



New Marlborough 5 Village News

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A VERY GOOD “GOOD NEIGHBORS” STORY

By Barbara Lowman



photo by Eoin Higgins, courtesy of The Berkshire Eagle

This is all that remained of the Lupiani home in Mill River following a devastating fire early on New Year’s morning.

In the very early hours of New Year’s Day this year, the Mill River home of Dianna and David Lupiani and four of their six sons was completely destroyed by fire. Luckily, no one was home at the time so there were no injuries, but what followed immediately was an iconic display of a community rallying to support one of its members in need.

Before the family had even returned to Mill River, a rental house that had become vacant on December 31 was made available to the family. The house was cleaned and made ready for their arrival. In addition, friends assembled basic necessities such as beds and kitchen equipment, so that forty-eight hours after the fire,

the family was able to move in with all of them under one roof.

In the meantime, a GoFundMe site was set up to receive financial support for the family, as well as a Lupiani Family Fund at Lee Bank. A list of furniture, household equipment, and clothing was generated and circulated on Maggie’s List, and collection sites were established for in-kind contributions from the community. These efforts were further publicized by a special edition of the *New Marlborough 5 Village News*, and David Lupiani’s employer printed an insert describing the situation which he included in his New Year’s greeting to his customers. Friends of their four sons still living at home presented each of the boys with a new backpack containing school supplies, sneakers, and some clothing so that they could start school right away.

Most of their furniture and family mementos were destroyed in the fire, and while they have what they need to resume normal activities, there are reminders almost daily of what is missing. As Dianna put it, “I have

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Good Neighbors, continued

one of those...oh...no, I don't any-more." One of the most meaningful efforts, however, came from the firefighters at the scene. While there wasn't much that could be salvaged, they did manage to unearth five family photograph albums



Firefighters at the scene were able to rescue five family photo albums.

photo by Dianna Lupiani

which they carefully set aside. Three weeks after the fire Dianna was looking for anything that had been spared, and noticed a piece of a charred drawer. In the drawer was a full stack of additional family photos. Although most family objects were gone, the family history and memories have been preserved. Dianna says the albums tell their own story, because they will probably always smell of smoke from the fire.

Insurance will only partially cover the cost of rebuild-

ing, but the family has been overwhelmed by the generous response from the local building tradespeople. Starting with floor plans for a modular home and the at-cost donation of a modular home, eventually every aspect of home-building

has been offered – site preparation, carpenters, plumbers, and electricians. Their message to the Lupianis has been “Get your plans in order, and we’ll all come together for a house-raising.”

Dianna described a recurring image that represents the way the family feels. They are on top of a ten-story building and are beginning to fall, when the community swoops in and catches them before they crash. “We feel so taken care of,” she said. “We will have a home.” □

BROADBAND UPDATE

By Barry R. Shapiro

“Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.”

Robert Frost

The Town’s journey to a land flowing with high speed broadband is about to come to a fork in the road.

Each fork leads to the same place – high speed broadband. But one fork leads to a broadband network built, owned, and operated by a private company, such as Frontier Communications. The other leads to a broadband network built and owned by the Town which would then hire a network operator, either directly or, indirectly, through an intermediary such as WiredWest.

“We simply at this point don’t know the facts,” said Nat Yohalem, chair of the New Marlborough Board of Selectmen. “There are advantages to owning the network, and there are advantages to not owning it. If we own it, we can try to control the prices our residents will be charged, and we could always try to change the operator if we were unhappy with it. However, if we own it, we’ll have to lay out the money to build it and fix it if it breaks. All of the maintenance responsibility will be on us, and we’ll have to build in depreciation reserves. On the other hand, if we contract with someone to build the network and they own it and we don’t, they have all the maintenance responsibility, but we’ll be subject to their pricing decisions, and that

may not be to our advantage. All of this needs careful study and tough negotiations once we know what our options are.”

As of now, the options include the following:

MBI Route

The Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI), the state agency charged with bringing broadband to the unserved communities, issued a request for proposals (RFP) and received a number of responses. Of the three proposals applicable to New Marlborough, two consist of New Marlborough building and owning the network and the vendor operating it. It’s not clear in the third proposal whether the vendor or the Town would own the network. These proposals are still being vetted by MBI and an analysis is expected some time in March. MBI has stated that only vendors approved by them will be funded, although towns are free to consider alternatives to the MBI approved list of vendors.

Multi-town MLP Route

As previously reported, New Marlborough has joined with the neighboring towns of Monterey, Sandisfield, and Tolland in an RFP seeking broadband service providers which would utilize each town’s municipal lighting plant (MLP). Responses are due on February 23, 2017, after this issue of the NM5VN goes to press. According to Mr. Yohalem, it will take some weeks after the responses are received to analyze the submissions.

Broadband, continued

Because these proposals have not yet been received, it is not clear whether the Town would build and own the network or the network operator would do so.

WiredWest Route

The WiredWest route is radically different from the two choices listed above.

Tim Newman, the Town's delegate to WiredWest, explained the concept as follows:

- Towns would be responsible for constructing their own networks, although WiredWest is prepared to act as an overseer of the construction process on behalf of the towns if they wish.
- Towns would own their networks entirely, including the fiber on the poles, the equipment hut and electronics, and the "drops" (that is, the connections from fiber on the poles to each house and the terminal connecting the house).
- WiredWest would operate the network after it is built. WiredWest would have no ownership in the town networks.
- An overlay fiber "ring" would link the neighboring towns into a network. These components can be owned by WiredWest or by the towns and play no role in the operation of the town network, only its connectivity to other member towns and the internet.
- Towns would need to commit to membership in the WiredWest Cooperative for five years, after which towns are free to "unplug" and seek other operators.
- WiredWest would hire private sector providers to deliver all required services for the operation of an internet network and to provide phone service (through Voice Over Internet Protocol).
- WiredWest would function as the manager of the network, paying bills that are town-level responsibilities, working with and monitoring the performance of the chosen provider, and interacting

with town MLPs to insure the towns are satisfied with the network's operation and customer service. In essence, WiredWest would function as a regional MLP, eliminating the need for member towns to deal with any MLP-related responsibilities.

- Subscriber billing would be handled by WiredWest. WiredWest would in turn manage payments due to the service provider for customer services.

Mr. Yohalem stated that the Town is "definitely considering the WiredWest proposal and the next step is for them to meet with the Broadband Committee and possibly the Board of Selectmen."

Mr. Newman is a passionate advocate for the WiredWest proposal in which the Town would own the network. "The expected RFP responses [from the multi-town RFP] will be from for-profit private sector providers who will build the network, largely with town funds, and will own it outright. New Marlborough will have no significant, or any, contractual voice in long term subscriber pricing or in operational policy. If indeed this option is the least costly, this loss of town control of the network will be the 'price.' The WiredWest solution is for a regional network of town-owned networks, giving the member towns long-term control over our regional broadband future. The cost to taxpayers and subscribers of these two approaches is very important and may, or may not, be significantly different. But, cost should not be the sole criterion for making a critical long term decision that will impact us far into the future. Our leaders should evaluate all viable proposals based not only on the hard dollar costs to taxpayers and subscribers under each option, but on the pros and cons of both private and public ownership."

Much remains in flux as MBI's analysis of its proposals continues, the Town awaits responses to the multi-town RFP, WiredWest meets with the Broadband Committee and the fork in the road looms ahead.

Tune in again next month as the saga continues. □

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN

January 23: The Board held a joint session with the Sheffield Board at the Sheffield Town Hall. The meeting was convened at 6:30 p.m. with all three New Marlborough selectmen present, along with Sheffield's Board Chairman Nadine Hawver and Selectman David Smith Jr. Also attending were selectmen from Monterey, Stockbridge, Sandisfield, and Tyringham.

New Marlborough's Nat Yohalem kicked things off, saying the purpose of the meeting was to invite other towns to join Sheffield and New Marlborough in discussing shared services. In addition to the four noted above, Alford, Egremont, Mt. Washington, West Stockbridge, and Great Barrington were invited but didn't attend.

