



# New Marlborough 5 Village News

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Clayton • Hartsville • Mill River • New Marlborough • Southfield



## WA WA SEGOWEA

### *The Camp Built on Cough Drops*

By Barry R. Shapiro

Camp Wa Wa Segowea, a nearly century-old institution and one of New Marlborough's hidden gems, is about to take a step into the future. The camp will renovate its historic main lodge, infirmary, and waterfront area to make them compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Having raised almost three-quarters of its \$500,000 capital campaign, the camp plans to break ground this fall and complete construction next year.

The renovation is just the latest step in a remarkable history of fortitude that began early one day in 1928, when William Wallace Smith II, a thirty-year-old scion of the Smith Brothers Cough Drops family, climbed aboard a small propeller aircraft and flew over the Berkshires. His mission was simple: find a suitable site to relocate a YMCA camp, then



*The Wa Wa Segowea lodge, built on the banks of Harmon Pond, is slated for renovation.*

operating in Ancram, New York. What better way to do this than from the air, even in the nascent era of air travel?

Before long, William spotted the perfect location for the camp: Foley Farm located on Foley Hill Road in Southfield. The farm, owned by (you guessed it) the Foley family, sat on approximately 500 acres and surrounded Harmon Pond on all sides. It was ideal.

Quickly striking a deal with the Foleys, Smith purchased the farm in the name of a non-profit, Smith Park of Massachusetts, Inc. He then turned operation of the camp, and all financial responsibility — but not ownership — over to the Ancram camp operator, Dutchess County YMCA, which closed the Ancram camp and relocated it to Southfield.

Fast forward ninety-four years and the much beloved camp, Wa Wa Segowea, is still in operation. It welcomes approximately sixty to seventy campers, ages eight to fifteen, for two-week sessions every summer. Tuition for a session ranges from \$1,850 to \$1,950 depending on the camper's age, but 40 percent of campers get financial assistance though support from donors and annual fundraising events.

"We are distinguished by our small size, what we call a 'small camp, big family,' where everyone knows everyone," says Mike Bruns, who has been involved with the camp since 1981, was its head chef for a time, and now serves on the board of Smith Park of New York, Inc., the non-profit that operates the camp (ownership of the land remains with Smith Park of Massachusetts). No longer affiliated with any Y, "the camp," says Mr. Bruns is "now an independent, non-sectarian camp, proud to be

*continued*

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*Wa Wa Segowea, continued*

recently accredited by the American Camp Association.” It has a loyal clientele, frequently serving the children and grandchildren of former campers.

The Wa Wa part of the name of the camp is derived from the original purchaser, William Wallace Smith II (that’s the first “W”), his brother, Arthur, also involved with the camp (that’s the first “A”), their father William Wallace Smith (that’s the second “W”) and an extra “A” thrown in for good measure. Segowea, pronounced “Segoya,” is a Native American word meaning “He who comes by the water to give.”

Wa Wa Segowea describes itself as a traditional, authentically rustic camp and encourages kids to try new things outside of their comfort zone. According to Mr. Bruns, many first-time Segowea campers have never swum in a lake, sung taps, or eaten wild blueberries. Segowea strives to create a safe space for its campers to experience growth while learning about themselves and others, without the distractions of the “always on” technical world (needless to say, there’s no Wi-Fi). All the traditional camp activities from sports to waterfront, to arts and crafts are offered. The centerpiece of the camp: the twenty-three acre Harmon Pond, spring fed and home to the unofficial Camp mascot, a snapping turtle named Wally.

Campers sleep in one of eleven chestnut-wood cabins, seven or eight campers and two staff members to each cabin. The cabins are simple structures with bunk beds, electricity, and large, screened windows. Adapting to contemporary sensitivities, the camp offers cabins to “Girls,” “Boys” or “All-gender.” Transgender and gender non-conforming can choose among all three, depending on their preference. Bathrooms are similarly identified.

The fact that the camp has survived for almost 100 years is remarkable, given its on-again-off-again relationship with the YMCA. According to Mike Bruns, the connection dates to 1910, when the Dutchess County YMCA first operated a camp in Long Pond,

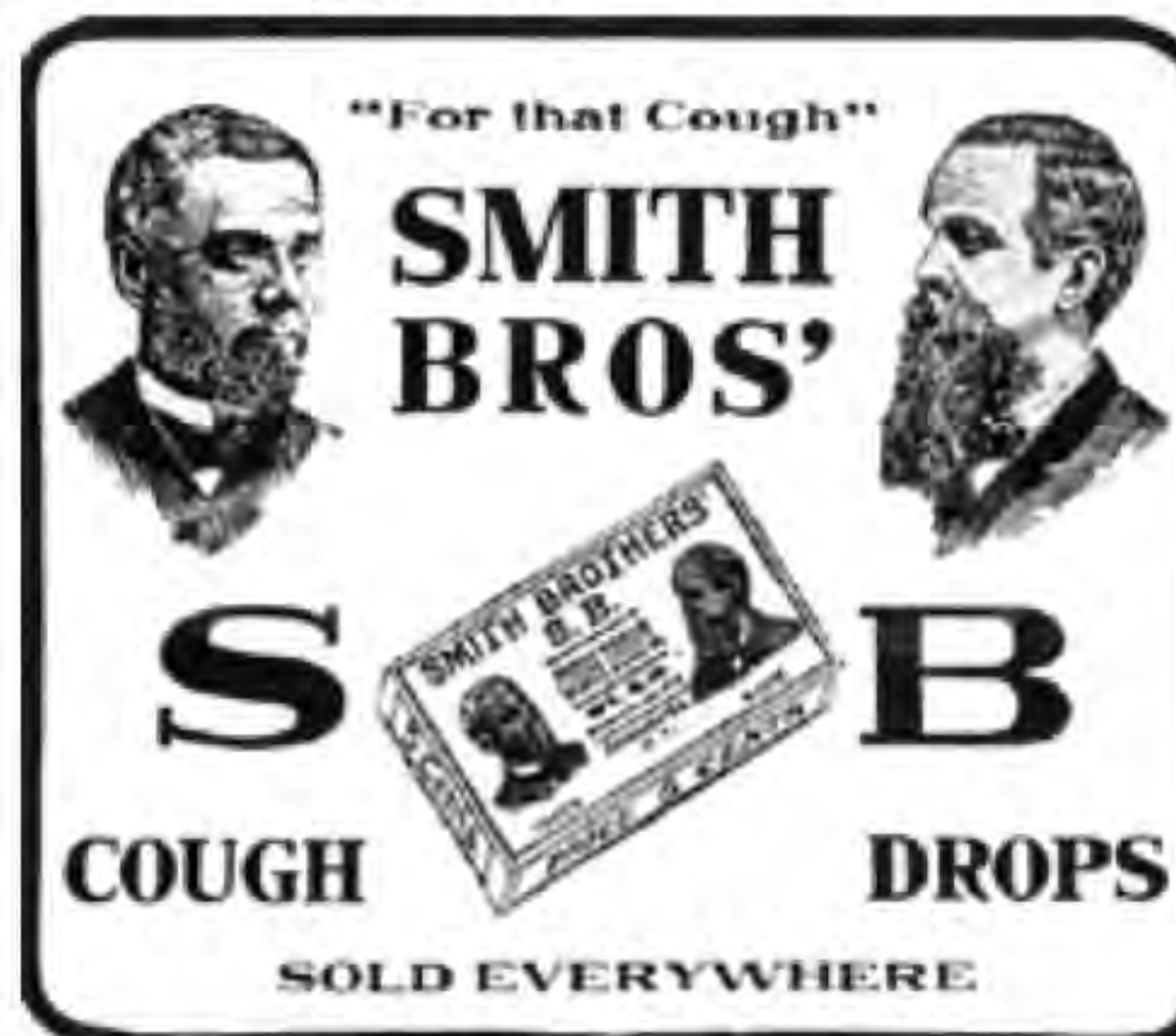


*The lodge in the 1930s*

New York, which it then moved to Ancram. A problem with the drinking water at that location was the catalyst for its move to New Marlborough. “We were operated by the Dutchess County YMCA until 2006,” says Mr. Bruns, “when they decided they could, for financial reasons, no longer support the camp, and the camp closed from 2006 through 2009 when the Capitol District YMCA agreed to reopen it. Then, in 2012, the Capitol District Y backed out, also for financial reasons, and the Torrington Y took it over until 2016 when it also opted not to continue.”

