



# New Marlborough 5 Village News

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Clayton • Hartsville • Mill River • New Marlborough • Southfield

## HERE COMES THE SUN

### *The Planning Board Wants an Improved Solar Energy Bylaw*

By Larry Burke

How might New Marlborough avoid a collision between its natural beauty and helping create renewable energy? That was the question that lay behind a robust public hearing called by the New Marlborough Planning Board that drew nearly forty citizens to Town Hall on a brisk Saturday morning, February 10. Seeking definition and clarity to the Town's existing protective bylaws, the meeting was overseen by Planning Board Chairman Peter Tiso and attended by Board members Patricia Hardyman and James Mullen, along with Chris Gruba, a senior planner with the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.

Mr. Tiso began the meeting by emphasizing that this meeting was "an informational hearing only," intended to roll out the bylaw draft to the public, and to seek questions and suggestions. The Planning Board had distributed copies of the draft and a one-page synopsis to the attendees, and Mr. Tiso restated much of the synopsis as he laid out the aims of the larger document. The existing bylaw, he noted, is inadequate. It states simply that "a facility for generating power from wind, sun, or water" shall be allowed only by special permit from the Board of Selectmen. There is no further elaboration on what conditions a permit might require.



An attentive audience listens as Planning Board Chairman Peter Tiso stood to make his opening remarks at the February 10 hearing on a proposed solar energy bylaw.

photo by Larry Burke

The proposed bylaw addresses this shortcoming. It lays out three categories for solar energy production:

- 1) Building-mounted systems, which would be by-right, no special permit required, just a building permit
- 2) Small-scale ground-mounted systems, limited to a footprint of one-eighth of an acre, which would require a special permit, input from abutters, screening requirements, and environmental safeguards
- 3) Large-scale ground-mounted systems occupying more than an eighth of an acre—essentially commercial operations—which would be subject to a comprehensive special permit process.

The first two categories are meant to delineate conditions for home use of solar generation. The main focus of the meeting was on the third category, which is the one that the proposed bylaw addresses in the greatest detail. Section 8.9.4 of the draft, concerning roof- or building-mounted photovoltaics, runs a concise two lines. Section 8.9.5, on small ground-mounted displays, is a bit more than two pages in length. Section 8.9.6, on large-scale installations, is five pages long and includes requirements covering safety and maintenance, liability insurance, a surety bond to cover removal and restoration, comprehensive design limitation, and respon-

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sibility for an independent technical review prior to the granting of a special permit.

Once the floor was opened to questions, two things became quickly apparent: One, there was great appreciation for the quality of the work put in by the Planning Board; and two, there was an extraordinary level of expertise and knowledge on the subject of solar energy production amongst the townspeople seated in the audience.

Many of the initial questions and comments centered on concerns about the potential loss of scenic views. John Schreiber summed up the feeling of many in the crowd by saying, "The beauty of our town is our biggest asset." Others, including Will Regan, Lori Fena, Rebecca Schreiber, and Elise Richman, offered their thoughts on specific wordings that might strengthen the Planning Board's language on screening solar installations from public view.

Douglas Trumbull asked Peter Tiso if the Planning Board's effort to draft a new bylaw was the result of the application for a large solar installation proposed for the gravel pit above Mill River on the Mill River Southfield Road, hidden from road-level view by an intervening hill. Mr. Tiso replied that, no, the board had been working on this area of the protective bylaws well before this commercial installation was proposed. Later in the meeting, when the subject of this project came up again, Mr. Tiso affirmed that the selectmen would be likely to proceed through the special permit process using the existing, limited bylaw. The new bylaw would not come to a vote until the Annual Town Meeting in May and would not be implemented before receiving an okay from the state Attorney General. He expressed hopes, however, that the Board and the applicant would make a good faith effort to comply with the spirit, if not the letter, of the proposed bylaw.

As the meeting progressed, other viewpoints were heard. Steve Cunningham, who had spent seventeen years in the energy sector, spoke in defense of solar fields, saying he finds beauty in them. He added that he expects there are ways that farming activity could take place alongside, or under, solar panels, to which Mr. Tiso agreed. On the other hand, Jean Pollock said she finds solar arrays to be "horribly ugly," and feared there would be no limits to the numbers of commercial installations in New Marlborough. Mr. Tiso responded that the Planning Board had not considered the need for a cap on the number of projects. Ned Wilson and



Planning Board member Patricia Hardyman (left) addresses a question from the audience during the solar energy bylaw hearing. To her left are members Peter Tiso and James Mullen, and, far right, Chris Gruba of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. photo by Larry Burke

Deanna Mummert, both with years of professional experience in the energy field, observed that the possibility of too many large solar installations was unlikely, since the capacity of NationalGrid's substation to transmit solar power to the grid will naturally limit the commercial potential in our town.

Other thoughts and suggestions were expressed, all welcomed by the members of the Planning Board. Issues ranged from expected monetary benefits to the Town, the role of larger corporations such as NationalGrid in having a level of authority over applicants, the possibility of huge energy conglomerates descending on the town, and the future effects of a changing economy. Planning Board member Patricia Hardyman

conceded that these were all important considerations but that the primary function of the Board was "to focus on land use, and not on power generation." Peter Tiso reinforced Ms. Hardyman's remarks by saying that the intent of the proposed bylaw is not to be prohibitive of this type of development, but to provide a way forward that protects New Marlborough's landscape from unnecessary degradation.

During more than an hour and a half of informed discussion, the tone of the meeting remained positive throughout. Courtesy and civility were the order of the day, a credit to our elected officials and to the responsible citizens who attended. The Planning Board will next work up a revised draft, incorporating a number of useful suggestions that came out of the meeting. It aims to have a new solar energy bylaw on the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting on May 7. If the voters approve, the bylaw will need to pass muster with the Massachusetts Attorney General before it can go into effect. □

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## Town Business Is Your Business

### BOARD OF SELECTMEN

**January 22:** The Board, with all three members present, met with Patricia Mullins and Will Sikula of Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC), which is assisting the Town in applying for a Community Development Block Grant. Such grants, funded by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) but administered by the states, are generally awarded for repairs to low- and middle-income housing. They can also be used for municipal infrastructure or to bring buildings into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

To apply for a grant the Town must first create a Community Development Strategy (CDS). So the meeting's first order of business was to review a three-page CDS document put together with BRPC's help. It comprises the Town's goals, priorities, and possible sources of funding for achieving these priorities. **One of the goals specified in the document is provision of a wide variety of housing options for the Town, including the creation of a housing rehabilitation program. The Board asked for certain revisions before signing off on the document.**

As for the grant, Ms. Mullins said that New Marlborough is being paired with the town of Cheshire on a grant worth as much as \$1 million. Experience has shown, she explained, that the majority of grants that get funded are regional grants involving the collaboration of two or more towns. Cheshire was already in the queue for a grant, she said, and will be the lead partner on it. As a result, its share of the grant will amount to around \$800,000, which would fund eighteen to twenty residential rehab projects, versus New Marlborough's \$200,000 for four to six projects. But as Town Administrator Mari Enoch pointed out, "Although Cheshire will be the lead and will get the



bulk of the money, what we're going to get is an amount that will get us started in a manageable way. I think it will help our residents more if we start with a small number of projects and get some experience, rather than starting out with a goal of trying to do a lot of projects in one year."

The awards, typically \$35,000, go to the homeowners and are actually fifteen-year, no-interest, deferred-payment loans that don't have to be paid back unless there's an ownership transfer of the property during the term of the loan.

The Board then reviewed and approved a Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and BRPC, which basically says that BRPC will prepare and submit the grant application and in return the Town agrees that BRPC will administer the grant and the residential rehab program, if the application is successful. For its efforts BRPC, according to HUD guidelines, will be entitled to as much as twenty-seven percent of the value of the grant, or \$270,000.

