of the system, the location of the 4 percent of the Town which may not receive service, but will hopefully be served by neighboring towns, the charges for service to low-income residents, the duration of the cable franchise agreement, how new residential construction will be served, and response time for service calls.

The meeting ended after about an hour and a half, with Chairman Shalaby thanking the residents and Charter for an informative discussion.

Details of the final deal with Charter have been previously reported in this paper (see the December 2018 issue of the NM5VN) but will be repeated here.

continued

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Bear in mind that the “deal” is set forth in three different documents: 1) a Grant Disbursement Agreement between Charter Communications Entertainment I, LLC (a Charter affiliate) and the state, acting through the Massachusetts Technology Cooperative (the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, commonly known as MBI, is a division of the Cooperative); 2) a Contribution and Assessment Agreement between the Town and the state, acting through the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development; and 3) a Cable Television License between Charter Communications Entertainment I, LLC and the Town. The summary below pulls information from these three agreements.

Here are the details.

When will service start? The expectation is that the construction will be completed within two years from the date that all agreements have been signed so look forward to high speed service by January, 2021, possibly earlier. The agreement provides that Charter must have the network built and operational within twelve months from the time that all pole licenses and “make ready” work is completed. That work is expected to take between six and eight months so, in theory, the network could be “lit” within eighteen months.

What is the cost to build the network? The actual cost is not certain. What is certain is that the state is going to provide funding to Charter in the amount of \$3.15 million (paid in four installments pursuant to the Grant Agreement). Any costs of construction above that amount will be borne by Charter.

What is the cost to the Town? The Town has agreed to pay the state \$720,000 to reimburse it for a portion of the \$3.15 million it will pay to Charter to build the network. The state will offset this \$720,000 amount, plus interest at 3½ percent, from state aid payable to the Town during the fifteen-year period after construction is complete (\$62,514 per year). This obligation will commence only when the system is built and operating. There are no other costs to the Town.

How much of the Town will be wired? The Agreement provides that service must be made available to a minimum of 96 percent of the residential premises in town. Some residences on the outskirts of town which do not have any frontage in town (for example, a residence whose driveway starts in a neighboring town although the house itself is in New Marlborough) might not have service, but every effort is going to be made to cover more than 96 percent if possible.

What is the cost to subscribers going to be? The cost is exactly the amount set forth on the Charter website (Charter operates its internet business under the “Spectrum” name). A recent check of the Spectrum website (www.spectrum.com) showed “triple play” packages of internet, phone and television with prices ranging from \$99.97 per month (for television, 100 Mbps internet service and unlimited nationwide telephone service) to \$139.97 for the same package with more extensive television channels. Many variations on this are available for those residents who only want internet with or without telephone service. Basic cable service starts at \$44.95 per month. All figures quoted are before taxes and applicable fees.

Will pricing be competitive? Pricing must be comparable to that which Charter charges in other towns in Massachusetts within a 100-mile radius of New Marlborough.

Is this a ‘fiber’ network? That is the expectation, although the word “fiber” is not utilized in the agreements. Charter noted that it primarily uses an all-fiber network but that there are places where some non-fiber cables may be used. The speed and upgrade potential, however, will be comparable to an all-fiber network.

Speaking of speeds, what will they be? The agreements provide for 100 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload, a considerable upgrade from the DSL service offered locally by Verizon which is typically no faster than 3 Mbps download and less than that for uploads. Residents desiring one gigabyte of service will be able to obtain that as well.

What is the length of Charter’s license with the Town? Fifteen years, renewable thereafter for up to ten years. The contract is not exclusive, meaning that, in theory, the Town could issue a license to another company to provide cable television services.

Will there be an installation charge? Any residence within 250 feet from the nearest access point (typically a pole on the road) will be charged a “standard” connection fee of \$49 for connecting to the system (the installation would be aerial). All other installations, including underground installations, are considered “non-standard” and will be charged an amount at a



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rate set by Charter in accordance with applicable law. It is worth noting that at the January 11, 2019, public hearing, the Charter representatives said their "bias" is not to charge more than the \$49 fee except in unusual circumstances and referred to their recent experience in Princeton, Massachusetts, where no customers have yet been charged more than the basic \$49 fee, even though some have more than 250 feet of connection distance.

What about private roads? So long as Charter can gain access to the private road, private roads are treated in the same manner as public roads (meaning that homes on private roads will have service available assuming the residences are within the 96 percent of the Town to be serviced).

News that the Town and Charter have finally inked the legally binding documents was received with varying degrees of excitement by residents.