As Mr. Yohalem explained, selectmen from Sheffield and New Marlborough have been meeting on an almost monthly basis for three years, looking for potential savings by purchasing equipment and contracting for services together. He cited several examples, including joint bids for sand and gravel for their highway departments and the joint purchase of two pieces of highway equipment, a roadside mower and a hot box for transporting asphalt, resulting in a combined savings for each town of \$85,000. But the biggest benefit of all in Mr. Yohalem's view is "the fostering of a terrific relationship between our two towns."

Currently, he noted, New Marlborough is looking to share a conservation agent with Sheffield and possibly other towns. As Mr. Yohalem explained, "It's easier to hire somebody for forty hours than it is to hire them for just one day a week." But as Sheffield's Hawver cautioned, "I think it's important that we don't just talk about hiring the same person. That's not a shared person. That's two towns hiring an individual separately. Sharing positions is two or more towns coming together and hiring one person and sharing the salary and the benefits together."

Later in the meeting Sheffield Town Administrator Rhonda LaBombard returned to the idea of towns sharing employees, saying the key question is who carries the benefits. She said it's important to work out a reimbursement structure between the sharing towns ahead of time.



The bigger problem, though, she said, is retirement, that when the shared employee retires, the retirement expenses are the responsibility of the last town that hired them. There is a law, she explained, that allows a town to go back and collect retirement benefits from any other town the employee worked in. "There are vehicles for doing that," she said, "but I think it's better working out an agreement in the

beginning." She said Sheffield, for example, got hit "right out of the blue" with retirement costs for a past town administrator. "We had no idea it was coming and no choice but to pay it."

The discussion then turned to emergency services and the possibility of sharing fire trucks, police officers, and ambulance services. Mr. Yohalem noted that in the same year, three towns, New Marlborough, Sheffield, and Monterey, all purchased fire trucks costing over half a

million dollars each. "That's a done deal," he conceded. "However, what we could share is smaller equipment, smaller trucks, rather than each town having a half million dollar truck and X number of other trucks." He said he would like to set up a shared services meeting with other towns and their fire chiefs to discuss the acquisition of smaller trucks when replacements are needed.

In discussing ambulance services, Mr. Yohalem noted New Marlborough "has a shortage of people to respond to ambulance calls, which in my view are the most important calls in the town." Sandisfield's Chair Alice Boyd and Selectman John Skrip said Sandisfield currently does not have a staffing problem with its ambulance, but could be facing a shortage of volunteers in the near future. Selectmen from the other towns, which do not have their own ambulances, said they mostly rely on either Lee Ambulance Service or Southern Berkshire Volunteer Ambulance Squad. But the group agreed a more centralized approach was needed, with Southern Berkshire Volunteer Ambulance Squad possibly serving as a hub. Mr. Yohalem said New Marlborough would draft a letter for review by the other towns requesting a meeting with Southern Berkshire Ambulance to discuss how they might move forward.

A more difficult issue, it turns out, is the sharing of



Tim Newman presented the *Wired West* program at the Board's February 6 meeting. photo by Larry Burke

police officers, in part because at least two of the towns, Sheffield and Stockbridge, have unionized police forces. Still, the group thought it worth exploring. "I'm not saying we should take it off the table," said Sheffield's Ms. Hawver. "I absolutely think it's an item for discussion, but it's just a little more challenging because of this," while Mr. Yohalem suggested setting up a meeting and getting all the police chiefs in a room to discuss it.

Talking more broadly, Mr. Smith noted that the mutual aid agreements between area towns in some ways accomplish the same thing in terms of sharing officers, adding, "And fire companies, let's face it, if we have a structure fire here, every town within a fifteen-mile radius is going to respond, all the more reason," in his view, "to share equipment."

The selectmen also discussed the possibility of getting a resident state trooper stationed in their towns who could handle most of their calls, in much the same way that towns in Connecticut, such as Canaan, apparently do. Sandisfield's Mr. Skrip volunteered to contact the Massachusetts State Police to inquire about it.

Other issues discussed included joint bids for road repairs and paving, the joint purchasing of stationery supplies, and finally the idea of possibly establishing a centralized human resources bureau, brought up by Sheffield Town Administrator LaBombard, "because for me [human resources] eats up most of my time," she said.

January 24: With all three members present, the Board convened a special 8:00 a.m. session to consider whether to join Monterey, Sandisfield and Tolland in their Municipal Lighting Plant (MLP) Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking a broadband provider. As reported earlier, with the Frontier deal officially dead, New Marlborough is now free to pursue other options.

But first, at Selectman Michele Shalaby's request,

Chairman Yohalem reported on last week's meeting in Lee with Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) regarding the availability of funding grants to an MLP group. He and Broadband Committee Chairman Richard Long also summarized for the meeting the responses to MBI's RFP, which were released on Monday. As Selectman Shalaby noted, it's important to review the responses precisely because it's another broadband option for the Town. The Board also approved the minutes from the December 21 and January 3 meetings.

According to Mr. Yohalem, MBI indicated there is \$22 million in funding available for broadband system construction to Western Massachusetts towns, and that the agency is open to providing construction grants to MLP groups. That was the good news, he said. The bad news is that the \$18 million originally set aside for design

and engineering in all likelihood will not be available to the towns, although a final decision is still under review.

For New Marlborough that would mean instead of \$1.7 million in funding from the state, the Town would only receive \$920,000. "So we're talking about a reduction of \$780,000," Mr. Yohalem said. He also noted that MBI still has to review and approve the responses to its RFP and strongly suggested that the towns not sign contracts with any of the bidders until the reviews are complete, a process that could take up to two months.

As for the bids, of the six proposals received by MBI only three of them included New Marlborough, those from Crocker Communications of Greenfield, local firm Fiber Connect, and Westfield Gas and Electric, which operates under the name Whip City Fiber. Comcast, Charter Communications, and an outfit called Mid-Hudson Data Corp, did not include New Marlborough as one of the towns they're proposing to serve. However, Crocker for cost reasons is proposing to wire only 70

The biggest benefit of all to shared services, in Mr. Yohalem's view, is "the fostering of a terrific relationship between our two towns."

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percent of the town, not the 96 percent MBI set as a goal, and indicated it could take as long as four years before the first homes are “lit.” In addition, according to Mr. Long, both Crocker and Fiber Connect do not appear to meet the financial criteria set by MBI for receiving grants, leaving Whip City as the only viable bidder. But according to MBI, Whip City is only offering to “be involved as a network operator.”

Returning to the question of the multi-town RFP, Mr. Yohalem said, “I don’t see what we have to lose by joining it.” The only obligation for the Town, he said, is to pay a proportionate share of the legal fees for preparing the RFP.

With the rest of the board in agreement, Mr. Yohalem then made a motion “to ask the Towns of Sandisfield, Monterey and Tolland to amend their Request for Proposal for a Municipal Lighting Plant to include New Marlborough, and to advise those three Towns that New Marlborough is willing to pay its 25 percent of the legal fees incurred for preparation of the RFP, which we understand should not exceed \$2,000 per town.” The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

In other matters, Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring provided the Board with an update on the Clayton Mill River Road project, which, as previously reported, is being paid for by a \$1 million MassWorks grant. He said he is now recommending the Town not replace two stream crossing culverts, as previously planned, because there’s not enough money in the budget to cover their cost. This is largely due, he explained, to an unexpected – and unbudgeted — \$53,000 expense from Verizon to move its wires from utility poles on two traffic islands the Highway Department wants to eliminate.

Selectman Tara White objected, saying, “We’re going to redo a whole road and not do those two culverts, when

we’re just going to have to go back and do them at some point.” She suggested that, since the Town is already into budget season, it consider adding the culverts as a warrant item and paying for them out of the FY18 capital budget. But as Mr. Loring noted, the culverts are in no danger of collapsing, and could last another five to ten years. It was also pointed out that it’s going to be a very tough budget year and that the culverts might not rank very high on the Town’s capital spending priority list. In the end, the decision was deferred, with Mr. Loring saying, “It’s still early. We don’t have to make that decision right now. I just wanted to run it by you guys.”