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The deadline for submitting the application to the state Department of Housing and Community Development is March 2. A required public hearing to inform residents about the program was scheduled for Monday, February 12. In the meantime, the Town and BRPC will create a list of residents potentially interested in taking advantage of the program.

In other matters, Ms. Enoch said Planning Board Chairman Peter Tiso wants to meet with the Board to review the Planning Board's recently completed draft of a solar bylaw and to express his concerns about non-compliance with the present bylaw. The Planning Board will hold a public hearing on the proposed solar bylaw revision February 10. The Board agreed to add him to its January 29 agenda. Also on that agenda is Building Inspector Tom Carmody, who is expected to propose changes to his office hours now that he has taken a full-time building inspector job with the city of Pittsfield.

Under Selectmen updates, Michele Shalaby said she met with Fire Company President David Smith and Police Chief Graham Frank to discuss the possibility of moving the Police Department into an office in the former firehouse in Southfield, which is where the police cruiser is currently housed. **The Fire Company, she said, has been setting aside the \$500 a month it has received from the Town for garaging the cruiser for a little more than five years to fund rehabbing the building and creating a police department office.** She said a rental agreement for the office space will have to be worked out between the Town and the Fire Company and that Chief Frank will have to start including that expense in his budget.

Finally, Mr. Yohalem reported on the second in a series of roundtable discussions bringing together the selectmen and finance committee members from the

five Southern Berkshire Regional School District towns with the school superintendent and members of the School Committee. He said that the meeting focused on the status of the Egremont School and prospects for repairing the building and reinstating an educational program there.

**January 29:** With all three members present, the Board met with Building Inspector Tom Carmody to discuss his office hours and the structure of the department now that he has taken a full-time building inspector job in Pittsfield. Mr. Carmody, who has been the building inspector in New Marlborough for twelve years, reported that he has already reduced his office hours by half and now meets with contractors

only on Monday nights but that he is willing to stay on in that capacity through the end of the fiscal year, or even longer if necessary, until a replacement can be found. He said he would like to play a role in finding and training that person and indicated he's planning to propose the same thing to the Town of Alford, where he is also the building inspector.

**His goal would be to find a candidate with a college degree, construction experience, and perhaps a construction supervisor's license and have that person achieve state certification while on the job.** As he noted, he has a budget to work with – his \$20,400 salary, which he'll continue to draw, plus \$2,100 in expenses – which he said he's willing to share with whomever he hires as this person works toward getting certified.

The Board agreed to consider his proposal but seemed to be leaning towards sharing an inspector with one or more other towns. Mr. Carmody disagreed with this strategy: "If we get too many bosses involved, no one's going to want to be involved in that," he said referring to potential candidates. "They're not going to want to have three or four boards [of selectmen] or towns that

*"What we're going to get is an amount that will get us started in a manageable way."*

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they're responsible to. No, I want to start with one, that's all." In the end, the Board made no decision for going forward, and, at least for the time being, will let Mr. Carmody continue to work a reduced schedule.

Next, Planning Board Chairman Peter Tiso presented a proposal for a new solar bylaw. As he explained, "The reason we're doing this is that the current bylaw addresses solar in an extremely terse manner." By contrast, the proposed bylaw, according to a one-page summary he handed out, is an effort to expand on the existing bylaw so as "to balance the benefits of solar development with the need to protect other resources, primarily agricultural land and ecosystems." It divides solar production systems into three size classes with "what we feel are more logical permitting steps that make sense for each class," he explained. The three classes are: building- or roof-mounted photovoltaic systems; small-scale ground-mounted systems with a footprint of up to one-eighth of an acre, generating power primarily for on-site use, and large-scale, or commercial, ground-mounted systems, occupying more than one-eighth of an acre, where the power generated is for off-site use.

He said in some ways the proposed bylaw is "more permissive" than the current "blanket requirement for a special permit." For example, building- or roof-mounted systems can be installed by right, with no special permit required regardless of size.

On the other hand, large-scale or commercial ground-mounted systems would be subject to a permitting process that ensures they will be "constructed, maintained and eventually decommissioned in a manner that minimizes their environmental impact and ensures that the Town will not be left with costly or unsightly problems in the event that a system is abandoned."

He also noted the proposed bylaw does not use

*"The reality is I'm under the gun to get these moved. So as soon as we can sell them, we're going to sell them."*

"generative capacity" at all in defining how a solar power system is to be regulated, but instead looks at the size of the system's footprint, since in his view it's more about land use than generative capacity. (For an article on a February 10 public hearing on the proposed bylaw, see page 1.)

Following up on last week's meeting with Berkshire Regional Planning Commission regarding the Town's application for a Community Development Block Grant, the Board voted to approve an updated version of its Community Development Strategy (CDS).

In other matters, the Board voted to add Dave Herrick to the Conservation Commission, bringing to five the number of members on the commission. His term will be effective immediately and run until the end of the current fiscal year.

The Board also voted to sign a contract with the state accepting a \$5,000 grant on behalf of the Council on Aging. The grant, according to Senior Services Director Prue Spaulding, is used to support the senior wellness program, to pay for the thrice-yearly senior luncheons, and to support the Southern Berkshire Elderly Transportation consortium.

**February 5:** With all three selectmen present, the Board met with Shawn Brazo, president of Seaboard Solar Holdings LLC, to hear his proposal to sell the Town discounted solar net meter credits that the Town could use to pay its electric bills with NationalGrid. Seaboard would sell the credits under a long-term contract for roughly 70 cents on the dollar. Since the Town is currently spending about \$15,000 a year on electricity, it would realize a savings of \$4,500 annually, or about \$100,000 over the life of the twenty-year deal.

As Mr. Brazo explained, the solar net meter credit program was created by the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources under the Green Communities Act to promote renewable energy and is structured so that a portion of the benefits go to public entities such as towns, schools, and municipal housing authorities. Under the program, a solar company, such as Seaboard, generates electricity and sends it to a utility. But instead of paying Seaboard money for the power, the utility creates a credit account, which Seaboard can then draw on and distribute to its public entity clients on a discounted basis.

According to Mr. Brazo, Seaboard currently has three solar projects approved and permitted that it hopes to complete by year's end — in Oxford, Charlton, and Sheffield. Sale of the remaining credits will enable the company to line up financing to start construction. "In the interest of full disclosure," he said, "and I don't mean



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to sound like ‘act now or...’ but the reality is I’m under the gun to get these moved. So as soon as we can sell them, we’re going to sell them.” He distributed a list of towns and other public entities that have already signed on and urged the Board to talk it over and let him know if the Town is interested. After telling the Board he would send it a contract for its review, he said he’d like to wrap things up, if the Town is interested, within a couple of weeks.

The Board voted to sign an inter-local agreement between New Marlborough and the town of Cheshire in connection with the \$1 million block grant that the towns together will be applying for to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The agreement specifies, as previously reported, that Cheshire will act as the lead partner on the grant and that it will have full responsibility and accountability for all financial and program-related matters. Also in connection with the grant, the Board signed off on a letter to the DHCD explaining that New Marlborough currently does not have an ADA Self-Evaluation Survey and Transition Plan but it would develop one if it is selected to receive the grant.

In other matters the Board, at Ms. Shalaby’s urging, put off signing a tax-map renewal contract with Cartographic Associates, Inc. (CAI), until it could be determined whether there’s a discount available for signing a three-year deal. The renewal fee on a one-year contract is \$3,100, a \$200 increase over last year.

Under Town Administrator updates, Ms. Enoch said the Board received a special permit application from Joshua Seitz for a commercial marijuana growing and processing facility. The Oasis Campus, as it’s referred to in the application, would be located on the site of an old gravel pit at 1270 Hartsville New Marlborough Road, which is owned by O’Connor Brothers Inc. of Norfolk, Connecticut. Mr. Seitz, a frequent visitor to Board of Selectmen meetings this past year, first appeared last April with plans to buy and develop the former Kolburne School property for this purpose, but his plans fell through when an offer for the property from Tom Brazie was accepted.