Tim Newman, who labored for so many years to educate residents about the need for broadband and to explore the many options to be considered was delighted that contracts have now been signed, "Finally. After ten years of rolling this particular boulder uphill, this is welcome news and cause for an enormous sigh of relief. In my household, any actual celebration, together with

the popping of champagne corks, will have to wait for there to be lit fiber service. Got my fingers crossed it will happen surprisingly soon. Meanwhile, the Broadband Committee are to be thanked profusely for their diligence and hard work making this particular sausage. And to the selectmen in acknowledgement of their singular focus on obtaining this outcome."

Richard Long, who put in countless hours as chair of the Broadband Committee and as an advisor, along with Steve Klein, to the Board of Selectmen, had this to add: "After so much effort by so many for such a long time, it's exciting to savor the prospect of actual construction of a high-speed communications network in our town as soon as next summer. By next Thanksgiving, many in our town, hopefully, will be watching the football game over the new network."

And that's it, dear reader. Signed, sealed, delivered, as the song goes.

And that's also it for our regular, monthly Broadband Updates. We began these Updates back in January 2016 and they have appeared every month since. No worries. The NM5VN will, of course, continue to provide updates as necessary to keep everyone informed of progress.

Until then, stay tuned. □

WINTER HOUSE CONCERT

The New Marlborough Village Association presents the second of the Winter House Concert series on Sunday, February 17. The Hudson River Consort, a string quartet, will offer a special program of two Joseph Haydn quartets played on instruments with which Haydn would have been familiar, and for which he wrote his huge quartet output. The members of the group will demonstrate how their instruments differ from modern ones as they perform two totally delightful and contrasting examples of Haydn's early and late works.

The Winter House Concerts begin at



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

The first Winter House Concert with Sarah and Gilles Vonsattel, scheduled for January 20, had to be postponed due to a strong winter storm. It has been rescheduled for March 17. Due to scheduling conflicts, however, the pianist will be Sayaka Tanikawa. □

Thank You to Our Contributors

Ian Devine; Jayne M. Kurzman; Robert & Jennifer Miller; Patricia & Michael Brady; Thomas & Sharon Halpin; Abigail Crine; Nancy McWilliams; Judianne O'Brien; Andrea Marks & David Warmflash; Leslie Wheeler; Helen Liveten; Dawn S. Massini; Gary Skeggs & Susan Griffin; Eugene & Sally Stamper; Ben & Cornelia Webster; Katherine Bouton & Daniel Menaker; Leni & Jim Herzog; Michael Carmona & Kerry Tatlock; Ron & Jean Paro; and Eugene & Maria Cleary.

NEIGHBORS



Lucy Hankey, of Mill River, passed away on December 26 at the age of ninety-two. Born in Winsted, Connecticut, in 1926, she grew up on her parents' small farm in Mill River, and lived within half a mile of that homestead for her entire life. She was a graduate of New Marlborough Central School, which at that time served grades one through twelve. Lucy delivered milk for her father, and during one of those deliveries met her future husband of sixty-two years, Norman.

Lucy was an elementary school bus driver for thirty-eight years, and for several years was a teacher's aide at New Marlborough Central School. She was a Girl Scout leader while her daughter, Lillian, was active in scouting. Lucy enjoyed music, playing the piano, singing, and dancing. She, Norman, and

their son, John, regularly attended outdoor concerts at Coe Park in Torrington, Connecticut, and at the VFW in Great Barrington. And dancing – Lucy liked to do the polka, which she continued to do until she was eighty-six years old.

Mark Carson, of Hartsville, writes: "I met Lucy Hankey when I was in first grade. She was very kind and the prettiest bus driver. At the end of the school year she let us have a paper fight on the bus if we kept the bus clean all year. And all of us cleaned up the bus afterwards. She always made us feel better."

Lucy was a beloved institution of the school-bus-riding population, as illustrated by this remembrance from **Anita Ormsbee Cook**: "I Love Lucy! As far back as I can remember, as a young girl attending New Marlborough Central School, Lucy Hankey and her good friend, **Eva Klein**, were school bus drivers for the district. Lucy, I believe, always drove bus #13. Little did I know then that Lucy would be a mentor to me as a bus driver."

With the Ormsbee family business of bussing, it was expected that I would get my bus license when I became of age. Good drivers like Lucy were hard to come by. I knew I wanted to be the driver Lucy was. Her presence exemplified control, order, and respect. Her bus was as clean and neat as she. You never had to worry about her driving skills; she was a pro. Although she demanded law and order, the children loved and respected her. I also have fond memories of our afternoon visits while waiting for the children to load our buses. Lucy would usually have a snack – always a candy bar.

While attending her funeral, I listened to her grandchildren talk of the love and respect they had for her, and the difference she made in their lives. I realized then, not only did she make a difference in my life and her grandkids', but to hundreds of other children that she drove for thirty-eight years.