That marked the end of the YMCA’s connection to Segowea but the beginning of active participation by Smith Park of New York, Inc., a non-profit formed in 1996 to help support the camp financially, which, with the departure of the Y, decided to raise needed funding and run the camp. “This was a remarkable transition,” says Mr. Bruns. “We had little experience in actually running a camp, but we raised the funds and went out and hired a great camp director in Lily Mercogliano Easton, who is still with us. She has great ties to the camp. In fact, she was a camper, later met her husband here, and got married here!”

According to Ms. Easton, who continues as camp director, attendance has shown steady growth: 157 campers last summer, which



*The origin of the iconic Smith Bros. cough drop is uncertain. By one account, James Smith, an immigrant from Scotland then living in the Hudson Valley, bought a formula for cough syrup from an itinerant peddler, Sly Hawkins, around 1847 and incorporated it into the first batch of cough drops. Another credits his sons, William and Andrew, with creating the drops. Or they may have originated from another Smith, who, according to this theory, stumbled on the secret recipe when the cotton candy he was selling was dubbed “cough candy” for its fortuitous medicinal properties. After James’s death in 1866, William and Andrew took over the business and introduced the name “Smith Bros” and the ubiquitous logo of two bearded brothers to the brand.*



*Campers attend the morning flag-raising.*

Ms. Easton hopes to increase to 175 this year. “We’re expanding to six weeks this summer and will also have our one- or two-week family camps when families can rent cabins for all or part of a week,” she says. “We’re drawing locally, all over Massachusetts as well as Dutchess County, the New York metro area and across the country, mainly from alumni families.” Camper tuitions and contributions provide a balanced annual budget of just over \$200,000.

Like many camps nationwide, Covid disrupted operations. “We had to close in 2020,” says Mr. Bruns, “but we reopened in 2021. The planned renovation of the lodge will include shoring up the foundation, adding an ADA compliant restroom, and making the entire main lodge, waterfront, and health infirmary ADA accessible, but it will not alter its essential character.” It was built around 1928 from American chestnut trees grown on the property, dragged across Harmon Pond, ice-covered in the winter, and milled on site. “The lodge is the camp’s most historic structure,” says Mike Bruns. “It is a spectacular space.”



*A 1940s ballgame*

An interesting provision in the original sales agreement allows members of the Foley family to visit the property in perpetuity. In a tradition that has continued for more than ninety years, as many as forty members of the Foley family have returned annually around Memorial Day. According to Mr. Bruns, “They usually go to Mill River, visit their relatives in the local cemetery and then spend the day at the camp. Like all things relating to Wa Wa Segowea, it’s a wonderful tradition.”

Clayton resident Ed Harvey would agree. He has been involved with the camp since 1978, when his mother was camp nurse, his father was a caretaker, and Ed, himself, a camper. “My brother, Tom, and I had many jobs there and we remain heavily involved as volunteers — I even got married there in 2019,”

says Ed. “It’s a beautiful property, as natural as it can be. My dad, Paul, used to say it’s a place where kids can be kids and do what they like, from reading to hiking to fishing. It’s a very special place.” □

## Town Business Is Your Business

### BOARD OF SELECTMEN



**January 6:** Starting at 5:00 p.m. to accommodate a 6:00 p.m. joint meeting with the Finance Committee, the Board terminated the Declaration of Emergency it had called to facilitate the request for state funds to repair storm-damaged roads last summer. In an update on the hiring of a human resource consultant, an administrator who is to be shared with the towns of Great Barrington, Egremont, Monterey, West Stockbridge, and Sheffield, Tara White said that negotiations on salary were ongoing. According to Ms. White, the candidate rejected the salary offer of the consortium, and made a counter-offer, which was in turn rejected by the consortium. Negotiations continue.

Ratification of a multi-town (Alford, Great Barrington, Monterey, and New Marlborough) memo of understanding to provide elderly transportation was postponed until the Board had the document in hand. The selectmen approved the appointment of Peter Marks to the Board of Health and Wendy Miller to the Finance Committee. Both will serve until the Annual Town Election, May 9 — or longer if they are re-elected to these committee memberships.

Next up: the thorny matter of employment policy. Chairman Richard Long said he “would love to see a human resources manual [now in draft form] completed this fiscal year.” One of the key decisions was whether to continue to base salary increases on the annual Social Security percentage or on cost of living adjustments (COLA). Mr. Long urged that, while the Board has ultimate responsibility for employment policy, management of work assignments and task changes be vested with the town administrator.

Discussion then detoured to a current management

decision: **Administrative Secretary Sharon Fleck has requested that her weekly work-load be reduced from thirty to twenty hours, and the Board needed to determine how to replace the lost productivity.** Ms. White suggested that a young mother with time on her hands while her children were in school might be the answer. Town Administrator Mari Enoch cautioned that, ideally, the minutes of Board meetings should be prepared, not in a vacuum, but in the context of follow-up activities at Town Hall. “Let’s not underestimate what Sharon does,” she said. “With years of experience in the job, she has the pulse of what’s going on.” Ms. Enoch agreed to Mr. Long’s request that she look into the requirements of the administrative secretary position and report back to the Board.

But there was a more immediate need. “Who is taking minutes tonight?” asked Ms. Enoch of a task previously handled by Ms. Fleck. A silence ensued, broken by Ms. Fleck, who said, “At the beginning of December, I asked that a reduction in my hours become effective January 1. Except for [Selectman] Mark [Carson], no one got back to me. This is an unacceptable treatment of employees,” she added, as she stood firm on her decision not to serve as the secretary of the present meeting. After another pause, Ms. White volunteered to produce minutes, and the meeting moved on.

Mark Carson, in an apparent clarification, said that Marsha Pshenishny was “retiring from” rather than “leaving” her position as clerk of the Board of Assessors. (In an email to the *5 Village News*, Mrs. Pshenishny said she would not be a candidate to continue as a member of the Board of Assessors after the Town Election, May 9.) Following a discussion of whether or not the job should be redefined — or turned over to an

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outside contractor — Ms. White agreed to meet with the Board of Assessors for its input.

After Ms. Enoch received the go-ahead to pursue a grant to help finance a new firetruck defibrillator, the selectmen muted their microphones, took a five-minute breather, and awaited the 6:00 p.m. arrival of the Finance Committee.

Members of the Finance Committee, including Chairman Steve Klein, Barbara Marchione, Robert Miller, John Pshenishny, and Wendy Miller, whose appointment less than an hour ago to fill the spot vacated by Michele McCauley made her by far the freshest face on the Committee, zoomed in at 6:00 p.m. for a...

**Joint Board of Selectmen/Finance**

**Committee Meeting:** Mr. Long, calling the meeting to order, said that “the primary focus should be to get the issues [involved in creating an FY23 Town budget] on the table,” with the understanding that follow-up sessions would be needed to button up the details. He then turned the proceedings over to the Finance Committee Chairman Steve Klein.