As he indicated then and again now, he will be the developer of the property but will not be growing, processing or selling marijuana products himself. Instead, he will lease out facilities on the Oasis Campus to licensed growers and processors “for commercial activities involving cannabis, both medicinal cannabis and recreational cannabis.” His application states that “there are no plans for retail sales on our campus.”

**According to a map submitted with the application, the 106-acre site will include four greenhouses totaling**

**52,000 square feet**, as well as indoor growing facilities; a commercial kitchen and manufacturing facility for producing edibles and concentrates; a testing laboratory; warehouse space for an agricultural supplies wholesaler; and parking spaces for seventy-six vehicles. There will also be an on-premises security building providing security patrols and video surveillance of the property.

The Board scheduled a public hearing to review the application on Monday, March 12, at 6:00 p.m., and set a snow date of March 19.

Later in the meeting a group of residents, including Becky Schreiber, Doug and Julia Trumbull, and Deanna Mummert, expressed concern regarding Mr. Seitz’s plans and asked to be added to the agenda for the Board’s next meeting to discuss the impact on the Town. In response, Chairman Tara White told the group, “We really can’t deliberate or discuss

the permit application prior to the public hearing.”

Ms. Schreiber, however, would not be put off, saying, “We’ve been asking for this since November, and we keep getting the runaround, and now that there’s a draft [of the application] out, we want to be put on the agenda to have a discussion about it. We can’t go away now,” she stated, “We won’t go away.”

She said the group understands that the current application has to be dealt with at a special permit hearing, “and we’ll be there to voice our concerns,” she said, “but this is not a discussion about that particular application. It’s about what the future of New Marlborough is and what is the long term plan and vision of the select board for our town — for the next application, and the next one and the one after that. The town wants a voice in how these are going to be legislated and regulated, and we want to be put on your agenda for the next meeting to discuss it.”

In the end, Mr. Yohalem told them that in order to get on the agenda they need to contact either Town

***“This is not a discussion about that particular application. It’s about the future of New Marlborough....”***

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Administrator Enoch or Board Secretary Sharon Fleck.

In other matters, the Board signed off on business license renewals for Pamela Read Hardcastle of Hartsville New Marlborough Road for her Floral Garden Design business, Ronald Clavette of Canaan Southfield Road for his Pro Detailing automotive cleaning service, and Johnson Carpentry of Rhoades and Bailey Road.

**The Board then met with Kirt Mayland of Altus Power America, a solar energy developer, who was there to brief the Board on a special permit application he's expecting to file in the next few weeks for two commercial solar fields in Mill River.**

If approved, the fields will be located on the site of two gravel pits owned respectively by Norm Hankey and Ronald Leonard, across from the Highway Department garage just off the Mill River Southfield Road. He said the Hankeys and the Leonards will continue to own the properties, which Altus would lease from them. The fifteen-acre combined parcel would produce a total of 3 megawatts of power, which would be fed directly into the NationalGrid distribution system.

Although in reality they are two separate projects, according to Mr. Mayland, there will be a single access road running perpendicular to the Mill River Southfield Road, with one set of utility poles and a single interconnection point into the NationalGrid system. The access road, he said, will be upgraded from dirt to gravel, but because it will be skirting a wetlands buffer zone, the developers expect to file a Request for Determination notice with the Conservation Commission.

There will no lights at the site, he said, and no noise that can be heard from the road or by any of the nearby residences. "It's too far away, and there are too many woods surrounding it," said Mr. Mayland, "and I don't think anyone can see it from anywhere except for Mr. Hankey himself." The physical construction would take up to three months, and the only significant noise would be when the steel posts are either hammered or screwed into the ground."

The primary benefit to the Town, he said, would be increased personal property taxes on the facility. He pointed out that with projects like these, the developer typically negotiates a twenty-year payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreement with the town. "It should be a significant net positive as far as taxes go," he said, "probably ten to fifteen times more" than the town is receiving now for the land. He said his company expected to develop a full set of plans within two weeks.

**February 12:** With all three selectmen present, the Board convened a public hearing regarding the \$1 million Community Development Block Grant for which the Town is applying with the Town of Cheshire to inform residents about the program. Grant applications are due March 2 and the grants will be awarded sometime in July. **In the meantime, BRPC is**

**helping the Town collect names of people interested in the program, which will provide up to \$35,000 in no-interest, deferred-payment, fifteen-year loans which can be used to fix or replace roofs, windows, heating systems, septic systems, wells, and other major components of a home.** Before adjourning the hearing, the Board signed a joint application authorization form permitting the Town to join Cheshire in submitting the grant application.

With the hearing adjourned, the Board voted to sign the 2019 tax map maintenance proposal from CAI. The Board held off signing the contract until it could determine whether a three-year contract with a discount was available. It learned from Assessor's Clerk Marsha Pshenishny, however, that it has always been a one-year contract.

Under town administrator updates Ms. Enoch mentioned that Massachusetts Broadband Institute will meet with the selectmen and the Broadband Committee Friday, February 16, to brief the town on its broadband options under MBI's new Flexible Grant Program. She also said the next Southern Berkshire Regional School Committee Meeting has been moved to March 1 from February 28, and that the School Committee, which committed to holding one meeting in each of the five district towns this year, will be hold its meeting in New Marlborough on April 12 at Town Hall. □

*Peter Schuyten*

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## VIEW FROM THE BOARD

By Michele Shalaby

Rarely do we wish to comment on the policies and laws of the federal government or of other states. But we take exception here. Seeing repeated mass shootings at schools has emphasized how much the sensible gun laws of Massachusetts are at odds with the extreme lack of regulation in other states and our federal government. Massachusetts, with a robust list of weapons and weapon features that are banned, is one of the most restrictive gun-ownership states in the nation. We are grateful for this. We believe that the presence of such weapons, far from defending public safety, places it under greater risk. While Massachusetts gun laws in no way guarantee the safety of our school children or any other public gathering, we believe they increase the likelihood of safety. Our state's position on gun ownership is an instance in which the common good is well worth the restriction on personal rights.

In New Marlborough, we have a lively hunting culture that is appreciated by many, including those of us on the Board of Selectmen. We understand that people live in hard-to-reach places where they may feel a need for self-protection until the police can arrive. Our state laws support the reasonable ownership of weapons by law-abiding citizens. Massachusetts is not, however, isolated from jurisdictions with more lax gun-ownership laws. The accelerated mobility of people from elsewhere puts Massachusetts at risk of the weakest gun laws of the country. The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence rates Massachusetts gun laws at an A- but gives even some fellow New England states very low grades: New Hampshire get a D-, Vermont and Maine an F.

In the past, I looked more favorably on the rights of law-abiding individuals to bear arms in a responsible manner. That balance has shifted. Our national culture, lobbying efforts, and weak laws have led to a proliferation

of menacing, deadly weapons that are completely unnecessary for either sport or personal protection. And the appeal of fire power is even now being kindled. In this week of mourning another mass school shooting, it is enraging to receive an NRA sweepstakes entry, offering a tactical rifle as a prize.

We can all urge and pressure federal and state lawmakers to bring their laws to the level of those in Massachusetts. This will take time and considerable effort, but that should not prevent us from raising our voices against the proliferation of the weapons that can harm so many in so little time.

Meanwhile, we can start in our homes and neighborhoods. If you own a weapon that is banned in Massachusetts (or a copycat/duplicate) that you purchased before the ban in another state, in a person-to-person sale, or through inheritance, we ask that you voluntarily destroy that weapon to forever remove it from our society. We'll help find the resources to do so, and you will have our gratitude. If you know people with such weapons, please urge them to remove them from our lives. If you know a person considering such a purchase, discourage it. If you know of a person with these (or any other) weapons who might be a danger to others, please communicate your concern to the police.