She will forever be in our hearts."

Cheryl Ann Luft, of Southfield, passed away at the age of sixty-four on December 28 in Queens, New York, after a long battle with cancer. Her friend, **Jeanne Bassis**, formerly of Southfield, brought this news to New Marlborough: "Honoring our friend Cheryl Luft, who loved being a part of the New Marlborough community."

Cheryl grew up in Westchester County through high school. She then attended Washington University in Saint Louis, Missouri, earning degrees in art history and animal behavior. She and John Marinelli were married in 1993 and moved to Southfield. After John passed away in 1999, Cheryl continued to live here and participate in community activities.

Cheryl pursued certification in movement therapy, which led her to start her own practice, Moving into Well-being. For several years she provided demonstrations at Elihu Burritt Day. She was also an avid photographer, bird-watcher, dog lover, and first responder volunteer. Her love of nature and photography led to establishing a small greeting card business. She also exhibited photos in the community photography show sponsored by the New Marlborough Cultural Council, and at the New Marlborough Meeting House Gallery.

Cheryl had a strong sense of community, and wanted to contribute to the causes she supported. Her gentle presence will be missed by her many friends in New Marlborough.

Jim McGraw, formerly of Southfield, passed away peacefully on December 21 at Kimball Farms in Lenox at the age of eighty-seven, where he resided for the past eighteen months with his wife of sixty-two years, **Nelda**. They, daughter and son-in-law Nyna and Bob Malley, built their lakefront home, "The Cobble," at Windemere in 2000 and lived there for fifteen years.



Lucy Hankey

photo courtesy of Birches Roy Funeral Home



Cheryl Luft

photo courtesy of Jeanne Bassis

He had a distinguished government and business career, spending six years with the United State Agency for International Development (USAID), stationed first in Cyprus and then in Bangladesh, setting up capital assistance programs throughout the region. Despite personal danger, Jim consulted with leaders of war-torn regions and helped them modernize their communities amidst harrowing conditions. The fruits of the irrigation, electrification, and other infrastructure projects he helped implement stand today as testaments to his service. He then joined ITT Corporation, where he rose to executive vice president and treasurer of the Sheraton Hotel chain. He, along with Nelda and their three daughters, traveled extensively throughout Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, exposing the family to many cultures, religions, and traditions.

Jim was born in Oklahoma and raised there and in Texas at the height of the depression. He was a gifted student and leader, attending Texas Tech where he majored in philosophy. He considered studying for the ministry, but the global upheavals of World War II inspired him to take a more active role on the international stage, and toward that end he enrolled in Columbia University School of International Affairs, studying German and Russian history and language.

Upon graduating he enlisted in the Navy, and was stationed in Washington, D.C., at the Naval Security Station responsible for cryptanalysis. While home for Christmas he met Nelda on a blind date and they were soon married. They left Texas for good and returned to Washington to begin a family and the adventures that would last a lifetime.

Former New Marlborough resident **Brian Killeen** paid tribute to Jim: "My wife **Trisha** and I had the pleasure of meeting Jim and Nelda at Christ Trinity Church in Sheffield seven or eight years ago. I learned a great deal from Jim but little about Jim. He may have been the most unassuming yet accomplished man I have known. Family, religion, politics, fishing, sports, particularly the Patriots, were topics he might elaborate on. His career, much less so, particularly his time working for the government. In a George Smiley book, John le Carre wrote 'direct questions were the height of bad taste, but direct answers were worse.'"

And on a happier note, **Samantha Twing**, of Hartsville, has been named to the President's List at the State University of New York at Potsdam, one of 945 honorees for the fall 2018 semester. To qualify, a student must have a grade point average of 3.5 or higher for at least twelve semester hours of course work. Samantha is a junior this year, majoring in music. Congratulations, Samantha!



□ Samantha Twing

compiled by Barbara Lowman: deeuell@yahoo.com

OUR WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS



photo by Janice Boults

A stoat, or ermine, found its way into Janice Boults's new home.

On New Year's Day, **Janice Boults** sent the following delightful message and photo: "Sure, I expected a mouse or two when I moved into a converted barn that had not been lived in for several years, but an **ermine**? Part of the weasel family, this species is called a **stoat**, and its white winter 'ermine' coat will turn brown in the spring. The white fur of the stoat is used for trimming garments, especially the ceremonial robes of judges. This little guy had gained entrance from the outside wall of the bathroom, and I found the hole under the heater and blocked it, and blocked the outside entrance as well. They eat mice – the main reason I have not seen any since moving here!"

Ed Harvey sent along a picture on January 4 of one of a pair of **coyotes** that his night vision game camera recently captured in Southfield.