In answer to Mr. Klein’s request for a tax capacity analysis, Town Administrator Mari Enoch displayed a recap of revenues and expenditures for the four years from fiscal 2019 to 2022. (FY23 begins July 1, 2022.) Tax revenue over this period rose from \$5.19 million in FY19 to \$5.76 million in FY22. The recap indicates that FY23 tax revenues will total \$5.98 million — an increase of \$220,000, despite a tax rate decrease from \$9.94 to \$9.30 per \$1,000 of property value. Ms. Enoch was quick to point out that many residents will see higher tax bills because a recent revaluation had generally raised the values of town properties.

With the addition of state aid, free cash, and unexpended funds from the previous year, the Town had \$6.8 million available in FY22, compared to expenditures of \$6.5 million. Some of this excess,

however, is already spoken for by cost increases on the horizon:

- Broadband — state aid will be reduced by \$62,515;
- Highway Department employee wages — a newly signed union contract calls for a 7 percent increase;
- Requested addition of a full-time police officer;
- Cost of living salary increases;
- Possible increases in the Southern Berkshire Regional School District assessment, retirement assessment, health insurance rates, and remaining repair to last summer’s storm-damaged roads.

*Many residents will see higher tax bills because a recent revaluation had generally raised the values of town properties.*

Looking further into future capital costs, Mr. Klein cited the multi-year plan drawn up by the Capital Planning

Committee and urged that the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee get involved in helping shape future drafts of that plan. Ms. Marchione then zeroed in on what is potentially the Town’s most costly renovation: Town Hall. “We are due for a new Town Hall,” she said, citing how attention to the building lagged far behind that paid to other properties, such as the fire house and the library. She requested that the Town Hall get its own renovation committee, but Mr. Klein cautioned against too much splitting up of capital costs.. “Debt is debt,” he said. “In the end, it’s up to the taxpayer to decide whether to do one thing or another.”

Richard Long asked if a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement had been reached with the owner of the solar field opposite the Highway garage. Ms. Enoch said that at present the Town and the solar operator were too far apart on the amount of the PILOT and negotiations continue.

As the joint meeting trudged into its second hour, Mr. Klein stressed the importance of timely budget requests from Town department heads. Ms. Enoch displayed a proposed budget calendar, running from the present meeting through to the Annual Town Meeting May 2

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and Town Election, May 9. Following discussion, the assembled agreed to move the deadline for departmental budget requests to February 4. Then, Finance Committee members yielded to Mr. Klein's requests that they meet individually with department heads to help facilitate their budgeting: Barbara Marchione with Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring, Robert Miller with Emergency Services, Wendy Miller with Transfer Station Superintendent Freddy Friedman, Steve Klein with Police Chief Graham Frank.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

**January 14:** Assembling via Zoom at 9:00 a.m., the Board endorsed the hiring of Craig Colontoni as a Highway Department equipment operator, effective no later than January 31. A starting salary of \$22.50 an hour would be increased to \$23 an hour upon his obtaining a Massachusetts Hoisting License.

The next issue on the agenda was an attempt, once again, to define which duties Administrative Secretary Sharon Fleck would relinquish as she reduces her work-week from thirty to twenty hours. Ms. Fleck, present via Zoom, said she had been hired to take Board meeting minutes but that her responsibilities had subsequently greatly expanded. Pressed by Chairman Long on whether she would be willing to continue with minute taking, Ms. Fleck declined, saying, without elaboration, that "the biggest problem . . . is the way they are handled." When a discussion of whether to hire a part-timer or distribute the abandoned work-load among present staff reached no firm conclusion, Mr. Long said, "This is a micro-management issue that is not going to be solved now" and asked that the matter be kicked forward to a future meeting.

Chairman Long asked if employees with Covid-related absence from work — but who had already exhausted their sick-leave — would be compensated by the state.

Ms. Enoch gave a qualified "yes" but said that there is a cap on how much the Town can pay for sick leave. The selectmen said that they would happily accept whatever compensation the state offered.

Ms. Enoch updated the Board with two pieces of good news: the Town has been awarded a \$10,500 grant for the purchase of fire-fighter safety equipment, and the state has agreed to cover the cost of repaving Route 57 from the Monterey town border to its intersection with New Marlborough Hill Road.

The selectmen then agreed to call for a meeting with the Board of Assessors either January 21 or 28 to discuss a replacement for Marsha Pshenishny, who is resigning as tax assessor. Finally, Ms. White revealed that negotiations with a potential human resources consultant had fallen through over salary demands. Ms. Enoch said she was concerned by the delay. "We are piling more and

more responsibilities on available staff," she said. "We are already stressed."

Following the acceptance of past meeting minutes, this one was adjourned. □

Joe Poindexter

***"Debt is debt. In the end, it's up to the taxpayer to decide whether to do one thing or another."***

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# VIEW FROM THE BOARD

## Budget Season Challenges

As we enter the budgeting season with the 2022 Annual Town Meeting in mind, we face new cost challenges beyond the usual budget line items for general operations and the school district. The Finance Committee, Capital Planning Committee, and the Board of Selectmen will be grappling, among other potential needs, with general wage inflation, police and emergency services staffing, and the use of long-term debt for long-term infrastructure investment.

It is no secret that inflation is here again, not only in the cost of goods, but given labor shortages, the precipitous rise in wages in both the private and public sectors. Last year we instituted a new human resources system and pay-grade structure. Wage adjustments were also made to bring our employees closer to other towns in our region. With inflation-driven increases elsewhere, could we fall behind again, endangering our ability to keep or attract new employees? How should we respond?

Our town provides sixteen-hour police coverage seven days a week throughout the year, with two full-time officers, including the chief, and a part-time roster of as many as six officers to cover weekend shifts and the benefit time afforded to our full-time officers. A police-reform bill passed by the Massachusetts legislature makes use of the part-time model more difficult and costly. Increasingly, part-time officers look for full-time status where they earn benefits as well; and full-time officers are wary of part-time service. Our part-time staff has dropped to three, making it difficult to maintain shift coverage. A proposal has been made to hire a third, full-time officer. How should we respond?

Our aging town population relies on vital emergency services staffed by volunteers, but the pool of available volunteers is shrinking. Currently, we now have only three on-call volunteers for daytime coverage, but because of work or other conflicts, we sometimes find only one

person available to respond. Additionally, the burden falls on the same few people, leading to exhaustion. Emergency services is proposing that we hire one, full-time day employee, who would also handle heavy administrative paperwork. How should we respond?

Prior to the Annual Town Meeting last year, our Capital Planning Committee laid out numerous capital requirements and funding options. Among the many items, needs included funding costly equipment, such as an aging ambulance, and transportation infrastructure. Maintaining our lengthy mix of paved and dirt roads reduces needed reinvestment for their long-term preservation. To meet the roadway infrastructure need, the Capital Planning Committee proposed a five-year program of debt issuance, that would spread the costs of catching up on deferred maintenance over a fifteen-year period, thus stretching debt service costs and lowering the impact on tax rates. How should we respond? □

*Chairman Richard Long*

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## CONSERVATION COMMISSION

**December 16:** With members John Schreiber, Doug Hyde, Nanci Worthington, and Freddy Friedman present, the meeting opened with the continued Notice of Intent (NOI) hearing and order of conditions issued to Timothy Martin of Konkapot Road. The issue is a well that was drilled without appropriate containment, resulting in slurry and runoff into the wetlands of an adjacent property. Having visited the site, the Commission confirmed that Eastern Well Drillers, which had drilled the well, had successfully completed the requested remediation.

The Commission moved on to Wigmore Forest Resource Management's Request For Determination of Applicability (RDA) on behalf of Chuck Peterson of Great Barrington Mill River Road. The site work was originally deemed a forest management project to be permitted by the state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). However, it later became clear that the owner intended to include a camp site involving tree clearing within 200 feet of the Konkapot River. DCR, the Department of Environmental Protection, the New Marlborough Conservation Commission, and the property owner agreed to move forward without fault and accept the original miscommunication.