Gun safety is a complicated issue. For too long we've been relying on the law, while blocking efforts if they don't guarantee results or address all facets of the issue. It's time to take steps that reduce the likelihood of attacks, to voluntarily relinquish ownership for the common good, to let our neighbors know that their assault weapons are unacceptable. Let us help Massachusetts become an exemplar to the rest of the nation. □

## ANNUAL POTLUCK SUPPER SCHEDULED

The New Marlborough Cultural Council is planning the annual town potluck dinner for Saturday, April 7. It will again be held in the New Marlborough Meeting House Gallery, beginning at 6:00 p.m.

Past potlucks have shown that this is a fine opportunity to enjoy the culinary talents of our townsfolk and relax in conversation with our friends and neighbors. There will be an interlude of local musical entertainment, followed by further informal conversation.

The alphabet has been divided to insure a balance of dishes, depending on your last name:

- A – G Main dish
- H – N Salad or vegetable
- O – S Dessert
- T – Z Appetizers or snacks

Plates, cups, glasses, and cutlery will be provided, as will tea, coffee, and a variety of soft drinks and juices. Please feel free to bring your own wine or beer if you wish – many people do.

The food is delicious, the evening is fun, and the Council hopes to see you there, hopefully to welcome springtime! □

*Barbara Lowman*

## The Way We Were

# LEON EICHSTEDT

By Joe Poindexter

If you want to meet a self-reliant man, talk to Leon Eichstedt.

In 1975, Leon arrived in New Marlborough with a plot of land and a trailer but no house to live in. Not a problem. With his new wife, Mildred, at his side, he built it. Which is a lot like the way he has conducted his entire life.

Now eighty-nine years old, Leon Eichstedt has long been regarded as one of our town's master carpenters. He developed his skills, however, not from vocational training or an apprenticeship, but from just plain doing. "I learned it because I wanted to learn it," he says. It didn't hurt, of course, that he has always possessed an innate sense of how things fit together. "I did carpentry since I was a kid," he says, "didn't even know it was carpentry."

Born in 1929, Leon grew up in Sheffield during the depths of the Depression. He recalls regular government-mandated deliveries of vegetables to augment scarce food supplies. "If it wasn't for FDR, we wouldn't have survived," he says. The house was not electrified, but the family enjoyed a bit of entertainment on Sunday afternoons when Leon's father hooked up a radio to the car battery.

He was thirteen when his life suddenly became more purposeful. His father was driving a friend from Canaan home when they stopped, leaving the engine idling, to chat. "Dan liked to talk," Leon recalls of the friend, and the two men did not realize that the dense fog in which they sat prevented proper ventilation of the car. Both succumbed to carbon-monoxide poisoning. Leon's uncle located Leon at a nearby farm where he was feeding the calves, told him what had happened, and said, "You've gotta be the man of the house now."

With that, a favorite adage of his mother's was put to the test: "If you have the will, you can do anything." For example, while still thirteen, he took it upon himself to replace the engine block, which had thrown a bearing, in his mother's Chevrolet. All went well until he realized he didn't know how to set the timing, which led to the discovery of a second component to his mother's advice: If you have the will — and a community of support — you can do anything. In this case, help came from neighbor Bill Wilkinson. "Bill," Leon recalls, "sat on the porch steps and told me what to do. He said, 'You have to do it yourself, or you'll never learn it.'"



Leon, left, and George Denard built the foundation of the Eichstedt house.



Leon and Mildred Eichstedt

Photo by Joe Poindexter

After high school, Leon took a job as a driver for Gilligan Brothers, a Sheffield building contractor, but quit when they wouldn't give him any carpentry work and, in 1946, joined the Navy. What he lacked in experience, he made up for in self-assurance. Asked if he had carpentry skills, he said yes. And engineering, yes again — recall the Chevy engine repair. He was sent to boot camp in Bainbridge, Maryland, and then to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where he was assigned to a repair team. His know-how and work ethic were in demand. Leon remembers the refrain, "I want Ike," (his commanding officer's nickname for him) whenever a particularly demanding job came up.

When his tour of duty was completed, Leon found employment at Jug End Barn, in Egremont, then gravitated into carpentry. He went to work for Melvin Builders, then with bridge builder William Hunt — all the while picking up the finer points of the trade from his employers. Leon recalls being stumped as to how to erect a bridge parapet so that it was straight. "It baffled me," he says. Bill Hunt showed him the use of a plumb line.

The lessons were not lost on him, and Leon began to acquire a reputation as a master craftsman. He recalls that, following the remodeling of Brook's End Inn in Monterey that provided a bit of financial stability, he was in demand for restoration work all around New Marlborough: the New Marlborough Meeting House, an addition to The Old Inn on the Green, conversion of

a cow barn at Gedney Farm to living space — removing cow stanchions, building stairways — as well as historic restoration of a number of older houses in town. “I never picked my job in my life,” he says. Nor did he want to establish a company: “I didn’t want to hire anybody.”

He became his own client when he and Mildred bought a piece of land at the foot of Lumbert Cross Road — he proposed to her under a pine tree that is still standing on the property. And this is where self-reliance met up with community. The property needed a trench to connect a new well to the house. Leon had helped Joe Wilkinson, a neighbor then living on River Road, through a rough patch of his life, and Joe came over with an excavator to dig the trench. “How much do I owe you?” Leon asked. “Not a nickel,” was Joe’s reply.

George Denard, a mason from Albany who was working in the neighborhood, came by as Leon was mixing mortar for the foundation. George didn’t hesitate:



Leon and a son, Bruce, put a roof on the new house.

“Man, I’ll help you,” he said to Leon. And he did, pitching in through the laying up of the entire foundation. Leon would pay him when he could — “I was scratching for money.” When the foundation was done, he gave George an old Chevy station wagon in lieu of cash. “You helped your neighbors, they helped you,” Leon says of the quasi-barter economy of the day. “We were lucky. We had a lot of good neighbors.”

“A lot of nice friends,” adds Mildred.

When the exterior walls were up and the structure had running water, Leon and Mildred sold the trailer to an oil-exploration company working in Alaska. At the time, the Eichstedt house had few interior walls, and the front door was a piece of plywood, but they moved in. They were home.

Today, Leon and Mildred say they were lucky. Sometimes, however, “luck” is what happens when self-reliance and a good community come together. □

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## BROADBAND UPDATE

### A PATH FORWARD AT LAST?

by Barry R. Shapiro

Two meetings in February may finally have revealed the pathway to bringing high-speed internet to New Marlborough. While there are obstacles, most of them are visible, and those involved in the process are formulating strategies to overcome them.

At the first meeting, on February 16, the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI), the state agency charged with bringing broadband to unserved towns, met with the New Marlborough Board of Selectmen and the Broadband Committee. MBI Chairman Peter Larkin and Deputy Director Ed Donnelly, addressing the committees, plus a standing-room-only crowd of concerned citizens, opened by admitting that MBI's past efforts had not yet achieved its objective. They then proceeded to describe MBI's new "flexible grant program," which, according to Mr. Donnelly, seeks to work with the towns, "to form a consensus and work on a path forward."

Mr. Larkin then reviewed the status of the Town's three current options and MBI's conditions in providing a grant of \$1.45 million toward the project's cost.

- Westfield Gas and Electric — MBI would provide the \$1.45 million grant to Westfield upfront. Westfield, however, is willing to build out only what the grant would finance, which would result in only a third of the town being wired. To realize the Town's and MBI's objective of having at least 96 percent coverage, the Town would need to borrow or otherwise provide the additional funds necessary, something that Selectman Nat Yohalem stated the Town is not prepared to do. Mr. Yohalem has also said he would not support the Westfield proposal that the Town own the network.
- Crocker Communications — As with Westfield, MBI would provide the \$1.45 million grant upfront. Crocker would use the MBI funds to wire 62 percent of the Town, leaving the Town with a \$2 million-plus obligation for the remainder. Mr. Yohalem was again quick to point out that this proposal, like that from Westfield, is not practical for the Town, since it would require the Town to borrow significant sums. Crocker has proposed that it would own the network.
- Matrix Communications — In contrast to the Westfield and Crocker proposals, MBI flat out refused to provide any funding to Matrix upfront, citing concerns over Matrix's financial strength. However, MBI would agree to provide funding after the buildout has been completed, meaning that the Town would need to borrow approximately \$1.45 million to replace the MBI grant. MBI would repay the money to the Town in the future. Matrix would pay for the rest of

the construction costs and the network, which it said would cover at least 96 percent of the Town. Matrix would own the network but the Town would have an option to acquire it after three years and could elect to take it over after 20 years — for a symbolic \$10.