Finally, Tim Newman, the Town’s WiredWest delegate, reported that **WiredWest, which also put out a broadband RFP, has received five responses, two**

of which, he said, seem very promising. The proposals are geared to towns that want to build their own network and have someone else operate them as part of a regional network. He said a workshop is planned for Saturday, January 28, in Northampton, where the two finalists will be presented, along with a presentation of WiredWest’s newly revised broadband plan.

January 30: With Selectmen White and Shalaby present and Mr. Yohalem conferencing in by phone, the Board held a **utility pole hearing with National Grid, which was seeking authorization to install four new poles on Rhoades and Bailey Road, approximately 1.3 miles south of the intersection with Cagney Hill.** According to National Grid’s Steven Haywood, the poles will provide service to David Brigham at 747 Rhoades and Bailey Road, who for years has apparently been “living off the grid,” but now, according to Mr. Haywood, wants the convenience and reliability of utility power.

There was one abutter present, Pat Scarlett of 710 Rhoades and Bailey Road, who was concerned about the positioning of the first pole, which will be located in front

Returning to the question of the multi-town RFP, Mr. Yohalem said, “I don’t see what we have to lose by joining it.”



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of his property, and also wanted to ask whether any of his trees will have to be cut down. Mr. Hayward said "No" to the tree question but indicated that some branches will have to come off, and then he and Mr. Scarlett discussed the pole positioning issue offline. Meanwhile, the Board voted to approve National Grid's request.

The Board approved the minutes from the January 9 and January 18 meetings, and then authorized Mr. Yohalem to sign a retainer letter from the law firm of Kopelman and Paige, which is representing the four MLP towns, now including New Marlborough, in their broadband efforts.

At the request of the Finance Committee, the Board voted to appoint Edgar Zukauskas to the committee. He will replace Ira Yohalem, who has resigned. Mr. Zukauskas will serve until Town elections in May. He previously had been a member of the committee and has also served as its chairman.

Selectman Shalaby reported on the January 25 meeting of the four MLP towns, which she and Town Administrator Mari Enoch attended in Monterey. The purpose of the meeting, she said, was to educate the towns on the legal issues involved in using a **Municipal Lighting Plant or MLP, structure to carry out their broadband plans.** The meeting was conducted via conference call with attorney Rick Holland of the law firm of Kopelman & Paige, which, as just noted, is representing the towns in their broadband efforts. She said a number of points were made by Mr. Holland regarding the operation of an MLP, including the fact that a town's board of selectmen by default constitutes the MLP's board and that MLP business can be conducted at regular board of selectmen meetings. He also indicated an MLP needs to appoint a manager to act as a liaison with whatever entity is the managing the town's broadband network, and that the state agency

to which an MLP reports is the Department of Public Utilities.

In a related matter, Mr. Yohalem reported that Frontier Communications, which is apparently interested in bidding on the four-town RFP, has made a **formal request to extend the RFP deadline because of the addition of New Marlborough to the request for proposal.** He said Alice Boyd of the Sandisfield Board recommended that the deadline be extended by two and half weeks, from February 6 to February 23, and that all four towns have agreed.

February 6: After approving the minutes of the January 24 meeting, the Board met with a delegation of Town employees concerned about changes in the Town's health insurance plan.

Speaking for the group of largely Highway Department employees, Bill Ruane said the imposition of a deductible of \$250 for individuals and \$750 for families, plus higher co-pays, has put a serious financial burden on families like his. He said he has family members who require periodic medical tests and doctors' visits, some of which are only partly covered by insurance. **So the new deductible, he said, adds yet another layer of cost to his out-of-pocket expenses.** "Being a young family in New Marlborough trying to absorb all this cost with insurance is very tough," he said. "I just want to see if there's anything the Town can suggest in the way of alternatives."

As reported previously, the Town through its health insurer Berkshire Health Group is switching health insurance policies from one that has a zero deductible but a higher annual premium to a policy that has a deductible of \$250 for individuals and \$750 for families but a lower premium. As Chairman Yohalem explained, "While the premiums may go up, and they probably will, they won't go up as much as they would have without the deductible," he said, adding, "but we don't have the numbers yet."

The new health insurance deductibles put a serious financial burden on Town employees' families.



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He also said, "We'd like to find a way to help the employees, recognizing that there is a problem." He said the Board would look into whether health savings accounts or flexible spending accounts might help and what their costs might be, while Ms. Shalaby offered that the Board and the Finance Committee, in building this year's budget, would explore ways of keeping the employees whole, "so your salary increase isn't just going back into paying your current medical expenses," she said.

Next on the agenda was Executive Director Betsy Andrus of the Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, who appeared before the Board to ask if the Chamber might install what she described as a "self-help visitors' booth" on a level piece of ground in a centrally located part of town, "one preferably near a building so it will have some light in the evening."

She said the approximately 42-inch square booth, or kiosk, which the Chamber would maintain, would be built by students out of recycled doors and would be stocked with brochures and pamphlets provided by Chamber members promoting their products and services. She said there would also be space reserved for listings and announcements of activities in the town. Mr. Yohalem suggested several possible locations, including in front of the library, at Town Hall, or possibly in Southfield near the fire station, and also asked Board Secretary Sharon Fleck to contact Brian Mikesell, Chairman of the Library Trustees, to ask if the library would have an appropriate place for the booth.

Mr. Yohalem said the Board has received signed leases from the Fire Company for the new and old fire houses, but noted they were drawn up on a calendar-rather than fiscal-year basis, which the Town prefers. So he's redrafted them to run from February 1 through June 30. Then just prior to their expiration the Board will approve new leases that are on a fiscal year basis. The lease for the new fire house is for \$1 per year and runs

for three years, while the other lease has a one-year term at \$500 a month for housing the police cruiser.

In broadband developments, Tim Newman was next on the agenda to brief the Board and the twenty or so people in the audience about the recent meeting in Northampton where WiredWest unveiled its new broadband plan. However, before turning the meeting over to Mr. Newman, Mr. Yohalem said he wanted to make a couple of comments about postings on Maggie's List.

He first noted that it's the Board's policy not to respond on Maggie's List to any comments made there, one, because not everyone in town reads Maggie's List, but more importantly, if the Board were to do so, he explained, it would have to respond to every comment on the list, because "if we didn't, it would indicate, or could indicate, that we were in agreement with a comment simply because we didn't say anything."

That said, he went on to state, in an obvious reference to a recent Maggie's List posting, that the Broadband Committee "is alive and well. It has not been abolished. It has not been neglected by the Board of Selectmen," and noted that while Chairman Richard Long has been out of town the past few weeks, "Broadband Committee representatives, most of whom are here tonight, have participated in virtually everything that's been brought before the Board."

He also noted that no one on the Board or the Broadband Committee was available to attend the recent WiredWest presentation in Northampton, but that the Board did have representation there in the person of Mr. Newman, who is the Town's appointed delegate to WiredWest. "So I don't want anyone to think we boycotted the meeting or deliberately avoided attending it," he said, in another reference to a Maggie's List posting.

And finally, he said, "In terms of our consideration of the WiredWest proposal, we are extremely anxious not only to learn about it, but to consider it." He stated emphatically that it's on the table, just as the MBI RFP is and the RFP issued by the four towns, including New Marlborough, for the MLP procurement. "So there are three considerations right now, and one of them is WiredWest."

When Mr. Newman finally took the floor, he gave a brief recap of WiredWest's recent history going back to the December 2015 edict in which MBI decreed that any town signing up with WiredWest would not receive broadband funding from the state.

He said MBI's principal objections to the original WiredWest plan were 1) that the towns would foot the bill for their networks, and then were being asked

The Board will explore possible ways to reduce the burden imposed by higher health insurance costs.