Charlie Parton reported that his and Teena's birdfeeders were not being visited nearly as much as in years past. This bears out the observations of others in town as to a drop-off in the numbers of winter birds visiting our backyards.

Don Beauchamp wrote in, "Not much going on with birds, but on January 7, there was a pair of **bluebirds** checking their house, and the next day I saw three **bobcats** run across the lawn, a mother and two cubs who were of good size. I hope they come back."



A coyote, captured on an infrared camera

photo by Ed Harvey

On January 9, **Larry Burke** spotted a large **otter** slipping in and out of his pond, back and forth from the ice into the open water, but by the time he got back from the house with his camera, the otter had moved on.

Graham Frank managed to get in close range to photograph a pair of curious **white-tailed deer**, a doe and her yearling. He also spotted a small flock of migrating **tundra swans** (also known as **whistling swans**) on the Housatonic River near the covered bridge in Sheffield.

photo by Graham Frank



photo by Graham Frank

A doe and her yearling

Tundra swans, also known as whistling swans, on the Housatonic River

Mary Oliver, the American poet who focused much of her attention on nature, died on January 17. With Graham's photo in mind, here is one of Mary Oliver's beautiful observations:

The Swan

Did you too see it, drifting, all night, on the black river?
 Did you see it in the morning, rising into the silvery air –
 An armful of white blossoms,
 A perfect commotion of silk and linen as it leaned
 into the bondage of its wings; a snowbank, a bank of lilies,
 Biting the air with its black beak?
 Did you hear it, fluting and whistling
 A shrill dark music – like the rain pelting the trees – like a waterfall
 Knifing down the black edges?
 And did you see it, finally, just under the clouds –
 A white cross Streaming across the sky, its feet
 Like black leaves, its wings Like the stretching light of the river?
 And did you feel it, in your heart, how it pertained to everything?
 And have you too finally figured out what beauty is for?
 And have you changed your life? □

Compiled by Larry Burke. Send your wildlife stories to him at lburke2@me.com

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RECIPE OF THE MONTH

We have been trying to eat more veggies in our household, so we have started Meatless Mondays. It's a bit of a struggle to find something vegetarian that everyone loves that isn't pasta and is packed full of goodness. I love this recipe provided by Ginevra Bull. It is perfect for a Monday night: light, easy to make and yummy.

Gin and her family moved to New Marlborough in 2015, loving the sense of community of our small town as well as the many opportunities for outdoor and educational activities that are unique to our area. Gin was happy to share this recent discovery that has that magical element of being liked by all members of her family – and now mine. □

Fiona Kerr

Cozy Butternut, Sweet Potato, and Red Lentil Stew

Recipe by Angela Liddon on the website *Oh She Glows*

Prep time: 20 Minutes, Cook time: 30 Minutes

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil	3 tablespoons tomato paste
1 medium onion, diced (about 1 cup)	1-1/2 tsp ground turmeric
3 to 4 large garlic cloves, minced	1-1/2 tsp ground cumin
3 cups butternut squash, peeled, seeded, diced small (1/2" size)	1/2 tsp chili powder
1 large (2-1/2 cups) sweet potato, peeled and diced small (1/2" size)	1/4 tsp cayenne pepper, or more if you like heat
3 cups low-sodium vegetable broth	Fine sea salt, to taste
1 (14-ounce) can diced tomatoes	Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1 (14-ounce) can light coconut milk	3 tsp apple cider vinegar, or to taste
1/2 cup dried red lentils, rinsed	1 bunch chard stemmed and finely chopped or 5oz spinach

Optional accompaniments:

Fresh cilantro or parsley, minced
Cooked rice
Garlic powder and chili powder

Directions:

To a large pot, add the oil, onion, and garlic. Stir to combine. Increase the heat to medium and sauté for 3 to 5 minutes, until the onion is softened.

Add the squash and sweet potato and stir to combine. Add a pinch of salt and continue sautéing for a few minutes longer.

Add the broth, diced tomatoes (with juices), coconut milk, lentils, tomato paste, turmeric, cumin, chili powder, cayenne, salt, and pepper. (If you are spice-shy, feel free to add half the amount to start and increase from there after cooking, to taste.) Stir well to combine.

Increase heat and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium, stir again, and simmer uncovered for about 30 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the squash and potato are fork-tender. Reduce the heat if necessary.

Add the apple cider vinegar to taste. Adjust the other seasonings if desired.

Optional step: Using a handheld immersion blender, blend the stew for only 2 to 3 seconds (any more and you'll blend too much of the veggies). This thickens the broth.

Stir in the chard or spinach, and cook for another couple minutes until the greens are wilted.