Joining the meeting on behalf of the Peterson family, Mary Wigmore discussed the RDA going forward and focused on creating a solution that would protect the riverfront without penalizing the land owner. The parties agreed that the RDA would not need further permitting but would be subject to the following conditions: that half of the trees taken from an area 50 to 100 feet from the river would by June 1 be replaced with native species at least ten feet tall in an area 50 to 200 feet from the river. Secondly, the Commission required that silt bales and wattles be installed adjacent to the intermittent stream prior to removal of soil and debris on the existing culvert on the logging road.

Lastly the Commission addressed an NOI submitted by Leonard Golub and Benton Hill LLC of Rhoades and Bailey Road. Steve Mack and Jackson Alberti, Foresight Land Services, and Elisabeth Goodman, attorney from Cain Hibbard & Meyers, joined the meeting on behalf of the property owner. At issue was the owner's request to create an access road to his 235-acre property adjacent to a perennial stream.

An extensive report by Mr. Golub described his family's intent for the property, his historical challenges with accessing the property, his experience and knowledge of a main and secondary entrance to his property, and his request for approval from the Commission to repair and restore the main entrance to the property. Mr. Alberti clarified that the scope of the current NOI included constructing a new culvert and resurfacing the existing wood road with gravel under regulation 310 CMR 10.58.5,

which covers redevelopment and restoration of previously developed riverfront areas. He gave evidence that a main entrance to the property dated to the 1880s as well as that Highway Department maintenance of Rhoades and Bailey Road continues to degrade the wetland area with soil disturbance and sediment runoff. He explained that the proposed work would occur within the previously degraded and disturbed riverfront area and would repair and restore the wood road.

The Commission expressed its concern that, should access be given to wetland resources beyond the scope of the current NOI, wetland areas farther along the road would then be subject to vehicular traffic. It stated that, according to the DEP, this area does not qualify for redevelopment. It recommended that the applicant continue the hearing for the NOI, with the creation of road access according to general wetland regulatory standards for the entire length of the road. The NOI, it said, should include an alternative analysis that demonstrates that the secondary access is not practical. Ms. Goodman cautioned, however, that such an analysis might be vulnerable to a negative determination. She restated her opinion that the scope of work should be deemed a "redevelopment" project. It was agreed that further consideration of the NOI be continued to the January meeting.

Finally the Commission, turning to new business, agreed to issue a Notice of Violation to the owners of the Rooney Farmhouse on New Marlborough Southfield Road because site cleanup work recently performed there had not received a permit. The Commission then noted that after a site visit to Joyce Bernstein's New Marlborough Hill property, Ms. Bernstein agreed that no further work would be done to remove invasive plants. Following approval of minutes from the previous month's meeting, the meeting was adjourned. □

Martha Bryan



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## PLANNING BOARD

**January 12:** The meeting got underway via Zoom at 7:01 p.m. with three members on the call – Bob Hartt, Jon James, and Paul Marcel – along with Secretary Sharon Fleck and Sandisfield Planning Board member Bill Taylor. Mr. Hartt informed the others that Chairman Mark Carson was feeling under the weather and would not be attending. The fourth member, Tom Sebestyen, joined the call around ten minutes in.

After approving the December 8 minutes, the Board moved on to the topic of the evening – Dark Sky. Mr. Taylor spoke about what the Sandisfield Planning Board is working on — a four-page Dark Sky bylaw draft aimed at preventing “light trespass” and also mandating exterior lighting that falls in the “warm” range on the visible light spectrum, between 2700°K and 3000°K — for both private and commercial structures. He also said the Sandisfield highway department was prepared to change over the street lights to the warmer quality lights.

Mr. Hartt, who had taken on the duty of chairing the meeting in Mr. Carson’s absence, then moved on to “homework reports” assigned at the last meeting. On the subject of applicability of a Dark Skies bylaw, Mr. Hartt said that, without question, whatever bylaw the Board comes up with would apply to new construction. He thought that buildings undergoing significant remodeling would also be subject to the new bylaw. He then posed the question as to whether the lighting requirements of existing homes and businesses would be “grandfathered,” i.e. not subject to the bylaw, or whether a five-year grace period would be given for homeowners to come into compliance.

Tom Sebestyen said he thought a five-year extension would be reasonable but should exclude single-family dwellings. He proposed that the Board conduct a tour of the town to pinpoint where there currently is offensive lighting. Mr. Hartt mentioned three locations: the Town Garage, the Library, and Berkshire Springs bottling plant on Norfolk Road.

On the matter of how far-reaching the bylaw draft might be, a difference of opinion began to emerge. Mr. Hartt advocated for “something bold, that will do the job, and that’s reasonable,” and then relying on input from the public to further shape it into a form that is likely to pass at a Town meeting. Paul Marcel spoke in favor of keeping it simple, “no big-stick approach,” gearing it more toward new construction and using simpler, non-legal methods to persuade owners of existing structures to upgrade their lighting with less-invasive equipment.

Jon James, who was tasked with looking into the best way to enforce a Dark Sky bylaw, suggested that the more the regulations could be inserted into the building code the better. He said it would follow that the building inspector would then be the primary overseer of the code. And, on the subject of getting homeowners to comply with the steps that can be taken on a voluntary basis to reduce light trespass, he suggested that if the Town would undertake a reduction of glare from the Highway Department grounds, this might serve as a good example for citizens to follow.

In winding up the night’s discussion, Bob Hartt said he would take it upon himself to go through the thirteen-page model draft he had distributed last month, highlighting the passages he feels are pertinent to New Marlborough, so that the next meeting could be spent honing the draft down to something closer in length to what Sandisfield is working on. With no objections, he adjourned the meeting at 7:48 p.m.. □

*Larry Burke*



  
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# UN-LIGHTING THE NIGHT SKY

## New Marlborough Addresses Light Pollution

by Robbi Hartt

“There is a place to stand  
where you see so many lights  
you forget you are one of them.”

— from “Spruce Street, Berkeley”  
by Naomi Shihab Nye

This used to be the feeling people would get coming up to the Berkshires from Boston, Connecticut, Long Island, New York City. The sudden eruption of stars, constellations, the spiraling cloud dust of the Milky Way took our breath away as we exchanged blinding highways for dark back roads, densely populated cities for quiet rural villages, the deluge of blue lights for the soothing, sparkling night sky. Now the same words could carry a very different meaning. In many places, we are so overwhelmed by artificial lights that we forget we created them, or why we needed them, or that we are responsible for controlling them.

New Marlborough, for one, has seen the light — the threat, that is, of too much of it. The Planning Board is in the process of drafting a Dark-Sky bylaw to help the town protect this prized natural resource. The proposed bylaw has many benefits, including preserving the natural beauty of our local night sky, preventing the further encroachment of glare and light pollution, promoting advanced lighting technology, and balancing economic development with human and animal well-being.

For three billion years, light and dark existed in a rhythmic pattern created solely by the sun, moon, and stars — a pattern encoded in the DNA of all plants and animals that is now changing. According to the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA), over-lighting is a growing international concern, with 80 percent of the world’s population living under skyglow and 99 percent of the U.S. and Europe unable to even experience a natural night sky. Light pollution — defined by the IDA as “wasted artificial light that shines up into the atmosphere, creating smog-like conditions blocking the starry sky” — has gone from a little-known condition to a widely recognized *fourth* form of pollution (after air, water, and land). Research gathered by the IDA claims that 13 percent of residential electricity in the U.S. is used for outdoor lighting, emitting 15 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> each year; and 35 percent of that light is wasted due to unshielded and/or poorly aimed lighting. To offset the carbon dioxide our outdoor lights are producing, we would have to plant 875 million trees annually!