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to sign them over to WiredWest, and 2) WiredWest, as a startup, was overreaching in attempting to create a complete network-wide internet service provider.

He said that after some futile discussion with MBI in an attempt to save the plan, WiredWest went back to the drawing board and came up with a new plan, which it unveiled at the January 28 meeting in Northampton.

According to that plan, **towns would build and own their own networks, which WiredWest is then proposing to bind into a regional network that takes advantage of the financial benefits of scale.** WiredWest, he said, wouldn't operate the network, but instead plans to form a contractual relationship with a private company – either Westfield Gas and Electric or OTT Communications of Bangor, Maine – to be the operator and provide subscriber services, with WiredWest acting as the administrator, or overseer of the network, “taking that load off the towns.” In return, the towns have to commit to membership in the WiredWest cooperative for five years.

In terms of products and subscriber fees, Mr. Newman said the network operator would initially be offering three products, a basic 25-megabit internet service for \$59 a month, a gigabit service for \$75 a month and a voice-over-internet, or VOIP, phone service for \$19 a month.

He pointed out that the combined price of the basic service and the phone, at \$78 a month, is cost competitive with Verizon's pricing for its DSL and phone service, providing an incentive for subscribers to make the switch. Based on a “very, very conservative model,” Mr. Newman said, “we've determined that with that pricing, **if only 40 percent of the households in the Town took the 25-MB service, the network is sustainable.**” He went to say that the 40 percent level is not “what we think is going to happen” but is a way of demonstrating how secure the risk is in terms of borrowing the money to build the network.

He said WiredWest believes, “just based on the appetite for connectivity in other towns,” that the take rate for the network is going to be high, on the order of 70 percent to 80 percent, “and at those levels, if our numbers are correct,” he said, the network would generate excess revenues to the benefit of the towns. “That's not a promise,” he cautioned, “but it is something to consider when you compare it to the private sector model,” if, for example, New Marlborough were to go with Frontier, where presumably no money would go back to the Town.

But, as Mr. Newman conceded, there are **a number of significant unknowns** at this point, the first of which is **how much the network is going to cost.** As previously reported, New Marlborough originally was looking at

a network cost of some \$4.7 million, but that was an estimate made by MBI several years ago, which by now is certainly out of date. The other major issue is **how much money will be available from the state.** The Town had originally been expecting grants totaling as much as \$1.7 million, but based on a recent announcement by MBI, that number appears to have been reduced to \$920,000.

“So there are unknowns,” Mr. Newman concluded, “but the unknowns are outside the control of WiredWest.” In fact, as he pointed out, WiredWest's role in all of this doesn't even come into play for about two years, that is until the network is built and it's time to start signing up customers for contracts. But he noted that WiredWest will be available on a consulting basis to advise towns on how the network is designed and how the construction gets monitored.

Mr. Yohalem asked whether WiredWest with its new plan had received a commitment from MBI that state funding would be available to the towns that “pursue the WiredWest path.”

“Let me put it this way, Mr. Newman said, “We haven't had an official meeting with them, but many of the towns have been very vocal about their desire to be part of a regional network, and there's been no pushback [from MBI]. In addition, we've created a model that eliminates the things they objected to.” He further said that WiredWest is currently seeking a meeting with MBI as well as with its overseer agency, the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, “to see what's happening with the money.”

Mr. Yohalem also pressed Mr. Newman on what percentage of the subscriber fees will be going to WiredWest in its role as manager of the network, because he'd like to compare it to what it would cost the Town, if, for example, it were to hire its own manager to run the network. “I think people have a right to know that,” he said.

“There are three broadband considerations now, and one of them is WiredWest,”

Mr. Yohalem said.

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Mr. Newman either couldn't or wouldn't answer the question, saying "I don't know. I think it depends on the size of the network," and then quickly added, "What I should've said straight away is that I don't want anybody in this room to consider that this is the presentation of the WiredWest plan." He said his intention was simply to give an overview of the plan and to suggest a meeting between WiredWest and the Broadband Committee. "WiredWest will happily come in force and do a full presentation, looking at the spreadsheets, doing a lot of 'what ifs,' so that the Broadband Committee is in a position to fully understand all the details of the plan."

Mr. Yohalem thanked him, and then suggested that the Broadband Committee hold a meeting to prepare questions for WiredWest when it comes in to make that presentation and also to decide whether it wants to meet with WiredWest on its own or to make it a joint meeting with the Board.

In budget developments, Selectman White reported on last week's meeting of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District School Committee, where the committee **awarded the school busing contract to Massini Bus Company of Sheffield.** The bid represented an increase of approximately \$750,000 in the first year of a five-year contract. The remaining four years, according to Mr. Yohalem, are tied to the cost of living index. Massini was the only bidder, with Ormsbee Bus Company declining to bid because its owners are shutting down the business. As Mr. Yohalem noted, the Town's share of that increase, given its 22.83 percent school assessment, would be around \$170,000. However, as Ms. White noted, now that the district has accepted the bid, the real work of lowering that cost can now begin, as the two sides start negotiating over route reductions and consolidations.

February 13: With all three members present, the Board approved the minutes of the January 30 and February 6 meetings, and the joint meeting with the Sheffield Board on January 23.

Under broadband updates, the Board reviewed a **letter from MBI inviting selectmen and other town officials to a public meeting in Worthington on February 16 regarding the responses to MBI's RFP.** As the letter states, "We would like to hear your responses, impressions, questions or issues associated with any proposals that were submitted to provide broadband service to your town."

The letter goes on to mention that some of the RFP respondents, including Charter Communications, Crocker Communications, and Westfield Gas & Electric, will be attending the meeting and available to answer questions. **The Board said it would not be able to attend, and instead will submit a written response drafted by Mr. Yohalem and Ms. Shalaby.** They'll also

ask Broadband Committee Chairman Richard Long if he can attend.

Under Town Administrator updates, Ms. Enoch said Town Counsel Jeremia Pollard has advised the Town that a temporary moratorium on the installation of commercial solar arrays must be approved by the voters at a town meeting and by the state attorney general. She went on to say that according to Massachusetts General Law, "no zoning ordinance nor bylaw shall prohibit or unreasonably regulate the installation of solar energy systems." However, since the attorney general has approved similar moratoriums for other towns there is precedent, she said, that this one will be approved as well. The Board will ask the Planning Board to draft a warrant article for the Board and town counsel to review before submitting it to the voters at the Annual Town Meeting in the spring. As previously reported, the **purpose of the moratorium is to give the Planning Board time to research and prepare a solar bylaw for the Town.**

Following up on suggestions at last week's meeting that the Town look into whether health savings accounts or flexible spending accounts would help Town employees cope with the increasing cost of their medical insurance, Ms. Enoch reported that the Town is not eligible to set up health savings accounts because by law they require a much higher deductible than the employees will be paying, but that a flexible savings account is a possibility.



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Under such a plan, employees would have the option of setting aside a certain amount of pre-tax money from their paychecks to go into a special account to be used for medical expenses. The downside, according to Ms.

Enoch, is that any funds left in the account at the end of the calendar year must be forfeited, although she said it is possible to get an extension for up to \$500. □

Peter Schuyten

THE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT NEEDS YOUR HELP

The town is applying to the state Department of Transportation for a grant expected to total \$300,000 to be used to do the survey and engineering work on Route 57. This would be the first step in what is expected to be a major reclamation project covering the entire seven miles of the New Marlborough portion of the road. Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring expects the whole job will cost “not less than \$5 million,” money the Town is hoping to eventually get from the state. But to be eligible, they first need to get the survey and engineering work done, and you can improve the Town’s chances of getting the grant by filling out an online MassDOT Capital Investment Comment Form, the link to which can be found on the official Town website at www.newmarlboroughma.gov. It’s easy to do. Most of the questions are optional, so you can skip those and just do the three required questions at the end and then click on an interactive map to indicate your location. The deadline for submitting the form is March 17. The Highway Department thanks you.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

January 28: The meeting was presided over by Commission members Freddie Friedman, Rona Easton and John Schreiber.