Scoop some cooked rice onto the bottom of a bowl and then ladle the stew overtop. Garnish with minced cilantro or parsley and a good dusting of garlic and chili powder, if desired.

Leftovers will keep in the fridge for up to 5 days, and they freeze beautifully too.

nm5vn.org

The 5 Village News is always available at our website NM5VN.org (back copies, too).
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THE LOG

Police Department (selected entries)

- Dec. 1 3:32 p.m. A Canaan Valley Road resident reports that a stray beagle has wandered onto her property, then calls back a quarter hour later to say that she has located the owner.
- Dec. 7 12:40 p.m. The Department circulates a BOLO (be on the lookout) request to surrounding police departments for a vehicle taken from a Clayton residence without permission of the owner, by a family member, violating a court order.
- 5:32 p.m. A Southfield resident alerts the Department to threatening phone calls he has received from a family member.
- Dec. 8 11:44 a.m. A Clayton resident reports that an intruder entered her house, then drove off toward Connecticut in a gray sedan.
- Dec. 9 9:24 a.m. A Clayton resident reports that his vehicle has once again been taken without his permission; at 11:33 a.m. the Department puts out a county-wide BOLO request; at 4:00 p.m., the vehicle is returned to its owner; the operator is charged with larceny of a motor vehicle, operation after suspension, and larceny of power equipment.
- Dec. 12 6:45 a.m. A driver hits a deer on Mill River Great Barrington Road near Downs Road.
- 4:36 p.m. A driver hits a deer on Downs Road.
- Dec. 14 3:14 p.m. A Norfolk Road resident reports a bike, last seen about a month ago, missing from her basement, but calls again at 6:52 p.m. to report she has located the bike.
- Dec. 20 12:08 p.m. A Clayton resident complains that a neighbor has been cutting through her fence so as to allow passage for his vehicle; a visit reveals that the fence has been repaired; involved party notified of complaint and possible trespassing charges.
- Dec. 21 8:50 a.m. National Grid is notified when a caller reports a tree down and blocking traffic on Brewer Hill Road.
- 1:00 p.m. Officer assists the driver of an overheated delivery truck stalled at the intersection of Hartsville Mill River and Mill River Great Barrington Roads.
- Dec. 22 7:40 p.m. Verizon is notified of a tree on wires on Route 57 near the Sandisfield town line.
- Dec. 24 7:30 a.m. An SUV hits a stop sign and rolls into a ditch at the intersection of Corashire and Hartsville New Marlborough Roads.
- Dec. 26 10:19 a.m. A driver, whose vehicle has turned over on New Marlborough Hill Road, is issued a citation when it is discovered he was operating without a license.
- 10:30 p.m. In a third such incident, the Department issues a BOLO after a Clayton resident calls in the unauthorized use of his vehicle by a family member.
- Dec. 27 12:29 p.m. A Norfolk Road resident asks an officer to investigate after receiving a report from an exterminator at his property that there was a large animal wreaking havoc inside his house.
- Dec. 30 4:36 p.m. Officer investigates multiple gunshots heard near Thousand Acre Swamp.
- 4:50 p.m. Hikers at York Lake advised that the park closes at dusk.
- 9:19 p.m. Residents on Mill River Great Barrington Road report that their Tibetan terrier has gone missing, but at 1:34 p.m. the following day, they report that the dog has come home.
- 11:48 p.m. Alerted to a "suspicious" white box truck parked at the south end of the mile-long cornfield in Clayton, the department determines that the vehicle belongs to the farm leasing the field.
- Dec. 31 4:31 p.m. Investigating a call from a Norfolk Road resident, an officer determines that a truck parked on an adjoining property belongs to a hunter who has the neighbor's permission.

Graham Frank, Chief of Police

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Fire and Rescue

Dec. 1	9:42 a.m.	Old Hitchcock Road CO Alarm	Dec. 29	5:24 p.m.	New Marlborough Monterey Road CO Alarm
Dec. 7	3:30 p.m.	Bock Way CO Alarm	Dec. 30	9:54 a.m.	Clayton Mill River Road CO Alarm
Dec. 3	9:31 p.m.	Aberdeen Lane Medical Call	Dec. 30	11:24 a.m.	Berkshire Woods Road Fire Alarm
Dec. 3	12:50 p.m.	New Marlborough Hartsville Road Fire Alarm	<i>David Smith, Fire Company President</i>		
Dec. 28	7:56 a.m.	Stratford Road Medical Call			

2019 Burning Season & Online Burning Permits:

For the 2019 burning season, New Marlborough Fire and Rescue is again using an online application for burn permits. Burning is permitted from January 15 through May 1, and permits will be available from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. daily, as conditions allow for open burning.