Many grew hopeful about signs of decreasing skyglow in the early months of the pandemic when the country was locked down, but as human activity resumed, the

night sky once again began to disappear from view. While light pollution has been increasing nationally at a rate of 2.2 percent per year, the rate in Massachusetts has been an alarming 4 to 6 percent. Even as the Covid-19 lockdown eases, however, we have retained a sense of slowing down and noticing our impact on the natural world we’ve relied on for peace and inspiration. There has also been an explosion of stargazing hobbyists, with sales of binoculars and telescopes at record highs and ecotourism to places that offer a clear view of the night sky soaring. These trends should give us hope.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the western half of the U.S. has an abundance of large, unlit areas designated as “Dark Sky Places,” but there is a noticeable dearth in the Northeast — the nearest ones being Cherry Spring State Park in Pennsylvania and Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) Maine Woods in central Maine. (To get a sense of the contrast between the “lit” night sky in the East versus the West, go to “Where to find the last pristine skies in America” in your computer search engine.)

Beyond increasing energy consumption and damaging the environment, light pollution is disruptive to plant, insect, and wildlife ecosystems and harmful to humans. Astronomers, environmentalists, economists, and health professionals alike warn that we are killing darkness at the speed of light, and that our actions (and, in many cases, our inaction) are creating a black hole of issues — not only extinguishing the splendor of the night sky, but causing cancer, diabetes, and sleep disorders in humans, slowing or stopping the growth cycle of plants, and decreasing reproduction rates in animals.

Massachusetts is the only state in the Northeast without any regulations restricting outdoor lighting, according to Tim Brothers, vice president of the state’s IDA chapter. However, the legislature is trying to address this shortcoming with “An Act to Improve Outdoor Lighting, Conserve Energy, and Increase Dark-Sky Visibility,” which was introduced last year. It was still in committee when the legislative session ended, but similar legislation has been proposed this year. With amendments to specific guidelines, Mr. Brothers is optimistic it will be passed in early February. If so, Massachusetts would be the first state in the country to regulate the amount of harmful blue content permitted in outdoor lighting. The new legislation would also require the state to negotiate with power companies to adjust utility tariffs to reflect the more energy efficient lighting now in place in 70 percent of the streetlights in the state.

Although statewide mandates are important, Mr. Brothers notes that it is equally important that towns

set their own guidelines. As of early 2016, only forty-one of 351 municipalities in Massachusetts had adopted some form of outdoor lighting regulation, and the number hasn't changed dramatically since. "If we want to address light pollution in a significant way, bylaws and ordinances are where we need to focus," he stresses, adding that he just finished drafting bylaws for his hometown of Pepperell, using comprehensive language that could be adopted by other towns. "I've been monitoring the Wallace Observatory (MIT) for years, and we're about to lose our view of the Milky Way," Mr. Brothers cautions. "The Berkshires is a rarity. You have something special, and you should try to fight hard to keep it."

New Marlborough understands the urgency. Planning Board Chairman Mark Carson notes that a Dark-Sky bylaw has been part of the Board's master plan for several years but is now more important than ever. The Board hopes to finalize the bylaw recommendation in time to hold a public hearing in February and bring it before voters at the Annual Town Meeting in May. If New Marlborough passes a Dark-Sky bylaw this spring, it will only protect our night sky if neighboring towns follow suit. The impact of light pollution from surrounding areas can already be felt. (A NASA website — go to "NASA Blue Marble Navigator" on your search engine — shows significant light pollution in Great Barrington, Sheffield, North Canaan, and Winsted.)

Planning Board member Bob Hartt, who has been researching existing Dark-Sky bylaws passed by other towns, notes that "we in New Marlborough have the privilege of seeing more stars and constellations from our backyards than most people in the Northeast. But that is changing." Stressing the timeliness of this proposal, he adds, "Now that we have broadband and an expanding population due to a variety of influences, it's important to get protections in place before there's further development." The Board's goal is to propose a bylaw that is comprehensive without being heavy-handed and that promotes participation for the greater good. "I know people are eager to see a measure to address light trespassing because I've received a lot of complaints about that," Mr. Carson points out, adding, "The way I see it, this bylaw would



*The Milky Way as captured by Ruben Kier, Hidden Lake Observatory, Southern Berkshires*

be a huge asset over time — residents benefit, and the town does, too."

Amanda Gormley, IDA Director of Communications and Public Outreach, warns, "We lose a part of ourselves when we lose access to the night sky. We lose that sense of stillness and awe that should be right over our heads every night." Nearly eighty years ago, Robert Frost highlighted the importance of that awe and stillness in "Choose Something Like A Star," which ends:

"So when at times the mob is swayed  
to carry praise or blame too far,  
we may choose something like a star  
to stay our minds on and be staid."

# NEIGHBORS



**R**etired New York State Supreme Court Justice **Kenneth Rudolph**, a part-time resident of Southfield for many years, passed away peacefully with his family in attendance at age eighty-five on December 26.

Ken's legal career began in the early 1960s when he was appointed an assistant United States attorney by President Kennedy. Following that, he transitioned to private practice for several years. His judicial career began in 1984 as acting judge of the City of New Rochelle, New York, which continued in a variety of positions until his appointment to the New York State Supreme Court in 1995. He served there in several presiding justice positions until his retirement in 2009.



*Kenneth Rudolph*

He began dating his future wife, **Patricia Harney**, in 1958, while he was an undergraduate at Fordham University. Ken often said that "Meeting Pat was the best thing that ever happened to me." They married in 1960, and went on to have six children. The subsequent tally now is nineteen grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

In the mid-1980s, Pat and Ken purchased their home in Southfield. At first it was their weekend home, commuting from New Rochelle. Later, after Ken retired, they spent summers in Southfield, and winters in Port St. Lucie, Florida. Both were avid golfers, and while in the Berkshires spent a lot of time at the Stockbridge Golf Club. They also traveled widely, golf clubs in tow, with family and friends, checking out the courses and the offerings at the "19th hole."

Ken was affectionately referred to as "The Judge" by his Southfield neighbors. Their daughter, Jennifer, summed up Ken's years here: "My dad loved Southfield – it was definitely his happy place." □

*compiled by Barbara Lowman: deeuell@yahoo.com*

# WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS

*photo by Barry R. Shapiro*



**O**n January 17, **Barry Shapiro** wrote: "During this morning's storm, things got a bit out of hand at the Shapiro bird feeders. Mostly **goldfinch** but the occasional **nuthatch**, **titmouse** and **chickadee** braved the maelstrom of feathers. One could actually watch the level of the tube feeder go down in real time."

On the 18th, this bulletin from a fan of Wildlife Neighbors, **Anita Fleury**: "I thought you might like this photo taken by my twelve-year-old grandson, **Bobby Fleury**, on his visit a couple of weeks ago." □

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

*The Shapiro bird feeders*



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*photo by Bobby Fleury*

*A bobcat on the Fleury property*

## CULTURAL COUNCIL GRANTS

The New Marlborough Cultural Council is pleased to announce that we have awarded \$15,423 in grants to twenty-two organizations that provide cultural and educational programs for people of all ages in New Marlborough. In keeping with our mission, grants are awarded to applicants in four general categories:

- New Marlborough residents
- organizations that provide programs of benefit to the residents of our town
- programs that feature the creative work of New Marlborough residents
- events or creative works that occur in New Marlborough, including its schools.

The New Marlborough Cultural Council is supported by an annual grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, funding from the Town of New Marlborough and, most importantly, by the wonderful generosity of friends and residents of New Marlborough. As always, our thanks to everyone for their support.

Arts and culture are an essential part of the fabric of this community. The Cultural Council is actively considering ways to host gatherings again, with appropriate social distancing protocols. Look for announcements of upcoming events. If you'd like to join the Council or just volunteer to help at one of our events, drop us a line at [nmculturalcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:nmculturalcouncil@gmail.com). Thanks!