November’s meeting minutes were read and accepted with minor edits.

First, Edgar Zukauskas and Warren Weldon, acting as representatives of the Umpachene Falls Park Commission, addressed the Commission to clarify the permitting process necessary for work at Umpachene Falls. Mr. Zukauskas noted his concern that the banks of the river have been damaged from consecutive storms and that there are concerns about public safety and erosion. The Commission answered some questions about the permitting process. Mr. Zukauskas understood that filing a Notice of Intent (NOI) was necessary.

There is a conservation fund, established by the fees for the permits issued by the Conservation Commission, to be used for the purchase or protection of land at the discretion of the Commission. This is the first time the fund has been used, and the Commission voted

unanimously to donate \$7,500 to the New Marlborough Land Trust to assist in the purchase of 114 acres in the center of New Marlborough village.

Upon request from White Engineering, the members then approved the request of Sanford Panitch of 1193 Hartsville New Marlborough Road to delay the planting required by his NOI until spring.

Finally, the Commission reviewed the mail. Two Forest Cutting Plans were received and reviewed: one from Bruno Quinson of Norfolk Road for 100 cords and the second from Mike Britton of Sisson Hill Road for 75 cords. A letter received from Warren Kunz-Cho of 1581 Hartsville New Marlborough Road issued a complaint that a neighbor was putting junk cars and metal debris near the river. The Commission agreed to look into the matter. Notice was received that the Commission’s budget for FY 2018 was level-funded at \$2,000.

With no further business to consider, the meeting adjourned. □

Martha Bryan

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LAND TRUST NEWS

The Land Trust's night-time walk up North Road on the evening of the lunar eclipse, February 10, was enjoyed by eighteen hearty folk. While the partial eclipse was not necessarily visually dramatic, the company and moonlight were magical. Here is a photo of the "Ghost Moon" rising around 5:30 p.m. that evening. Needless to say, no flashlights were needed!

The Land Trust has officially posted a Request for Proposals (RFP) for farming at the New Marlborough Preserve. Please see the website, nmlandtrust.org, for details. We hope to partner with an enthusiastic, skilled farmer!

Meanwhile the Land Trust has started to address its first priorities for the Preserve: agriculture and hiking trails for the community. Even in the snow and ice, volunteers are exploring the acreage on the east side of the river and siting a preliminary route for a "River Walk."

We can't wait for spring!



Martha Bryan



photo by Don Beauchamp



JUST IN TIME FOR VALENTINE'S DAY...

The New Marlborough Friends of the Library sponsored its annual Homemade Sweets for your Sweet: A Chocolate Celebration. This fundraising event was a huge success. Adults

could purchase homemade chocolates as the children enjoyed making homemade valentines and all enjoyed dipping marshmallows, strawberries, and pretzels in our chocolate fountain and sipping a cup of hot cocoa. □



Librarian Deb O'Brien offers a treat to Al Lenardson



photos by Sandra Walker

Lily and Jack Sanzone readying their marshmallows for the chocolate fountain, and Library Trustee Claudette Callahan preparing a sweet snack

A REQUEST FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Imagine that your fire alarm activates when you are not home. The New Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department quickly arrives and while no flames or smoke can be seen from the exterior we can clearly hear your alarm repeatedly sounding. Since your doors are locked, we can't immediately enter to investigate whether a fire has indeed broken out or if this is simply a false alarm. Our only choices are to peer in windows looking for flame or to forcibly open a locked door, which may mean that door cannot be secured again. Many second homeowners have a designated key holder to provide emergency access, but typically they cannot arrive until well after the Fire Department. When seconds matter, none of these choices is effective at protecting your home. However, there now is a very effective alternative, the KnoxBox. This is an unobtrusive, secure locked metal box which you mount near your main door and which will contain your house key or a passcode. This new technology will allow the Fire Department to make an immediate room-by-room search of your home and extinguish a fire before it has the chance to spread. Only one master key for all of New Marlborough can open your box and only New Marlborough Fire and Rescue has that key. While the primary purpose of this technology is to provide the Fire Department access to an unoccupied home whose fire alarm has activated, the Ambulance Squad will have access to the master key in the event of a medical emergency with a locked door.

This system offers strong security at both your end and the Fire Department's. Your key box is made from reinforced steel that is nearly impossible for a burglar to break open; it is designed to resist sledge hammers and blow torches. One model can even be connected to activate your burglar alarm at the first sign of

attempted tampering. Equally important is that the Fire Department's master key is kept in a similar locked key box, which records an electronic audit trail of the authorized person's name, date, and time whenever the key is removed. No one other than New Marlborough Fire and Rescue has access to the master key, so you can

completely trust that our access to your home will be kept secure, and used only when you or your alarm system requests our emergency fire or medical response. The Fire and Rescue Department is a close-knit group of volunteer women and men who are your neighbors.

You can get complete information about the residential models of the KnoxBox at www.knoxhomebox.com and of larger commercial models at www.knoxbox.com, or by calling 1-855-438-5669. You order directly from the Knox Company, not through the Fire Department. The cost for residential models ranges from approximately \$200 to \$300. You would

provide the installation, which for the basic residential models requires only installing a few screws. The mounting location should be directly adjacent to your main door at a height of five to six feet so that it can be immediately located in an emergency.

New Marlborough Volunteer Fire and Rescue will respond to every alarm at any time of day regardless of whether or not you have a KnoxBox. However, when seconds count, this could make a big difference.

Should you have questions not answered on the KnoxBox website, please leave a message at the Fire and Rescue phone, 413-229-8100. □

*Bob Dvorchik, Assistant Chief
New Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department*



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NEW LOOK FOR FIFTH ANNUAL POTLUCK

The New Marlborough Cultural Council invites you to the fifth Annual Potluck Supper, to be held this year on Saturday, April 1. (This is not an April Fool's joke!) It will be held in the Meeting House Gallery on the New Marlborough Village Green, and will be the first event in the Meeting House since the completion of all the renovations of the past year. In a further departure from past years, the evening's entertainment will be provided by a variety of New Marlborough musicians. The potluck begins at 6:00 p.m.

Previous potlucks have emphatically demonstrated the creativity of our skilled local chefs, so this is a good opportunity to join friends and neighbors in an evening

of casual conversation and excellent food. Check the alphabetical listing below to see if you are to prepare a main dish, salad or vegetable, appetizers/snacks, or dessert. Plates, cutlery, glasses, cups, and beverages will be provided. If you wish, you may bring your own beer or wine. For more information, please contact Barbara Lowman at 229-2369.

Potluck contributions by last name:

A through G: Dessert

H through N: Appetizers/snacks

O through S: Main dish

T through Z: Salad or vegetable



UPCOMING: *Events Calendar for March and April*

March 1 and 2: "Meet and Greet" candidates for superintendent of Southern Berkshire Regional School District, 3:45 to 5:00 p.m. each day in the administrative area of Mount Everett Regional School; interviews by School Committee to follow at 6:00 p.m. Open to the public.

March 14: 20 Feet from Stardom, a revealing documentary about backup singers in the pop music industry and the third offering in this year's film series at the New Marlborough Library; 7:00 p.m. and free, but save a space with a call to the library at (413) 229-6668

March 24-26: Aladdin, a Mount Everett Middle School production, on stage at the Thomas A. Consolati Performing Arts Center; curtains times: 7:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday, the 24th and 25th, 2:00 p.m. Sunday, the 26th

March 28: Town Caucus, for elective officers to Town boards and committees; top two vote-getters for each office go on the ballot; 6:30 p.m. downstairs in the Town Hall

April 1: Potluck supper and musical program, sponsored by the New Marlborough Cultural Council; 6:00 p.m. in the Meeting House Gallery, New Marlborough Village Green; no admission, but check the article above for your food contribution.