Permits may be obtained at www.bcburnpermits.com/ or via a link on the Fire Department page of the Town website: <http://newmarlboroughma.gov/pages/index>.

Reminders:

- Burn only brush; no leaves, grass, hay, stumps, building debris, or other material.
- Burning is allowed between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. All fires must be extinguished by 4:00 p.m.
- Avoid burning on days with high winds.
- Keep fires at least seventy-five feet from structures.
- When possible, have a garden hose or other water supply available, as well as a rake and/or shovel.
- Do not leave fires unattended.
- Burn the fire down to coals and drown with water to extinguish.
- Call 911 to report any emergencies.

David Smith, Fire Company President



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HARVESTING INFORMATION ABOUT DEER

By Ellen Sweet

When Jess Holcomb took over proprietorship of the Mill River General Store two years ago, she also became the state agent of an official check station for hunters. The store is only one of two such stations in our western area, designated Zone 3 by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. The role of weighing and recording dead deer didn't bother Jess. "My father raised me as a hunter. Deer fed our family my entire life," she says. "It's delicious and very healthy." What she did not know was just how much scientific information is gathered from the deer by state biologists and how useful that data is to ensure the health and well-being of New Marlborough residents, both humans and wildlife.

Deer hunting season began on November 26 and ended on December 31, leaving Jess and Nate Buckhold, who is the western regional biologist for the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, a bit more time to sit down with me and talk about their work. Both raved about the communal spirit they observe among the hunters who come in, not only to weigh their deer but also to swap stories and compare notes. The busiest time is the first week of shotgun season, when Nate is there every day from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. because, as he explains, "that week, it's mandatory for every deer shot to be brought into a checking station." After that, hunters can choose to either register online or bring the deer in to be weighed. You may have noticed the sign hanging in the store where every deer's weight and the hunter's name are displayed so that some hunters can — and do — claim bragging rights.

Jess says she has learned a lot from watching the deliberate and exacting methods Nate uses to collect his data. First, he makes sure the hunter has the requisite license and that the deer has been correctly tagged. Then, with a caliper, he measures precisely the diameter of the antlers (if it's a buck) one inch above where they connect to the head, and counts the number of antler points. "If



Photo by Ellen Sweet

At the Mill River Store, Jess Holcomb (left) and Nate Buckhold weigh a deer and prepare to take measurements.

a buck is healthy and has had good nutrition, it can put more effort into growing its antlers," he explains. Next, he cuts into the cheek of the deer in order to count the molars and see how worn they are from use. This allows him to estimate the age of the deer. He observed that the deer this year all looked healthy, with no sign of disease, including Chronic Wasting Disease, which has plagued deer in other parts of the country. This is despite the fact that the large amount of rainfall somewhat reduced the usual feeding opportunities for deer; they had to find other sources because of wet corn and hay fields, and fewer acorns and apples.

Nate has been checking deer in our town for three years. An avid outdoorsman, he grew up in Easthampton, Massachusetts, but has spent time in the Great Smoky Mountains, Alaska, and Yellowstone Park. He inspects about 100 deer in New Marlborough the first week of shotgun season. Although the numbers for 2018 are not fully compiled yet, David Stainbrook, the chief deer and moose biologist for the state, estimates they will be



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similar to the numbers recorded in New Marlborough for 2017, which were 108 for the first week and 160 for the whole season. The total "harvest" of deer, as it is somewhat euphemistically called, for the state in 2017 was 13,305. For Zone 3, which extends south of Route 20 and west of Route 8, the harvest was 575.

As Stainbrook explains, collecting the data allows MassWildlife to "determine the ideal number of deer for a zone based on multiple factors, including deer population trends, hunter surveys, sighting rates, and impacts on the habitat from browsing." His staff uses the data to decide on how many antlerless deer permits to issue. These special permits include does and any deer without antlers or antlers less than three inches long. In our region, Stainbrook says, the number of antlerless deer permits was gradually increased from 1996 to 2003 (up to 4,000) because data showed that the deer numbers were getting too high. Once they stabilized, the number of permits has gradually decreased. This past year, 1,400 permits were allocated in Zone 3. For more information, check out <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/division-of-fisheries-and-wildlife>.

Stainbrook points out that New Marlborough has a by-law requiring written permission to hunt on private land, which means that deer numbers in our township are higher than in surrounding areas. Based on surveys his agency has conducted on public lands open to hunting near New Marlborough, he estimates deer density here at the fifteen to twenty deer per square mile range.