### 2022 New Marlborough Cultural Council Grant Recipients

**Alliance for a Viable Future** – Indigenous People's Day — Berkshires

**Aston Magna Foundation** – 2022 Aston Magna Music Festival

**Berkshire Children's Chorus** – A Story for the Season

**Berkshire Music School** – Ukulele Lessons for Berkshire Children's Chorus Students

**Berkshire South Regional Community Center** – Berkshire Ukulele Band and Berkshire Sings!

**Jane Burke** – The Art and Science of Clay

**Jane Burke** – STEAM Saturdays

**Dewey Memorial Hall** – Dewey Presents

**Dewey Memorial Hall** – Young at Heart

**Flying Cloud Institute** - Science and Art for New Marlborough Youth

**Great Barrington Public Theatre** – Berkshire Voices Reading Series

**Greenagers, Inc.** – Greenagers' Environmental Education and Stewardship Program

**IS 183 Art School of the Berkshires** – ARTcentric: Berkshires at Undermountain Elementary School

**Jana Laiz** – Author Series: The Art of Creating a Book from Scratch at Undermountain Elementary School

**Music in Common** – The Black Legacy Project

**New Marlborough Library** – Ukuleles at the Library

**New Marlborough Meeting House** – Meeting House Programs and Art Shows

**Pittsfield Shakespeare, Inc.** – Shakespeare in the Park

**SculptureNow** – SculptureNow @ The Mount 2022

**Shakespeare & Co** – 2022 Fall Festival of Shakespeare

**Taproot Sessions** – Women Roots Music Series at Dewey Hall

**United Church of New Marlborough** – Music at the Southfield Church



*Nancy Barbe, Chair, New Marlborough Cultural Council*

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## PARTICIPATING IN THE LIFE OF A PLANT

### *A Farmer's Philosophy*

By Tom Brazie

I have many stories to tell, and upon reflection they all stem back to a common thread: my love for this town and its people. I am a native of New Marlborough, and my ancestral ties reach back to the mid-1700s. I don't take this deep-rooted relationship lightly. I am honored to be where I am because of those who walked here before me.

There are a couple of trees in a meadow on South Sandisfield Road that I look forward to seeing each year as I hay the field and pass by them on my mower. They are maples and I am unsure of their age, but they are huge and stand proudly like captains, surrounded by the soft, gentle grasses of the field, but not hedged in, as are their subordinates, lined up like soldiers standing at attention, defining the boundary between forest and field. What is interesting is that while these two trees are old and weathered, missing much of their once majestic canopies, there seems to be an underlying respect for them. It's as if the other trees still see them in all their glory and aspire to grow as big and as strong as these trees once were.

Long ago when the two maples were saplings, I envision them catching the attention of the owner of the land who first cleared the field, and who left them to grow. I have done a lot of chainsaw work over the years and have found myself, although I doubt this man had a chainsaw, in exactly the same situation. I too have left a sapling standing for no other reason than a sense that it was simply too nice to cut. They say when you plant a tree, you are not planting it for yourself, you are planting it for future generations. I am convinced that one of my



*Great Grandmother driving and Grandmother Brazie riding the family tractor*

ancestors saved those saplings for me, and so, as I round the corner with the tractor, I take a moment to reflect on my life and think about those who walked there before me. It gives me goosebumps to look at these majestic 150-plus-year-old trees and think about all that they have seen. They have known more of my family than I have. I have a photograph of my grandmother Mary and her

sister, Flora, mowing hay in this field as teenagers.

As I reflect on my ancestors, my thoughts turn to the roots: our participation with nature. My traceable roots start at the property now known as Flying Cloud, where the two maples are situated. Many hands have contributed to its care. Its current stewards, Jane and Larry Burke, among all their other chores, keep the orchards pruned and the yard full of camp children. I have had the privilege of haying the fields during camp sessions. What a fantastic sight it is to be up in the field looking back at the house and seeing all of these wonderful children and young adults scattered around the property, soaking up the outdoors. Although they'll be the first to say they aren't farmers, Jane and Larry have found a way to participate in nature, not only by caring for their land, but, just as important, by educating our youth, our next generation of caregivers.

Participation is what I want to focus on. Each of us participates in nature in one way or another every day, but our largest impact is through the food we eat. And so, I want to investigate where that food comes from and how that food has participated in nature. Each morsel of food has a story, a history. Some good, some bad.

As Garth Brooks put it, "There's two dates of time they'll carve on your stone, and everyone knows what they mean, but what's more important is the time that is known, in that little dash there in between." This is a powerful verse — not just for humans but for plants and animals, too. Of all things that have occupied "that little dash in between," what are their stories? How have they participated while in nature?

This should raise the question by all food consumers, if my participation is recorded by the foods I buy, what influence have I had on nature? While living, did this product leave a negative impact or contribute positively? Nature is all about these life and death cycles, and all things in nature, including us, participate within them.

*continued*

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## LAND TRUST NEWS

We are busy planning our 2022 season with two very exciting events already scheduled. Join wilderness educator, enthusiast, and New Marlborough Land Trust board member Tes Reed as she wanders the Land Trust properties, exploring the natural world and its wonders. Space is limited, so please email [nmlandtrust@gmail.com](mailto:nmlandtrust@gmail.com) for a reservation.

Bundle up and enjoy walking the Joffe Preserve trails and forests in search of animal tracks and sign. Together we will explore, question, and decipher the prints, scat and sign markings left behind by the true inhabitants of this land. For ages twelve and up.



### Animal Tracking and Sign

**Joffe Preserve: Saturday, February 19, 2022**

**10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (two hours)**

Learn how to make a one-match fire in any and all weather conditions, using only what's naturally available from the land. We will learn what makes good tinder (fire starting material) and how wood from different trees burns. Experience the ancient technique of a bow drill (friction) fire and experiment with different fire starter kits. For ages twelve and up.



### Fire Making

**New Marlboro Preserve: Saturday, March 19, 2022**

**10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (two hours)**

Executive Director Silvia Eggenberger

### *Participating in the Life of a Plant, continued*

Agricultural practices have significant impact on our world. Some are positive, but most, regrettably, are extremely negative.

Life's design is very simple, and yet we continuously overlook it, trying to change or alter it. I am not talking about humans trying to live longer, healthier lives. I am talking about the practice of contained animal feeding operations, where the production of supermarket food involves unsanitary growing conditions and pumping animals full of pharmaceuticals. Fruits and vegetables grown in monocultures are deprived of an environment in which they can thrive naturally, so they are kept alive by saturating them in chemicals and synthetic fertilizers. These are the unnatural aspects of food production that need to be discussed and thought about as they are driven directly by consumer demand.

My farm's mission statement is "To heal and improve

New Marlborough's lands through intensive rotational grazing of our animals. And to grow quality food in a respectable and complementary way to both the animals and the environment and to rebuild a local food economy through education and example." The benefits of having a farm in your back yard are countless. In future columns in the *5 Village News*, I intend to highlight some of them and their significance, along with a few personal experiences that help tell the story of a life I am proud of. In much of my reading and research, I see descriptions of the perilous destinations to which we are headed. I feel that it is imperative that we start finding our way back to our roots — to understanding the dash that will separate the two dates on our headstones.