April 2: Rabies Clinic & Bake Sale, at the New Marlborough Fire Station in Southfield, 10:00 a.m. to noon; Massachusetts law requires rabies vaccinations for all dogs, cats, and, yes, ferrets; \$10 per vaccination

April 11: Ballet Boys, an award-winning documentary from Norway about three teenagers as they face the challenges of becoming professional dancers, the fourth in the New Marlborough Public Library's 2017 film series; 7:00 p.m. and free, but save a space with a call to the library at (413) 229-6668

April 22: The Fire Company's Spring Dance, it's here again (where did the year go?) at Gedney farm; tickets available soon at the Mill River General Store or from any New Marlborough firefighter; meanwhile, reserve the day

April 24: Voter registration; if you are a resident of New Marlborough and not registered to vote, this is your opportunity: see Town Clerk Kathy Chretien anytime between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.; she will also be available for working folk 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.

IT'S CAUCUS TIME

With the national and state elections behind us, it's time to turn our attention (some of it, at least) to local political matters. New Marlborough's annual Town Election this year will be held on Monday, May 8. And the Annual Election will be preceded, as it is every year, by the Town Caucus which falls on the evening of March 28, 6:30 p.m., at Town Hall.

In towns larger than New Marlborough, political parties nominate candidates for contested public offices. This is usually done at a nominating convention or at a primary election. In small towns like ours, this nominating process often takes place at a non-partisan meeting called a Town Caucus. To fill the position of Selectman, for example (there is an opening on the three-person Board every year), candidates for that office declare their intent to the Town Clerk – this year by 4:00 p.m. on March 21. She puts all the declared names on the Caucus ballot. On the date of the Caucus, registered voters attend the meeting and vote for the candidates (just one per position) of their

choice. Write-in candidates are also eligible. The two candidates receiving the most votes per position then have their names printed on the ballot for the annual Town Election. This does not preclude a person whose name is not printed on the ballot from running as a write-in candidate. So, in effect, the Caucus serves as a primary election.


The Caucus requires a quorum of twenty-five registered voters, a seemingly modest number for a town with about 1,000 voters. While not a problem every year, there have been instances in the past that required the Clerk to be a recruiter. The late Margaret Smith, Town Clerk for thirty years, had occasionally enlisted members of the Southfield Church choir from their weekly practice. Neighbors of Town Hall were also corralled.

Here are the positions to be filled by this year's election:

- 1 Selectman**
3-year term (currently held by Nat Yohalem)
- 1 Town Clerk**
3-year term (currently held by Kathy Chretien)
- 1 Moderator**
1-year term (currently held by Barry Shapiro)
- 1 Assessor**
3-year term (currently held by Freddie Friedman)
- 1 Tree Warden**
1-year term (currently held by William Ruane)
- 1 Library Trustee**
3-year term (currently held by Maureen Hosford)
- 2 Planning Board Members**
5-year term (formerly held by Holly Morse)
1-year term (formerly held by Charlie Parton)
- 1 Board of Health Member**
3-year term (currently held by Larry Davis III)
- 1 Cemetery Commissioner**
3-year term (currently held by James Palmer)
- 3 Finance Committee Members**
3-year term (currently held by John Pshenishny)
1-year term (currently held by Edgar Zukauskas)
1-year term (currently held by Robert Miller)
- 1 Constable**
3-year term (currently held by Edgar Zukauskas) □

David Lowman

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NEIGHBORS



Maureen Litchfield Krejci, of Southfield, reports that her daughter, **Danielle Guidi**, made the dean's list for the fall semester of 2016 at Anna Maria College in Paxton, Massachusetts, where she is a junior. Next year she will graduate with a bachelor's degree in nursing, as a registered nurse. In addition, this winter she took and passed the federal examination for emergency medical technicians (EMTs), so she is now a nationally recognized EMT. This certification adds an important dimension to her minor in community health at Anna Maria College. □

Neighbors compiled by Barbara Lowman: deeuuell@yahoo.com

Danielle Guidi

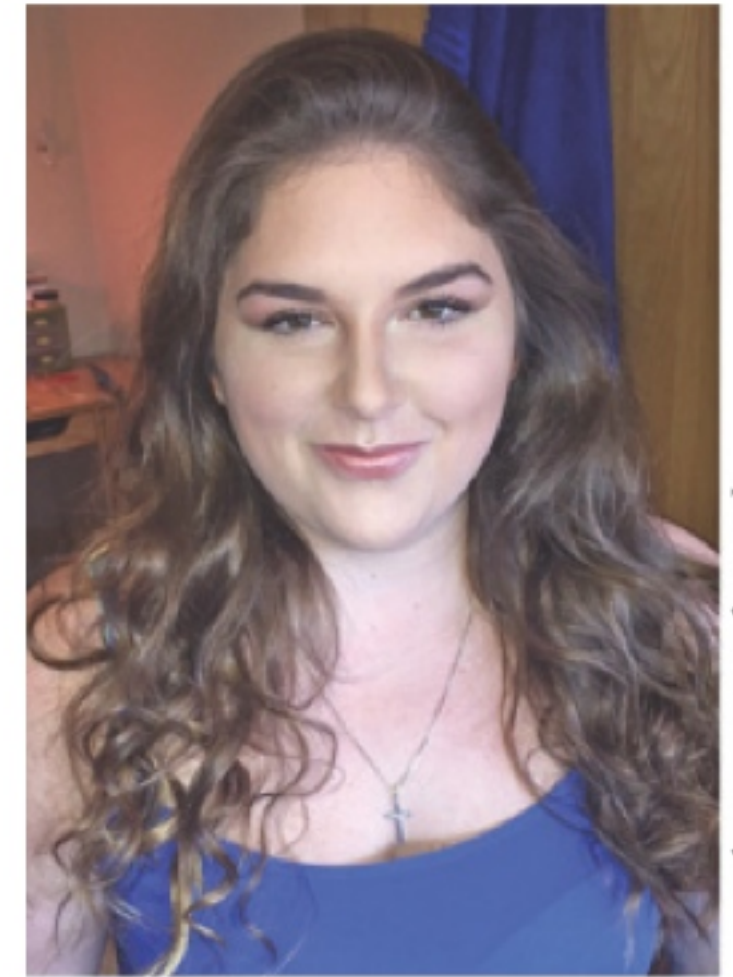


photo by Maureen Krejci

OUR WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS

After a bit of an absence due to his heavy extra-curricular involvements at Mount Everett High School, **Angus Kerr** is back with a look at the ways certain of our wildlife neighbors pass these winter months, unseen by us, but nevertheless very much here:



As snow blankets the hills of New Marlborough and ice covers the ponds, our small, cold-blooded neighbors including frogs, salamanders, and turtles are distant thoughts, reminiscent of the warmth of spring and summer. However, they are not too far away, and their winter habits are more spectacular than one might think.

Terrestrial frogs and salamanders typically burrow deep underground, and some species stay active throughout winter, including the red-backed salamander (*Plethodon cinereus*), which has been known to live in ant tunnels. The warmth from ant activity allows them to stay active despite the freezing temperature above. A small handful of terrestrial frogs, including the spring peeper (*Pseudacris crucifer*), spends the winter in a near-frozen condition in leaf litter. They have a substance in their blood that acts as an antifreeze, lowering their freezing temperature to 25 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 4 Celsius), and then expel nearly all water from their cells into their body cavity to decrease the effects of the cold temperatures. On those rare warm days in March and April, peepers will awaken, and their chirps may be heard throughout our forests and fields.

Aquatic salamanders, including the red-spotted newt (*Notophthalmus viridescens*), spend their winter swimming beneath the ice, while aquatic frogs, including the leopard frog (*Lithobates pipiens*) spend most of the winter sitting at the bottom of the pond, not burrowed into the mud, as many believe. Instead, they live in the litter along the pond's floor, absorbing oxygen through their skin, and occasionally awaking to swim.