This year, a new team of researchers showed up at the Mill River store the first Monday and the first Saturday of shotgun season. Led by Nolan Fernandez, these zoologists from University of Massachusetts/Amherst (UMass) are collecting data on deer ticks as part of a project to evaluate the tick population in the state. "We try to collect as many engorged, partially fed, or unfed ticks as possible," said Fernandez. "We groom around the head, behind the ears, and the neck. It's almost like looking for lice. One deer had as many as 100 ticks."

Stephen Rich, Fernandez's supervisor and director of the Medical Zoology Laboratory at UMass/Amherst,

explains the project this way: "Deer are tick magnets. We see two opportunities by plucking ticks off them. First, we need ticks to test different repellents and to do experiments cycling Lyme disease through animals in the lab. Second, deer are great sentinels to see what's out there." Mr. Rich says he's been collecting ticks for years but this year they're collecting more systematically throughout the state, in order to have a baseline for comparison in future years. They're looking for where the ticks are, how abundant they are, and what diseases are associated with them. "We chose New Marlborough because it is one of the locations with the highest pass-through rate of deer," says Mr. Rich.

It may be common knowledge but is worth repeating that deer are carriers of ticks and are the locus where they reproduce. But the bacteria that cause the disease that is inside the ticks are not in the deer: they are in mice. Tick-borne diseases are transmitted from a mouse to you through a tick bite.

The UMass team is checking for more than Lyme disease, but that is the most common in our area. Wherever you find ticks, Mr. Rich says, about 50 percent of the adults ticks tested will be infected with Lyme disease.

Anaplasmosis and babesiosis, two other tick-transmitted diseases, are more prevalent in places like Cape Cod. More data about ticks in our area can be found at the UMass/Amherst website www.tickreport.com/stats by typing in your zip code. The main website includes lots of information about tick disease prevention, and even a chat room where experts can answer your questions. There are also instructions about how you can send in a tick to have it tested. The department processes 15,000 requests for testing a year, and it tests for nineteen different diseases.

Mr. Rich says that the great partnership between UMass and MassWildlife allows both entities to leverage limited resources. And that directly benefits New Marlborough residents and our natural environment. □

SUSAN M. SMITH
Attorney At Law

38 Mahaiwe Street, Suite 1 Telephone: (413) 528-4300
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A MOUNT EVERETT HOMECOMING

A Recent Grad Returns to Teach

By Jane Burke

When Victoria Aldam graduated from Mount Everett in 2013, she never imagined herself returning to the school to teach eleventh grade English and coach the cheerleaders. During her time at Connecticut College she earned a B.A. in psychology and completed the elementary education teacher preparation program. After graduation in 2017 she had a license to teach grades one through six in the state of Connecticut, and began what she thought would be her life's work, teaching elementary school there.

Still connected to Southern Berkshire Regional Schools through her mother Wendy Casey, the twelfth grade English teacher at Mount Everett, Victoria found out in the fall of 2018 that there was an opening for a long-term substitute for sixth grade at Undermountain Elementary School. She was accepted for the position and was excited to be coming back to the Berkshires.

After the grade six assignment was completed, another opportunity presented itself. The eleventh grade English teacher at Mount Everett resigned in October to take a job nearer to her home. Victoria was intrigued with the opportunity to teach older students and return to her alma mater. She loved being back in the region, so she took and passed the Massachusetts Test for Education Licensure to get provisional licenses that enable her to teach both grades one through six and English in grades five through twelve. She said, "It has been the most wonderful experience returning home to teach. The majority of my teachers are still teaching at Mount Everett, and I have the honor to continue learning from them in new and inspiring ways."

Her enthusiasm for teaching was evident as she described the experience of working with her students.



Top: Victoria Aldam and her mother, Mount Everett English teacher Wendy Casey.

Middle: Younger students rushed into the Undermountain cafeteria and gathered around Victoria Aldam, eager to start. She showed interest in every girl as she welcomed them during the circle time, asking each one about their favorite color and their favorite sport.

Above: The high school cheerleaders divided their elementary school students into two groups to learn a cheer to perform during halftime at the next basketball game. Older elementary students are rehearsing while the younger group watches them. All were very excited about their progress.

photos by Jane Burke

She said, "There is wide range of learning styles. I like to use the theater skills I developed while a student at Mount Everett to bring literature to life and help students express themselves verbally. I am aware of the huge impact that my teachers had on me, so I think carefully about everything that I say to my students. Certainly my understanding of psychology has been a big help in my efforts to meet the needs of each individual student."

Even after school, Victoria continues to bring her energy and commitment to support students. She volunteered to coach the cheerleading squad because there was no other leader, and she cared about the seniors who had worked so hard in the past. She said, "I couldn't let them down. I remembered when I was a senior how much I enjoyed being on the squad." During the week of January 7, she led a daily cheerleading camp for elementary school children. Watching her gather the younger students for check-in circle, it was clear how deeply she cares about the success of each child. She has given the high school girls the responsibility of teaching the younger girls.