Mr. Donnelly noted that MBI is still finalizing its guidelines for funding companies like Matrix it considers "not highly capitalized" but would post them soon. Repayment, after the completion of network construction would be made if:

- counsel certifies that all procurement laws were followed in the construction,
- network construction is complete,
- the Town and Matrix certify that there are no lawsuits relating to the project and that all bills have been paid,
- there is a "take rate" of at least 50 percent of residents, and
- the Town and Matrix have entered into a formal contract for Matrix to provide broadband services.

At this point, the consequences of MBI's position became crystal clear: In order to obtain a network that will serve all New Marlborough, the Town will need to incur some level of debt, something that the Board of Selectmen has previously stated it is not prepared to do.

Broadband Committee member, Steve Klein, was the first to fire a question about this to MBI. "Would MBI," he asked, "confirm that it would agree, by contract, to reimburse the Town for any funds the Town borrowed for the upfront costs required by Matrix once all of MBI's conditions were met?" Mr. Donnelly confirmed that MBI would do this, noting, however, that the Town would "be on the hook to the end of construction."

Broadband Committee chair, Richard Long, observed that MBI had previously refused to provide reimbursement until Matrix had demonstrated at least two years of profitability after completion of construction. Mr. Donnelly said that MBI has "moved off this" but remained concerned about "construction risk." Mr. Larkin stressed that MBI was wary of funding construction and then having the project abandoned by Matrix. "We are not willing to take the risk of a 'stranded asset,'" he said.

Selectman Michele Shalaby challenged Mr. Larkin on the 50 percent take rate requirement for reimbursement.

“Why do we need that number?” she asked. Mr. Larkin responded by saying that MBI has a non-negotiable need to know that the project can stand on its own and has operational sustainability.

The process for grant approval was then reviewed at length: The MBI board, which meets only every few months, will need to approve the grant. The Town will need to follow any applicable procurement procedures, including the issuance of a new Request for Proposals (RFP). MBI will need to post any proposed transaction the Town is contemplating to allow other providers to submit competing proposals (which could lead to further delays). The Town will need to finalize its due diligence on the proposed provider and to negotiate and execute a contract with the provider. The Town would also need to submit a borrowing request to the voters at an annual or special town meeting, which would need the approval of two-thirds of the voters present.

Following the MBI presentation, Mr. Yohalem expressed his hope that other players might obviate the need for Town borrowing. He named Charter Communications, which “may submit a new proposal” and Fiber Connect, whose proposal has been received but not yet reviewed. He is also hopeful that an RFP could turn up some other provider that would not require Town borrowing.

Steve Klein, on the other hand, does not see the prospect of the Town borrowing money as an insurmountable obstacle. He points out that interest on \$1.5 million would cost about \$35,000 a year and would be due only for the two years until MBI repaid the loan. “It’s a better deal than anything we’ve seen so far, and it is basically approved by MBI and Matrix,” he said. “We have to go through a process, but that doesn’t have to be more than a few months.”

Delays are problematic, says Mr. Klein, not only in and of themselves, but also because of recent actions by Fiber Connect, another potential service provider. Fiber Connect has already started its make-ready process and is currently seeking to sign up selected New Marlborough residents for its service. He believes this constitutes a threat to getting the entire town wired. “Any effort to cherry pick the easiest areas to wire in town makes the town less attractive to other potential providers,” he said. “I encourage all residents to wait until a ubiquitous solution is in place before subscribing.”

Mr. Klein is optimistic that an acceptable solution to the town’s broadband needs will soon be developed, that the path forward is now “clearer than ever.” With this in mind, Broadband Committee Chairman Long corralled his members and set a meeting for February 21.

At this meeting, also well attended by concerned citizens, Mr. Long reviewed available options to get the entire town wired and stated that it appeared “likely the Town will need to provide upfront financing.” Mr. Klein

added that, at this point, “all options have some cost to the Town. We tried to avoid this but couldn’t.”

As an alternative to borrowing, the up-front money could, Mr. Long suggested, be financed through a municipal lease financing arrangement, which would require a simple majority of voters at a town meeting, rather than the two-thirds requirement of a bond. As with a bond, the lease obligation would run for about two years, or until upfront expenses were repaid by MBI.

The Committee agreed to put together a new RFP, as required by law, within the next two weeks, if possible, and to require a response date of not more than two weeks after issuance so that a decision on which provider to recommend could be reached promptly. The Committee will post currently available data on the Town website and hold an information meeting after responses to the RFP have been received. At this pace, the matter could come before the Annual Town Meeting, May 7, though the Committee made clear that it could not guarantee that this would be possible.

Echoing his sentiments expressed at the meeting with MBI that residents should resist signing with a provider until a town-wide solution was reached, the following resolution was introduced by Mr. Klein and passed by vote of three in favor, two opposed:

*The committee’s work is moving forward with speed. It is our intention to solicit proposals from all providers who have expressed an interest in serving the town and achieving the Committee’s and the Select Board’s stated intention of providing a ubiquitous solution (at least 96 percent of all residences) for high-speed internet in New Marlborough.*

*We have received expressions of interest from four different companies. Once we receive formal proposals, we will evaluate them and present a summary of them to all interested town residents at an informational meeting. We will then make a recommendation to the Select Board. We expect this process to move quickly.*

*We also know that some providers may have approached residents in some areas of town with a direct offer to install high-speed internet for them. While we understand everyone’s frustration with the pace of progress to date, we ask everyone to hold off on signing up for high-speed internet that is not part of a ubiquitous, town-wide solution. Any effort that wires only some residences will make it difficult, if not impossible to successfully structure and build a system that provides high-speed internet to all residences. We respectfully request that everyone hold off until our process is complete and we have identified a town-wide solution.*

There are still bumps in the road ahead: an RFP to get out, responses to be received, a formal contract with the bidder executed, an agreement from MBI for reimbursement and voter approval for such borrowing as may be needed. But progress appears to have been made. This time we will know within weeks, rather than months or years, whether it is once again an illusion. □

## Neighbors



**O**degaard Fields wrote to share his experience with a recent field trip to Boston:

"I went to Boston through Project 351, a state program that brings eighth graders from all 351 Massachusetts cities and towns to Boston, where they spend the day in community service through non-profit organizations in the Boston area. I was selected to represent New Marlborough. With Mount Everett students Nadia and Grace Makuc, Mikel Norse, and Mariah Broderick, I went to J.F.K Memorial Library in Boston to hear Governor Charlie Baker speak about his connection to Project 351. Lauren Baker, his wife, was also there as a surprise Project Hero.



Odie Fields with a Team Ellen DeGeneres member making lasagna for the Pine Street shelter in Boston.

Project Heroes are international, national, or local people who have made a significant difference in the world around them. Teams of about fifteen teenagers are assigned to a Project Hero.

"Then we split up to go off to a nonprofit organization and help out. Some groups went to schools; others went to homeless shelters, Cradles to Crayons (which helps children in low-income families), or other service organizations. I went to a homeless shelter and prepared lasagna for the following week. Another element of Project 351 is Spring Service. In March, my friends and I will collect clothing for Cradles to Crayons at Mount Everett in Sheffield.

"I had a memorable experience; this program brings together kind and compassionate people. If you have any questions about Spring Service or Project 351, my email is [odegaardfields@gmail.com](mailto:odegaardfields@gmail.com)."

(The "351" refers to the number of cities and towns in Massachusetts, each of which sends an eighth-grade student for a Day of Service in Boston.)