*This is the first of a series by Tom Brazie, owner of The Farm, New Marlborough.*



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# THE LOG

## Police Department (selected entries)

- Dec. 1 8:46 a.m. A Southfield resident alerts the Department to a pickup truck, which she believes contains hunters planning to trespass on her property, passing her property numerous times.
- 1:45 p.m. A caller complains of a motorist parking on the roadway near the Southfield Store.
- Dec. 2 10:20 p.m. The Highway Department is alerted to a tree fallen across Canaan Valley Road.
- Dec. 3 8:09 a.m. Cows loose on New Marlborough Southfield Road.
- Dec. 4 8:41 p.m. An officer is alerted to a verbal altercation between a hunter and the son of a Hartsville resident, who claims that the hunter had not apologized for trespassing on his mother's property.
- Dec. 7 6:33 a.m. A motorist alerts the Department to a tree on wires on South Sandisfield Road.
- Dec. 9 9:17 p.m. A driver hits a deer on Hartsville New Marlborough Road.
- Dec. 11 10:26 p.m. A tree fallen across Canaan Southfield Road in Clayton causes motorists to detour onto the lawns of adjacent residences.
- Dec. 12 9:27 a.m. A caller reports his alarm to have found his wife missing on his arrival at their Southfield residence, but soon calls back to say that she had simply mistaken the day of a medical appointment and had returned.
- 7:07 p.m. A driver hits a deer on Hartsville New Marlborough Road.
- Dec. 17 10:48 a.m. An officer assists a driver who has locked himself out of his vehicle in Southfield village.
- 4:06 p.m. Verizon is notified of a tree on wires on Route 57.
- Dec. 18 7:44 p.m. A caller reports that the New Marlborough Land Trust sign at its Thousand Acre Swamp trailhead has been stolen — for the second time.
- Dec. 19 11:03 p.m. Alerted by the Department to a tree that has fallen on wires on Route 57, National Grid says that the wires involved are telephone and cable, not electrical. Verizon is contacted.
- Dec. 20 10:28 a.m. An officer assists a motorist who has locked himself out of his car in Southfield village.
- Dec. 21 6:16 p.m. The Department assists in locating a dog owner, who, having gone in search of his two dogs in a marsh adjacent to Three-Mile Pond, declares via cell phone that he himself is now lost.
- Dec. 24 11:49 a.m. A driver reports hitting a deer on Hartsville New Marlborough Road.
- Dec. 27 12:52 p.m. Verizon is notified of low-hanging wires on Mill River Southfield Road.
- Dec. 29 7:49 p.m. A Southfield resident objects to an officer answering a call to resolve a custody dispute.
- 8:21 p.m. An officer responding to a 911 call (accidental) from a New Marlborough residence, receives a delighted reception from the children in the home.

*Graham Frank, Chief of Police*

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## FIRE AND RESCUE

Dec. 4	10:36 p.m.	Cross Road to Canaan Valley Road Medical Call	Dec. 21	7:54 p.m.	Mutual Aid to Sheffield Search
Dec. 5	11:34 a.m.	Mutual Aid to Monterey Structure Fire	Dec. 23	8:06 p.m.	Peter Menaker Road Medical Call
Dec. 9	3:48 a.m.	East Hill Road Medical Call	Dec. 24	11:55 a.m.	Hartsville New Marlborough Road Medical Call
Dec. 9	7:02 p.m.	Hadsell Street Medical Call	Dec. 24	9:27 p.m.	Hartsville New Marlborough Road Medical Call
Dec. 10	8:27 p.m.	Norfolk Road Medical Call	Dec. 25	1:51 a.m.	Mutual Aid to Richmond Structure Fire
Dec. 16	10:33 a.m.	Shunpike Road Medical Call	Dec. 28	11:55 p.m.	New Marlborough Monterey Road Medical Call
Dec. 16	2:30 p.m.	Shunpike Road Medical Call	Dec. 30	10:47 a.m.	Adsit Crosby Road Fire Alarm
Dec. 17	3:53 p.m.	Mutual Aid to Sandisfield Vehicle Fire	Dec. 31	4:44 p.m.	Mutual Aid to Monterey Chimney Fire
Dec. 18	9:34 a.m.	Mutual Aid to Sheffield Medical Call			
Dec. 19	1:06 p.m.	Mutual Aid to Great Barrington Medical Call			
Dec. 20	4:24 p.m.	Mutual Aid to Great Barrington Medical Call			

*Fire Company President David Smith*

In calendar 2021, Fire and Rescue responded to 269 calls, an increase of thirty-seven over 2020.

**BURNING SEASON:** A reminder: burning season opened January 15 and is permitted through May 1. Please use the online application for burn permits, which may be obtained at [www.bcburnpermits.com/](http://www.bcburnpermits.com/) or via a link on the Fire Department page of the Town website: <http://newmarlboroughma.gov/pages/index>.

You may request a burning permit from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on the day of the intended burn, as conditions allow. Burning is allowed between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.; all fires must be extinguished by 4:00 p.m. □

*Fire Company President David Smith*

## HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT NEWS

Peter Wilson has been a member of the New Marlborough highway crew for more than six years and has served in the roles of mechanic, welder, and fabricator. Pete can fix or build just about anything and is probably one of the best mechanics I have had the pleasure to work with. Additionally, Pete is an excellent equipment operator, licensed to operate everything that we own. I am sad to say that he has taken a job in the town of Monterey. We are very happy for Pete as he spreads his wings, but he will be greatly missed. Thank you to Pete for his many years of service.


Three bridges in New Marlborough are scheduled to be upgraded within the next year. Their closures will impact traffic flow. Weather permitting, the bridge on Canaan Southfield Road near its intersection with River Road will undergo reconstruction starting in March. When Canaan Southfield Road is reopened to traffic, the bridge on Lumbert Cross Road will be closed for upgrades with a projected start date in July. The bridge over the Umpachene River at the north end of Norfolk Road will soon follow with reconstruction anticipated to start in the fall. We ask for your patience as we undergo these much needed upgrades.

New Marlborough is lucky to have an experienced highway crew that is on call twenty-four hours a day,

every day, from mid-November to mid-April. They are ready to go at a moment's notice and are expected to plow and sand for sometimes days at a time with little sleep. Many thanks to our five-man crew for their dedication and diligence.

The Town provides sand for New Marlborough residents. For your convenience, a small sand shed has been set up at the Highway Department as you enter on the left. Please take no more than two buckets at a time. No contractors, please. □

*Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring*



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**R E S I D E N T I A L • L A N D • C O M M E R C I A L**

## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

This delicious dessert, quick — about twenty minutes — and easy to prepare, never fails to disappear. It serves up to six. Add linzer tart cookies from the Southfield Store to make it an even more romantic finish to your Valentine's Day dinner. □

Marjorie Shapiro



photo by Barry Shapiro

### Nutella and Hazelnut Semifreddo

#### Ingredients

- 1 large egg (from one of our great New Marlborough farms)
- 3 large egg yolks
- 1 cup Nutella (a sweetened hazelnut cocoa spread)
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2/3 cup caster sugar (or regular granulated sugar run through a food processor until powdery)
- 1-2/3 cup heavy cream
- ½-cup finely chopped toasted skinless hazelnuts (toasted almonds can also be used)

#### Directions:

- Double line a 9" x 5" loaf pan with plastic wrap.
- Soften the Nutella by putting it into a small bowl, then placing that bowl into a larger one partially filled with boiling water.
- Put the egg, egg yolks, vanilla, and sugar into the top of a double boiler and place over a pot of boiling water (or into a bowl placed over a saucepan of boiling water). Beat with an electric mixer for about 8 minutes or until the mixture is thick and pale. Remove from the heat and let cool.
- In a large bowl, whip the heavy cream until peaks form.
- Fold the cooled egg mixture into the heavy cream. Pour half the mixture into the prepared loaf pan.
- Make a shallow well an inch and a half wide along the entire length of the mixture and pour in the softened Nutella, saving a bit for a final flourish.
- Pour the rest of the mixture over the Nutella.
- Swirl a knife through the mixture, making a couple of "Z's," so as to gently distribute the Nutella.
- Cover the pan with plastic wrap and freeze for at least 6 hours.
- When ready to serve, turn the semifreddo out onto a serving platter, carefully remove the plastic wrap, drizzle the saved Nutella over the top, and finish with some sprinkled toasted hazelnuts.
- Cut into generous slices and enjoy!