Now she is living with her mom and working alongside her in the English department. She said, "I really want to stay here and continue in this job. I think Glen Devoti is a great boss and the faculty has been amazingly supportive. Since it is difficult for young people to find affordable housing in the region, it is great that my mother and I get along so well. I can save money for a place of my own or maybe with others like me. I look forward to tak-

ing graduate courses and developing my new teaching career as a high school English teacher right here at Mount Everett." □

SCHOOL COMMITTEE NEWS

January was a busy month for the Southern Berkshire Regional School Committee. There were several executive sessions required to resolve issues that arose because the town of Egremont was not happy with the District. Although the District had agreed to open the South Egremont School for this school year after extensive renovations to the building, an inspection prior to the opening revealed that lead had been exposed during the construction. The School Committee ruled that students would not be allowed back into the building until the lead was remediated and there was no threat to the health of the children. (The children and their teacher have been at Undermountain Elementary school pending a resolution of the problem.) The town of Egremont disagreed with this ruling and withheld their quarterly payment to the district in protest. The School Committee reminded Egremont that it must make the payments the voters agreed upon at town meeting, and that the opening of the school was a separate issue. The School Committee received letters of support from the towns of Monterey, Sheffield, and New Marlborough expressing the belief that the safety of the children was paramount and that the school should stay closed until the lead threat was fully addressed. All issues have since been resolved. The payment from Egremont has been received. The remediation inside the school building has been completed. There is agreement that once the exterior painting has been completed and the building is certified safe for occupancy, the children will be allowed to attend school there.

In addition to the regular public meetings of the full committee, each member sits on an average of four subcommittees. January was the month when all subcommittees met to reorganize. Subcommittees include policy, curriculum, finance, buildings and grounds, technology, warrant, collective bargaining, regional agreement, community input, SBRSD future of education in South County, and executive evaluation. Each of the subcommittees brings recommendations on actions in its area

back to the full committee for consideration.

The first task for the curriculum subcommittee is to work with the curriculum coordinator Peter Dufresne as he orchestrates the fall 2019 implementation of the new middle school program for grades six through eight that was developed by the Middle School Task Force. The School Committee has to approve the plan because it represents a major shift in approach, including project-based learning, community service, and thematic team teaching. On February 12 at 6:00 p.m., the community is invited to the Mount Everett Library to hear details about the middle school changes from teachers and administrators. Questions from the public will be answered.

The policy subcommittee is assisting Superintendent Regulbuto in her close attention to ensuring the safety of students. She has implemented practices already outlined in the district policy manual. As she consults with the fire and police departments in Sheffield, the bus company, and state officials on ways to improve safety, the subcommittee will draft policies for full committee approval. Several older policies are being reviewed and updates considered. □

Jane Burke

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Children's Fiction

Saving Winslow, by Sharon Creech

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Hello Snowplow, by Debra Bruss

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FEBRUARY

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A Chocolate Celebration on February 9

Get your sweet tooth primed and ready. Maybe buy your children some new toothbrushes. On Saturday, February 9, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., the New Marlborough Friends of the Library will once again be sponsoring a chocolate extravaganza for the young and the somewhat older.

As usual there will be a chocolate fountain, free hot chocolate, and work tables where kids can make their own valentines. Available for dipping at the fountain will be Rice Krispy treats, pretzels, strawberries, marshmallows, and perhaps some banana slices.


At press time, librarian extraordinaire Deb O'Brien wasn't sure exactly what treats will be available — volunteers cook them up — but said the usual assortment includes chocolate lollipops, truffles, peanut butter cups, chocolate covered fruit, and bars of milk and dark chocolate. □

Anne Sommers



photo by Anne Sommers

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

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

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

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

Board of Assessors: Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

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

Building Inspector: Monday 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.; Thursday 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.

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

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

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

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

Tax Collector: Monday through Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

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

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

Town Hall: 229-8116

Police: Business office: 229-8161

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Transfer Station Hours:

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

NM5VN Editorial Team

Barbara Lowman, issue editor; Diane Barth, designer;

Martha Bryan, Jane Burke, Larry Burke,

David Lowman, Joe Poindexter, Peter Schuyten,

Barry Shapiro, Anne M. Sommers, Sandra Fusco-Walker

Contributing writers and artists: Ann Getsinger, Angus Kerr,

Jodi Rothe, Mary Richie Smith, Catherine Twing,

Tara White, and Michele Shalaby. Index: Donna Weaver

New Marlborough 5 Village News

appears monthly,

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The next issue will be dated March 2019.

All copy must be submitted no later than February 17.

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

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