Gretchen Long

**Gretchen Long**, a part-time resident of Mill River since 1964, and now also a resident of Wilson, Wyoming, has served as one of twelve members of the National Park System Advisory Board for the past seven years. Recently, ten members, including Ms. Long, resigned in frustration that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has refused to meet with them or to convene a meeting in more than a year. The Board's by-laws require meetings twice a year: It last met in November, 2016.

The Board is the body within the Park System tasked with establishing national historic or natural landmarks — it has designated more than 130 such landmarks during the past seven years. Since these cannot be established without Board approval, no new landmark has been designated since January, 2016.

It has other functions as well. Over the years, the National Park Service has sought the input of the Board in addressing climate change, modernizing facilities, and encouraging younger visitors to frequent the parks. Board members were

surprised that they had not been consulted on the Department of the Interior's recent decisions to increase visitor fees and reverse a ban on plastic water bottles in the parks. The Department's decision to rescind all work in the sciences and climate change provided the impetus for the resignations.

Ms. Long has been involved in issues of land use and management for twenty-five years. She is strongly supportive of the philosophy underlying the National Park System. She is concerned that the current leadership is contradicting the progress of policies established over the years and is undercutting the long-term health of the National Parks.

Word has been received that **Dick Hulett** passed away on January 22 in Port Orange, Florida, at the age of eighty. Dick grew up on the family farm, which the family still owns, in Clayton. He graduated from New Marlborough High School in 1955 in a class of nine students. Classmates **Dick**, **David Sheldon**, **Howard Nourse**, **Londa (Bianchi) Bourquard**, and **Winnie Veretto** went through all twelve grades together, and have remained life-long friends. Dick and his wife, **Joan**, regularly attended the annual NMHS reunions.

There will be a local celebration of Dick's life on April 14 at the Falls Village (Connecticut) Church at 1:00 p.m. Joan Hulett can be reached at 735 Tarrytown Trail, Port Orange, FL, 32127.

While the Winter Olympics were capturing sports page headlines last month, the *5 Village News* was keeping an eye on New Marlborough's own top-ranked competitor. **Stuart Lawrence**, who divides his time (with artist-wife **Diane Nerwen**) between Southfield and Brooklyn, was recently ranked the nation's fourth-best croquet player. In

February, he competed in an international tournament in Wellington, New Zealand, and was seeded third in the United States Association National Championship being played in Rancho Mirage, California, as this issue of NM5VN went to press.

**Leslie Wheeler**, a recent resident of New Marlborough, has just published her newest mystery, *Rattlesnake Hill*, which she says is set in a town “not unlike New Marlborough.” Go to her reading (3:00 to 5:00 p.m., March 10 at the Bushnell-Sage Public Library in Sheffield) and see if you can sniff out the similarities.



Stuart Lawrence

If you need something done, give the job to a busy man. That adage seems to have guided the Board of Selectmen in its choices to fill two positions on the Conservation Commission: **David Hosford** and **David Herrick**. Mr. Hosford, who was appointed at the beginning of the year, was president of the New Marlborough Village Association from 2007 to 2012 and still serves on its board. He is also on the boards of the New Marlborough Historical Society and New Marlborough Land Trust. Four years ago, he was appointed to the Town's Historical Commission.



David Hosford



David Herrick

Mr. Herrick, whose appointment took effect January 27, served on the Finance Committee for twelve years, the Fire Department for twenty-five years, and was an EMT from 2000 to 2010. He has been the Town's 911 Coordinator since 2000 and Constable since 2015. Of course, from 1992 to last April, he was also owner, operator, and resident sage of the Mill River General Store.

Finally, let it be noted that as of late January **Debbie O'Brien** has served as New Marlborough's library director for a quarter of a century. Deb, who started as our librarian January 27, 1993, guided the library through its reconstruction following the fire of 1998. Drop in to the library to congratulate her — and see what you can do to get her to commit to another twenty-five years. □



Debbie O'Brien

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

## Upcoming: Events Calendar for March and April

**March 20:** Deadline for caucus nominations for Town offices; place your name with Town Clerk Kathy Chretien no later than 3:30 p.m.

**March 27:** Town Caucus, Town Hall, beginning at 6:00 p.m.

**March 30:** Deadline for certification of nominees (top two caucus winners) for election to Town offices; see Town Clerk Kathy Chretien no later than 3:30 p.m.

**April 7:** Annual Pot Luck Supper, cook it, bring it, and enjoy the culinary skills of your fellow townspeople; 6:00 p.m. New Marlborough Meeting House Gallery on the village green, sponsored by the Cultural Council

**April 14:** The Land Trust's Red Hot Blues Bash, the annual hoedown with food, drinks, and two special auctions; at Gedney Farm, tickets on sale starting March 10

**April 23:** Last day to register to vote at the Annual Town Meeting; see Kathy Chretien at the Town Hall, 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. or 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.

# HARBINGERS

Yes, it has been an exhausting winter. But as Erik Callahan's photos, all taken during a recent chilly week, suggest, if the birds come, can spring be far behind? For more of Erik's work, go to: [erikmichaelcallahan.wordpress.com/photography/](http://erikmichaelcallahan.wordpress.com/photography/)



Red-bellied woodpecker



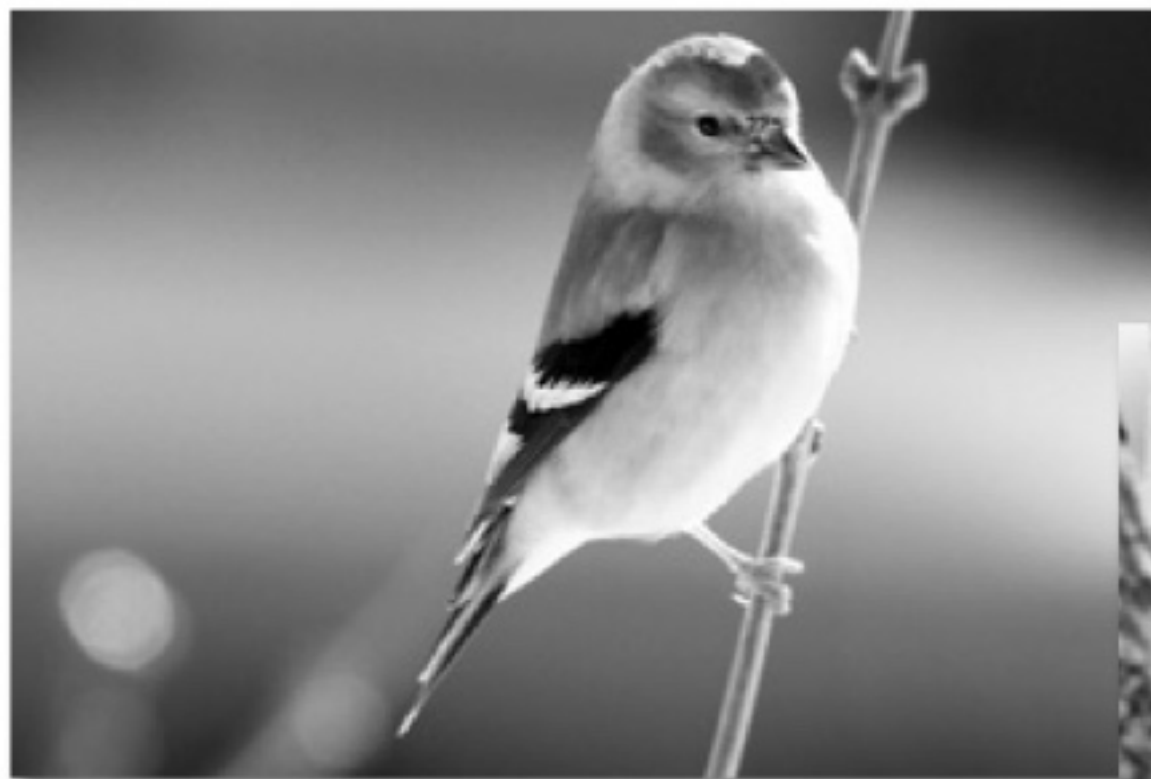
Goldfinches at the feeder



Chickadee



Male hairy woodpecker



Goldfinch



Purple finch



Male cardinal



Junco



White throated sparrow

**Thank You to Our Contributors!**

Edward & Claire Stiepleman; gift from John & Judy Ladd for Roberta Roy;  
Walter Agar; David Krom; Michael Skrak



## COMMUNITY NEWS

### Notes from the Council on Aging

Recently the Council on Aging sent a letter to town residents outlining a couple of activities of interest.