Aquatic turtles are different again. Tom Tynning, a herpetologist who has long studied reptiles in the Berkshires, conducted research on wood turtles (*Glyptemys insculpta*) in the Pittsfield Audubon Sanctuary. He placed radio transmitters on the turtles, and then went out every week to locate his subjects. He found that they spend three months of the year sitting in the mud at the bottom of streams or ponds, breathing through their cloaca, or, as Mr. Tynning humorously puts this remarkable ability, "butt breathing." They rarely leave this position, except when the water level rises or a predator threatens their safety.

Our wildlife neighbors all have their own unique ways of surviving our challenging winters – so if you are out on your winter walk and come upon a frozen pond or stream, take a moment to appreciate the life that goes on below the ice, and to consider who might be quietly lurking down there, looking forward to spring. □

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OUR WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS

Don Beauchamp, from Clayton, reports, "I am sending a photo of two **evening grosbeaks** on the feeder, from around January 25. The bluebirds are still around, even in the snowstorms. This month I have been visited twice by a **red-breasted nuthatch**, and two weeks ago, I saw a young, but very large, **eagle** along the Konkapot. On Friday, February 10, I followed the tracks of a **bobcat** that had come across our bridge and continued until the tracks went into heavy brush, and that's where I gave up. As a Valentine's Day treat, I heard a **song sparrow** across the street, and then saw him on ground the following day, along with a **house sparrow**. I also saw a **barred owl** flying low across the field, in search of migrators."



photo by Don Beauchamp

Evening Grosbeaks

Larry Burke, up on Woodruff Mountain, has also seen **red-breasted nuthatches** at his feeders, and at least one seems very friendly, allowing Larry to come quite close. On the morning of February 15, Larry had the good luck of spotting a pair of **otters** on his farm pond, popping up from a hole in the ice near the shoreline, cavorting with each other, and then ducking back under, most likely for a crayfish snack.



photo by Larry Burke

Red-breasted nuthatch



photo by Larry Burke



photo by Larry Burke

River otters on Woodruff Mountain

Sandra Walker, who lives not far from Hartsville, on Caulkins Cross Road, and who has one of the more impressive bird feeding stations around, has sent in two photos of the lucky birds in her backyard, a flock of wild **turkeys** and a plethora of **finches** taking flight during a February snowstorm. □

Compiled by Larry Burke, lburke2@me.com



Wild Turkeys

photo by Sandra Walker



photo by Sandra Walker

Sandra Walker's feeding station

THE LOG**POLICE DEPARTMENT (SELECTED ENTRIES)**

Jan. 4 7:27 p.m. A Mill River Great Barrington Road resident crashes his Volkswagen Beetle on County Road near the New Marlborough border.

Jan. 7 2:09 a.m. A Canaan Southfield Road resident requests assistance to remove her car, which has suddenly become disabled, from the intersection of Canaan Southfield Road and Lumbert Cross Road.

Jan. 8 9:18 a.m. A Scion XB suffers minor front-end damage when it swerves into an embankment on Route 57 just west of Corashire Road.

Jan. 9 8:24 p.m. A trailer is towed from Canaan Southfield Road, after its brakes are frozen as the result of a brake-line failure.

Jan. 10 11:06 a.m. A Brewer Hill Road resident reports that a check, missing since 2016, was altered and cashed for \$1,300.
4:58 p.m. An officer gains reentry to a vehicle from which a Canaan Southfield Road resident had locked herself out.

Jan. 12 4:15 p.m. A County Road resident reports that the tires of his girlfriend's car have been slashed.
8:46 p.m. A small sedan slides off Hartsville Great Barrington Road into a fence.

Jan. 16 1:17 a.m. Caller reports that a truck, with lights on but no-one either entering or leaving, has been parked on the road outside his Shunpike Road residence for forty-five minutes.

Jan. 19 1:47 p.m. A horse reported loose at the intersection of Hartsville New Marlborough and Adsit Crosby Roads.

Jan. 24 7:21 a.m. Tree on wires near Berkshire Spring Water on Norfolk Road.
11:22 p.m. Tree on wires on Sisson Hill Road.

Jan. 25 5:44 p.m. Hartsville New Marlborough Road resident reports a forcible break-in to his garage and the theft of several chain saws.

Jan. 27 2:43 p.m. Motor vehicle accident on New Marlborough Hill Road

Jan. 28 11:54 p.m. Caller reports a Prius off Hartsville Mill River Road at the intersection with New Marlborough Hill Road, its two occupants unresponsive; a Life Flight is requested, then canceled, when, after forty-five minutes, driver and passenger exit the Prius under

their own power; both are transported to Fairview Hospital, and the driver is criminally charged with driving under the influence.

Jan. 29 8:17 p.m. A Norfolk Road resident reports that a female who "seems kind of out of it," is wandering around her property and sitting on her front porch.

Jan. 30 6:18 a.m. Cows exit a pasture through a broken fence at Clayton Mill River and Brewer Hill Roads.

11:01 a.m. Caller alerts the department to a pig loose on New Marlborough Southfield Road.

THE LOG: FIRE AND RESCUE

Jan. 1 3:15 a.m. Mill River Great Barrington Road Structure Fire

Jan. 1 6:21 p.m. Mill River Great Barrington Road Medical Call

Jan. 5 6:30 a.m. Mill River Great Barrington Road Medical Call

Jan. 5 5:24 p.m. Hartsville New Marlborough Road Fire Alarm

Jan. 6 10:51 a.m. Mill River Great Barrington Road Medical Call

Jan. 10 9:15 a.m. Mutual Aid to Canaan Structure Fire

Jan. 11 7:54 a.m. Mill River Great Barrington Road Fire Alarm

Jan. 14 11:45 a.m. Hadsell Street Medical Call

Jan. 14 1:32 p.m. Mutual Aid to Great Barrington Medical Call

Jan. 15 3:44 p.m. Mutual Aid to Great Barrington Medical Call

Jan. 20 8:28 a.m. Adsit Crosby Road CO Alarm

Jan. 24 11:01 p.m. Sisson Hill Road Wires on Fire

Jan. 25 11:10 a.m. Hayes Hill Road Medical Call

Jan. 27 2:45 p.m. New Marlborough Hill Road MVA

Jan. 27 2:27 p.m. Clayton Mill River Road Medical Call

Jan. 29 12:07 a.m. Hartsville New Marlborough Road MVA/Medical

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REGISTRATION

March 1, 2, and 3 — 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Registration for all schools in the Southern Berkshire Regional School District will be held at the Undermountain Elementary campus. If you are unable to attend registration, please call and a registration packet will be sent to you. Registration forms will also be available online on our website www.sbrsd.org. Deadline to return registration paperwork is March 15.

REGISTRATIONS ACCEPTED FOR THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS:

- **Pre-Kindergarten:** An integrated Pre-Kindergarten program is offered for students (3-5) who have special needs and for all students who turn 4 by December 31 of the school year in which they wish to enroll. This is a half-day program.
For questions regarding Pre-K call Karen Frighetto at 229-8265, ext. 371 or email kfrighetto@sbrsd.org.
- **Early Kindergarten:** This program is for children who turn age 5 between October 1, 2017 and March 1, 2018. This is a full day program.
- **Kindergarten:** This program is for children who will be 5 years old before October 1, 2017. This is a full day program.
For questions regarding Early Kindergarten or Kindergarten, call Rose Glaszcz at 229-8754, ext. 377 or email rglaszcz@sbrsd.org to set up a time to visit the school.

SCHOOLS WHERE THE ABOVE PROGRAMS ARE AVAILABLE

Undermountain Elementary: Pre-Kindergarten, Early Kindergarten, Kindergarten

New Marlborough Central: Pre-Kindergarten, Early Kindergarten, Kindergarten

Monterey: Early Kindergarten, Kindergarten

South Egremont: Kindergarten, 1st Grade

— **Please bring proof of residency, birth certificate and current immunization records** —

If you live in a neighboring community, you are invited to attend the workshop and apply through School Choice to have your child enrolled in our Early Kindergarten or Kindergarten programs. We invite you to visit our schools, to meet and talk with our teachers. Contact the Superintendent of Schools for information on the School Choice process. Phone 413-229-8778 with School Choice questions.