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**MAILBOX**



Barry Shapiro’s article about moose in the November issue (“Moose: The Ungulate Among Us”) brought back fond memories of our encounter with the world’s smallest ungulate, the mouse deer. We were living in Borneo during the early 1960s, went to the market and saw our first mouse deer. We couldn’t resist and brought it home, naming it Chendi, short for Chendawan, meaning mushroom in the local dialect. It looks just like a little deer but is only eight inches tall. It is though neither a deer nor a mouse but the smallest ungulate, or hooved animal, formally called a chevrotain. He was a wonderful addition to our family, amusing us with his antics, such as grabbing the end of the toilet paper roll and running through the house, trailing the billowing stream of white behind him. We still miss the little guy!

Charlie Parton

*Chendi, and daughter Sarah*



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## SCHOOL NEWS

# EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

## Mount Everett and Simon's Rock Investigate a Partnership

By Jane Burke

The Southern Berkshire Regional School District (SBRSD) has been working towards transforming the learning experiences offered in the high school program at Mount Everett Regional School to help students prepare for an unknown future. Since her arrival as superintendent, Dr. Beth Regulbuto has stressed the need to explore connections with local institutions of higher learning as well as local businesses to help students explore their interests. Four years ago, with an understanding that traditional ways of teaching and learning fall short in the digital age, the District began to investigate new collaborations in what it calls a Pathways to Careers initiative.

In 2018, Ken Knox, a professor of mathematics at Bard College at Simon's Rock (BCSR) and a member of the SBRSD School Committee, had a vision of how BCSR could assist the district. Bard College founded Simon's Rock in 1964 as the only college in the country specifically designed for highly motivated students ready to enter college after the 10th or 11th grade. Since then, it has reached out to underserved city high schools to establish early college high schools. Professor Knox and Ms. Regulbuto asked the School Committee if they had interest in a bringing BCSR faculty to Mount Everett to provide college classes for juniors and seniors free of charge. The answer was a resounding yes! The prize at the end of the journey: designation as an Early College High School and funding to support this program.

A memorandum of understanding was approved in 2019 whereby SBRSD and BCSR entered into a five-year commitment to develop a high-quality partnership and bring college courses and wraparound support to Berkshire County high school students at a reduced cost to the District but at no cost to the students. During

the 2019–20 academic year, Simon's Rock offered a successful pilot course in logic, limited to fifteen students in the fall, and a liberal arts seminar in the spring. Holding classes at the school helped foster a safe and supportive learning environment. Students were selected for this program without regard to their previous grades or academic achievement. They earned three college credits per course.

In 2021, after a pause precipitated by the pandemic, the partners collaborated on procuring state grants to help build what they describe as a wrap-around program. "This partnership is a wonderful example of a way we are able to ease the burden of future educational costs for families, increase student confidence in pursuing higher education coursework, and give insight into the fields that our students think interest them," said Superintendent Regulbuto. "Starting college coursework early helps our students understand whether it's a good fit before they leave the halls at Mt. Everett."

"We are thrilled to work with South County school districts to support the educational needs of students and help introduce them to pathways to college at an early age," said John B. Weinstein, provost and vice president of Simon's Rock. "The courses visiting students will take as part of the program are the same as the introductory courses taken by full-time students at Bard College at Simon's Rock, with the same faculty and the same rigor of academic standards." Classes to be offered are common introductory courses for first-year college students such as Psychology, Language and Gender, Calculus I, Art and Literature, and even Local and Sustainable Food in the Berkshires.

State money from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is available to help finance

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this initiative. Grants under the Student Opportunity Act are designed for districts that have approved plans to close persistent disparities in achievement among student subgroups. With students at small rural schools eligible for this boost, the District and BCSR applied for a \$55,000 grant to finance a 2021 summer program for Mount Everett students. A recent survey demonstrated the need: 46 percent of Mount Everett students said they did not plan to attend a four-year college and 44 percent were unaware of an immediate family member attending college. This combined with the track record of commitment between the partners led DESE to award a grant last spring that allowed Mount Everett students to take introductory on-line college credit classes in anthropology, literature, mathematics, and natural history.

Students had guidance in course selection and exploration of career interests. The natural history course required fieldwork and in-person participation. Students and their families were provided advisory sessions on career readiness, applying to college, college culture, and the development and maintenance of habits that support academic achievement. There was no cost for tuition, textbooks, transportation, internet access, or a safe, quiet place to study, with the goal of removing any barriers to obtaining a high-quality education. "Our hope is that this program will help remove obstacles for students and allow all students access to college coursework while providing new educational opportunities for our motivated and enthusiastic local public-school students," said Dr. Weinstein.

This fall his hope was realized for at least one Mount Everett student, Nadia Makuc, who participated in the philosophy course. Ms. Makuc had already taken a high-school philosophy course, as well as courses offered at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts and Berkshire Community College. "In those courses," she said, "I read about Hume and Descartes, but in this course, I actually read primary sources written by them. It was a very challenging and empowering experience to have our professor help us decode what we had read." This sparked an

interest in reading more broadly, which brought her to follow the Twitter account of a Princeton professor. As she put it, "I sent him a message and he answered! It was amazing." This led her to apply to Princeton, which she thought was a long shot and nothing she had ever considered. When the acceptance letter arrived in January, she was shocked. "At first I thought it was a mistake" she said. "I never thought a place like that was possible for me."

When informed of Nadia's experience Professor Knox was thrilled. "It's wonderful to hear about the successful applicant to Princeton," he said. "I am so glad she was inspired in this way. John Morrell and I, as co-teachers of the philosophy course, absolutely did hope that the act of directly reading the voices of others, discussing with each other, putting the words into context, and struggling with the ideas would serve to help the students develop their own voice.

"Since moving to the Berkshires in 2016," he went on to say, "I've been interested in and felt a responsibility to join in the work of educating our local students. The question is how to set our young students up to live successful, fulfilling lives. This means they should grapple with global and local issues, create a system of values and principles, and find a vocation that allows them to stake their place in our global society.

The partnership has applied for another Students Opportunity Act grant of \$150,000 to expand BCSR offerings. The hope is that every Mount Everett student have the opportunity to participate at some level in college preparatory coursework and career exploration. Whether it be one course or up to thirty college credits, the joint program will help students enroll in college after high school, reduce the overall cost of a college degree, and increase their likelihood of success. The goal is to gain state designation for Mount Everett as an Early College High School. The District expects to hear by mid-February whether it had won the funding to move forward with this ambitious expansion of its offerings. □



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*Violeta*, by Isabel Allende

### Children's Fiction

*What Can You Do With a Rock?* by Pat Zietlow Miller

*Sweater Weather*, by Matt Phelan

*Norman Didn't Do It (Yes, He Did)*, by Ryan T. Higgins

*Walrus Song*, By Janet Lawler

### Library Winter Hours

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Fri. 1:30 – 7:30 p.m.  
229-6668



### Children's Nonfiction

*A Shot in the Arm*, by Don Brown

*Hello Earth: Poems to Our Planet*, by Joyce Sidman

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1. Take your square piece of paper, place it color side down and fold in half, fold it in half again and open it out.



2. Fold the bottom edge up to meet the center crease.
3. Flip your paper over.
4. Fold up the left side to meet the center crease. Do the same for the right. You should now have two triangles.



5. Flip it over and bring the point of the triangle up to the top edge of the paper.



6. Turn it over again. It should have two rectangles at the bottom.
7. Open out one of the rectangles and press flat to form a triangle.



8. Repeat on the other side.
9. You should have two small squares on either side of the triangle you've just created. Fold these in to make two smaller triangles.



10. It will look like this. Turn it back over ...so it looks like this!



11. Either fold back or cut off the sides to form your finished heart bookmark. You can cut the sides off as they might be too bulky when they're folded but you can leave them on if you don't mind. It's totally up to you.

12. Pop it on a book and...



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Town Hall:** 229-8116

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