First, in a questionnaire inserted in the recent street listing mailing, the Council on Aging asked if the recipient of the mailing had been unable to secure transportation to a medical appointment (none had), and if the recipient would like to receive a phone call during a power failure. About twenty-eight people responded that they would appreciate a phone call at that time. The Council on Aging is now looking for several volunteers who would be willing to call four or

five of these people during a power failure. If you would like to volunteer, please call Marsha Harvey (413-229-9965) or Prue Spaulding (413-229-8407).

Second, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts provides funds for seniors through the Circuit Breaker tax relief program. When real estate taxes and other related expenses exceed 10 percent of a senior's annual income, the senior may receive funds from the state by filing a state income tax form and applying for the Senior Circuit Breaker program. Questions? Call Prue (229-8407). □

### Dialysis Closer to Home

While most other hospitals in Massachusetts are selling their renal dialysis facilities to private, for-profit companies, Berkshire Medical Center (BMC) is expanding its capacity. As a part of a \$6 million investment in new treatment centers, BMC announced the opening of a now fully renovated South County Renal Dialysis Center at 10 Maple Avenue in Great Barrington, which has nine treatment chairs and is

open three days a week.

"Our community can count on having access to the healthcare services they rely on, right here at home," says David Phelps, president and CEO of Berkshire Health Systems. "The quality of care that our renal dialysis staff provides is among the best in the nation." In January, BMC opened a center with twenty-one chairs in Pittsfield and last fall one with twelve chairs in North Adams. □

### Day Camp at Wa Wa Segowea

For the first time, local children will have daytime access to the Camp Wa Wa Segowea experience. Camp Wa Wa Day Camp, open to seven-to-nine-year-olds runs from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Early drop-off is

available and campers can elect to sleepover Thursday nights. The \$250 per week tuition includes lunch, \$300 for early drop-off plus breakfast. Wa Wa Segowea's four-week season runs from July 16 to August 10. □

### Old Inn at the Pillow

Peter Platt and Jacob's Pillow are combining to bring fine dining to dance this summer. The Old Inn on the Green will operate a pop-up restaurant under a classic summer tent at Jacob's Pillow, the acclaimed dance venue in Becket, Massachusetts, during its ten-week season June 20 through August 26. The Old Inn on the Green at the Pillow, as it will be called, will serve dinner Wednesday through Saturday from 5:00 to 9:00

p.m. and a Sunday Brunch 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

More casual fare will be offered by the Southfield Store at the Pillow — hours: Wednesday through Friday, 4:00 to 11:00 p.m., Saturdays, noon to midnight, and Sundays, noon to 5:00 p.m. Finally, the Southfield Coffee Bar at Jacob's Pillow will serve lattes, espressos, and the like Wednesdays through Fridays, 2:00 to 9:30 p.m. and Sundays, noon to 5:00 p.m. □

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## THE LOG

### Police Department (selected entries)

- Jan. 1 1:01 a.m. A young English pointer reported running loose in New Marlborough village.
- 9:41 a.m. A Hayes Hill Road resident reports concern about a neighbor's dog, which, having been locked out of the house on a cold morning, has been barking for the past half hour.
- Jan. 2 10:19 a.m. Officer calls in a tow truck to assist with a motor vehicle accident on Campbell Falls Road.
- 19:28 a.m. Officer assists with the return of a stray dog on Norfolk Road.
- Jan. 4 4:04 p.m. Officer assists with a motor vehicle accident on Route 57.
- Jan. 7 8:18 p.m. Animal Control Officer is called to assist with the recovery of two horses loose on Hartsville Mill River Road.
- 1:00 p.m. Southfield village resident complains of a car parked in the roadway in front of the Southfield Store.
- Jan. 11 12:21 p.m. Officer follows up on an accident report filed the previous evening, in which a vehicle struck a deer on Canaan Valley Road.
- Jan. 12 11:46 a.m. The Highway Department is notified after an officer reports a backed-up culvert on Hartsville New Marlborough Road.
- 5:57 p.m. Following a stop on Old County Road, officer discovers marijuana and two open beer cans in the vehicle.
- 9:10 p.m. Wires down on Canaan Southfield Road.
- 11:18 p.m. A vehicle stopped on Mill River Great Barrington Road is found to be operating with a revoked registration.
- Jan. 13 9:17 a.m. National Grid notified after a caller reports a tree on wires near the New Marlborough village green on Hartsville New Marlborough Road.
- 11:24 a.m. A Foley Hill Road resident alerts the department to a pothole, large enough to damage vehicles, near the foot of her road.
- Jan. 16 8:18 p.m. A Hartsville New Marlborough Road resident who has received harassing messages during the past month is advised to seek a court order.
- 3:42 p.m. A Hayes Hill Road resident calls in a two-car accident at the intersection of Hayes Hill and Mill River Great Barrington Roads.
- Jan. 17 3:01 p.m. The Department receives paperwork to facilitate the hospitalization of a resident of the Brien Center, Pittsfield, following mental health issues.
- Jan. 18 7:35 p.m. Officer reports that a snowmobile trespassing in the large cornfield adjacent to the Clayton Mill River Road fled south across the Connecticut state line.
- Jan. 19 12:57 p.m. New Marlborough Southfield Road resident reports being threatened by a man who came to his front door with an axe in his hand, yelled at him, and left.
- 3:45 p.m. A Mill River Great Barrington Road resident reports a scam call from a "credit card company."
- 8:15 p.m. A Southfield resident, stopped for speeding, is arrested for driving under the influence (third offense) with open containers of alcohol in his car.
- Jan. 27 4:16 p.m. Officer stops a motorcycle on Lumbert Cross Road; vehicle towed and the operator charged with operating an unregistered/uninsured motorcycle.
- Jan. 29 7:59 p.m. Officer reports dangerously icy conditions on a patch of Campbell Falls Road.
- Jan. 30 11:22 a.m. Debris reported on Route 57.
- \* Not recorded here: sixty-four motor vehicle stops resulting in a citation or a verbal or written warning.

*Graham Frank, Chief of Police*

### Fire and Rescue

- Jan. 3 9:41 a.m. Mutual Aid to Sandisfield Medical Call
- Jan. 5 12:18 p.m. Norfolk Road CO Alarm
- Jan. 8 6:28 p.m. Mill River Great Barrington Road Medical Call
- Jan. 12 1:24 p.m. Stratford Road Medical Call
- Jan. 16 7:21 p.m. Norfolk Road Medical Call
- Jan. 17 1:12 p.m. Norfolk Road Medical Call
- Jan. 19 10:52 a.m. Canaan Southfield Road Medical Call
- Jan. 29 2:04 a.m. Mill River Great Barrington Road Medical Call
- Jan. 30 3:29 a.m. Ambulance Stand-by for Great Barrington Structure Fire
- Jan. 31 3:12 p.m. Hotchkiss Road Fire Alarm

*Fire Company President David Smith*



## Land Trust News

The Land Trust is busy planning for the second Red Hot Blues Bash, a community extravaganza that celebrates the people and landscape that make New Marlborough special. The Bash will be an exceptional evening with great food, live music, dancing, specialty cocktails, and, a special element of

the evening, a silent auction.