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A CELEBRATED RETURN

By Jane Burke

The chatter of busy children echoed in the hallway at New Marlborough Central School. The source was Dan Weston's classroom where children were engrossed in a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) investigation. Small groups of these second and third graders were testing the parachutes they had engineered. Students took turns dropping their chutes while their teammates filmed the fall using their iPads. After each trial they gathered around their screens to watch their slow motion films and discuss how successful they were in measuring the speed of the fall. Digby Kerr explained, "We are learning about different kinds of movement and forces. We can put the camera in slow motion so we can see how long it takes our parachute to fall. Without the iPad it would not be so accurate." The children's agility with the different functions of their iPads was impressive. After observing the film clips, they projected them on a large screen to share them with the whole class, then switched over to another app where they created a laboratory report of their findings.

Mirabelle Meyers explained, "In this experiment



Students determine the time of descent from a video of a parachute test.



photos by Jane Burke

Dan Weston showing students how to use "Explain Everything," a computer app that allows the students to put drawings, words, and media together to dramatize what they've learned.

we are wondering about gravity, air resistance, and friction. We started learning about this with Flying Cloud. Kristen Sparhawk had us dancing with scarves and we watched them fall. Then we did some balancing with our bodies so we could learn about gravity and what happens when there are unequal forces. Seeing and doing things helps me understand them better. I think later in my life I will really remember what I learned about forces in third grade."

Jonah Salzman added, "Mr. Weston shows us all the different things we can do in different subjects. We have even written our own picture books. We can download any books we want to read or listen to, even in different languages."

Watching the students at work moving from experiment to discussion with peers, it was clear that Mr. Weston's students were captivated by this high quality and unusually integrated STEM learning where science, technology, engineering and math are being used simultaneously. They clearly benefited by having

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the arts experience to deepen their understanding. Educators call this STEAM learning. Few teachers are able to bring all of these elements together in a meaningful way as Mr. Weston has done.

Mr. Weston is clearly energized by his return to this classroom where he taught from 1997 to 2000 before moving over to Undermountain. Ashley Lotz's reassignment to Undermountain provided him the chance to be part of the creative team at New Marlborough. He commented, "The building is old but technology is on a par with the main campus. Parent participation is huge." With his strong background in science and technology, he decided to build an immersive iPad classroom. "I was able to do a lot with not much money. The school bought two machines, the PTA provided one, and we were given another used one. I bought two and an Apple air play so that kids could share.



A student releases his parachute, while a teammate records the descent in an iPad video.

For me, my \$1,000 investment makes me happier than spending that much on myself. It was like my birthday present." Among the other iPads circulating in the room were his and his wife's. His dedication to providing this opportunity for children seems to have infused them with his passion for shared learning using this tool. They are not playing games with it or sitting glued to the screen but instead interacting with others. The iPads have opened an almost magical door to myriad possibilities, and the children are thrilled to see what new things they can learn.

The community is welcome to come see these students' "living museum" event in late March. They will be joined by children from all of the classrooms at New Marlborough who have been learning about various aspects of physics with Flying Cloud staff, which they will be sharing with the audience. □

MEET THE CANDIDATES

The Southern Berkshire Regional School District's School Superintendent Search Committee completed its interviews on January 30 and sent forward three promising candidates for the School Committee to consider for the job of superintendent. Two accepted the invitation to continue in the process. They will be visiting the district to meet staff, students, and community on March 1 and 2. "Meet and Greet" events will be held in the administrative area of Mount Everett Regional School from 3:45 to 5:00 p.m. each day to introduce them to the public; the full School

Committee will interview them at 6:00 p.m. These interviews are open to the public. Interested residents are encouraged to come on March 1 to meet Mary Jane Rickson, Assistant Superintendent-Director/Principal from Pathfinder Regional School District, and on March 2 to meet Beth Regalbuto, Associate Superintendent of the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District. Both women have deep experience as teachers and administrators and have expressed their desire to become the leader of our district. □

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NEW ACQUISITIONS AT THE LIBRARY

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Echoes in Death, by J.D. Robb
Heartbreak Hotel, by Jonathan Kellerman
Rather Be the Devil, by Ian Rankin
Stolen Beauty, by Laurie Lico Albanese
Garden of Lamentations, by Deborah Crombie
We Were the Lucky Ones, by Georgia Hunter

Adult Nonfiction

The General vs. The President: MacArthur and Truman At the Brink of Nuclear War, by H.W. Brands

Children's Fiction

Violet the Painting Fairy, by Daisy Meadows
Annabelle the Drawing Fairy, by Daisy Meadows
Team Batman, by Beth Davies
Rise of the Rogues, by Beth Davies

Children's Nonfiction

How to Code in 10 Easy Lessons, by Sean McManus
How to Be a Blogger in 10 Easy Lessons, Sean McManus
Harriet Tubman's Escape, by Thomas Throupe
The Wright Brothers' First Flight, by Thomas Throupe

Audio CDs

The General vs. The President: MacArthur and Truman At the Brink of Nuclear War, by H.W. Brands
Rather Be the Devil, by Ian Rankin
Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race, by Margot Lee Shetterly

DVDs

<i>Happy Valley Season 1</i>	<i>A Man Called Ove</i>
<i>DCI Banks Season 4</i>	<i>Trolls</i>
<i>Girl on The Train</i>	



Julia Hibbins and Jonah Salzman show their fairy houses. photos by Debbie O'Brien

Bring Your Child to the Library Day was celebrated February 4, with minstrel storyteller Mary Jo Maichack telling tales of fairy folklore and then making fairy houses.

This program was supported in part by a grant from the New Marlborough Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

Library Winter Hours
 November 1 - March 31
 Mon. Wed. Sat. 10:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
 Tues. & Thurs. 1:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
 Fri. 1:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Book Discussion Group

Please join us on March 25 at 10:00 a.m. for bagels and a lively discussion of the book *Before the Fall*, by Noah Hawley

HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY!



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Contributions are needed to continue the paper!

Please fill in the form and send with your contribution to:

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YES, I WANT THE *New Marlborough 5 Village News* TO CONTINUE!

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Town Times

Board of Selectmen: Every Monday at 6:00 p.m.

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, 9:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

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

Building Inspector: Monday 5 - 7 p.m., Wednesday 8:00 - 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

Post Office: Mill River Window: Monday - Friday 11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Southfield Window: Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

(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 Friday 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

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

Dog and Animal Control Officer: John Springstube 413-232-7038

Town Clerk: 229-8278; 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. weekdays; Saturday by appointment

Town Hall: 229-8116

Police: Business office: 229-8161

Transfer Station Hours:

Wednesday: 9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.

Saturday: 9:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.

Sunday: 9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.

PERMITS WERE DUE JULY 1

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Hours:

Monday - Friday 7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

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We welcome advertisements from businesses owned by New Marlborough residents.

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, Jodi Rothe,

Peter Schuyten, Barry Shapiro, Pam Stebbins,

Jon Swan, Marianne Swan, Sandra Fusco-Walker,

Contributing writers and artists: Ann Getsinger,

Mary Richie Smith, Tara White. Index: Donna Weaver

New Marlborough 5 Village News

appears monthly,

also online at our new website! www.NM5VN.org

The next issue will be dated April 2017.

All copy must be submitted no later than March 17.

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

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- ♦ **Reiner White:** General Contractor; 413-229-8450
- ♦ **Ter Mar Triangle Farm:** 106 Sandy Brook Turnpike (Rte 183), Sandisfield; 413-258-2898; fruits and vegetables in season; pork; jam; eggs; honey; sawmill; kiln milling; firewood
- ♦ **Woodruff Mountain Landscaping:** Excavation and landscape contracting, all forms of stone work and masonry, and outdoor services, including lawn mowing and yard work. 413-229-2919 woodruffmountain@aol.com

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