The silent auction has two parts. The first will present donations from community members who offer “unique experiences” that draw on what they love to do. It is a way to highlight the creative talents and expertise of local residents and for us all to learn something new about our neighbors. At last year’s Bash, for example, Richard Stebbins offered a two-hour fly fishing lesson on the Konkapot River. Angus Kerr offered a wilderness safari in uncharted New Marlborough territory complete with crawfish hunting and insect trapping. The second part of the auction will feature a limited selection of higher priced “adventures.” Through a wide range of items to bid on, the auction will be accessible to diverse interests and means, reflecting the essence of our New Marlborough community.

Polish your dancing shoes and get down to Gedney Farm on April 14. Tickets go on sale March 10. □

Martha Bryan



## A CHALLENGING WINTER

The winter of 2017-18 has been hard on New Marlborough roads. Although snow accumulation has been moderate, we have had a number of nuisance storms, requiring a lot of time and material. We have also had several rain/ice storms. During a rainstorm, when the road temperatures are below freezing, both paved and unpaved roads freeze almost instantly. This happens even when the air temperatures are well above freezing, so don’t be fooled.

On paved roads, rain dilutes the salt, which has to be reapplied every few hours to keep ice from building up. On the dirt roads — we have forty-five miles of them — the sand that is applied quickly freezes over, sometimes within thirty minutes. With only six trucks taking several hours to treat them, it is almost impossible to keep ahead of this kind of weather. We usually treat them early morning and evening, trying to conserve sand so that we have sufficient material for when the storm ends.

Our goal is to provide reasonably safe roads during all weather conditions. Thanks to New Marlborough

residents for their patience and to the highway crew for answering the call at all hours of day and night.

Motorists should always use their best judgment and plan ahead during storms, recognizing that they are traveling at their own risk in inclement weather. While most of the winter weather is behind us, please keep the following guidelines in mind; another winter season is only eight or nine months away:

- Use common sense and refrain from unnecessary driving during a snow or ice storm.
- Reduce your speed and drive cautiously.
- Avoid distractions. The use of electronic devices while driving is not only illegal, it’s unwise.
- Snow tires are better than all-season tires during winter months in New England.
- Do not park your vehicle in any roadway.
- Tune in to local weather forecasts and be aware of changing conditions. □

Chuck Loring, New Marlborough Highway Superintendent



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## SCHOOL NEWS

**A** Letter from School Superintendent Beth Regulbuto: The Middle School Task Force (MSTF) is underway! The MSTF includes district and building administrators, members of the District Leadership Team, faculty and staff, parents/guardians, the School Committee and community members. Why are we looking at reconfiguring the middle school of Southern Berkshire Regional School District? Data from many sources: School Committee members, staff, community feedback, surveys, meetings, performance data, changes in the standards, enrollment trends, and other data all point toward taking an opportunity to focus on the middle-school environment and to consider whether or not the sixth grade would be better served there or in an elementary model.

The charge for the task force is to review the current middle school program and to examine and propose a reconfigured middle-level program that includes grade six, in an opportunity to continue to improve the educational experience for students. There will be many opportunities for input and feedback throughout the

process. Decisions, including the timing of grade transitions and the implementation of new programs, will be made with the students' needs and their best interests in mind as the first priority. Information will be posted to the [www.sbrsd.org](http://www.sbrsd.org) website on the District Tab under Middle School Task Force. If you have any questions, suggestions or concerns, please use the [linksbrsd.org/middle-school-task-force.html](http://linksbrsd.org/middle-school-task-force.html) to submit anonymously to the MSTF for review and consideration.

*Beth Regulbuto*


**Other business:** The administration is considering two other issues that could have a long-term impact. The School Committee is looking into closing permanently the Monterey and South Egremont Schools. Administrators are also considering using a ten-year rolling average to even out year-to-year swings in school-budget payments by the District's five towns. Under the present system, New Marlborough's obligation, sharply up last year could fall by \$150,000 this year because of a twenty-student decrease in enrollment. Sheffield's school budget payment is slated to increase by \$500,000.



**Science Saturday:** Twelve eager young scientists gathered at the New Marlborough Public Library for the first Science Saturday, sponsored by the New Marlborough Cultural Council, February 3 and intently searched for answers to questions about physics and chemistry. "This was one of my favorite times working with children," says science educator Jane Burke. "They were all so able to explore their ideas independently and then generously pause to help each other."



**Expo Day:** The Mount Everett middle school team has been leading the way in project-based learning for decades. All seventh and eighth graders complete a months-long, in-depth research project and then present their findings to the public. On Expo Day, this year, February 13, the students shared their learning with peers and younger students during the day and with parents and other adults in the evening. Maple Webster Ben-David of Hartsville, above, explains her study of the life of a star.



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## SHADOWING A CAREER

By Angus Kerr

Each year, high school students across the nation participate in Job Shadow Day, a program that gives students the chance to see the functions of an occupational field of their interest. This February, when the first Shadow Day occurred, with the second taking place during the spring, students from Mount Everett were among the 157 that participated in Berkshire County. My personal experience, as a tenth grader at Mount Everett, was profound and insightful.

First, the act of searching for a career is both exhilarating and difficult. With so many possible options out there — 124 businesses and professionals participated in the event — it was a struggle to select the right opportunity. Students were able to visit police forces, lawyers, stage companies, forensic labs, firefighters, journalists, publishers, politicians, restaurants, architects, designers, and all manner of other local careers, giving them a diverse array of options to investigate a job that might eventually suit their interests. After many long hours of searching, I was accepted to shadow a journalist at the *Berkshire Eagle*.

At the *Eagle*, I was able to see the functions of a local newspaper, as well as talk to the editor, publisher and several journalists to learn what their job entails. The opportunity has encouraged me to think seriously about journalism as a career, and I know my peers had similar experiences on their Shadow Day.

Shadow Day works both ways. The chance to see a workplace is not only illuminating but can also lead to an internship. Conversely, it may lead to a reconsideration of a career choice. As part of my shadow opportunity at the *Eagle*, I was able to work on a story about the importance of Shadow Day by interviewing Heather Shogry-Williams, youth director for the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, during which she noted the growth of the program. “At the

rate we’re going, it looks like more students are going to participate this year,” she said. The growth is partly due to increasing awareness for career-readiness, as administrators are realizing the importance of preparing students for jobs after school, while continuing to respect the importance of college-readiness within the high school curriculum. Looking ahead, Ms. Shogry-Williams believes that opportunities like Job Shadow Day will be immensely important in preparing students for what they may encounter after high school.

Of course, businesses also benefit from Shadow Day. As well as giving new focus and interest in specific fields to students, employers are able to potentially entice a new generation of employees, and provide a more certain future for Berkshire County. They can boost interest in their specific field and possibly even begin an internship program with the students who shadowed. This interaction between students and the local community is important and, more and more so, is being recognized as the path towards a healthier, more vibrant Berkshire County. □

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## New Acquisitions at the Library

### Adult Fiction

*The Grave's a Fine and Private Place*, by Alan Bradley  
*Still Me*, by Jojo Moyes  
*The Great Alone*, by Kristin Hannah  
*The Deceivers*, by Alex Berenson  
*The Atomic City Girls*, by Janet Beard  
*Poison*, by John Lescroart  
*White Houses*, by Amy Bloom

### Adult Nonfiction

*All-American Murder: The Rise and Fall of Aaron Hernandez, the Superstar Whose Life Ended on Murderer's Row*, by James Patterson  
*An American Family: A Memoir of Hope and Sacrifice*, by Khizr Khan

### Young Adult Fiction

*Herman Melville's Moby Dick: The Graphic Novel*, by Christophe Chaboute  
*Speak: The Graphic Novel*, by Laurie Halse Anderson  
*The Book of Pearl*, by Timothee de Fombelle

### Children's Fiction

*The Forbidden Library: The Fall of the Readers*, by Django Wexler  
*Mummies at the Museum*, by Wong Herbert Yee  
*This Is It*, by Daria Peoples-Riley

### Children's Nonfiction

*The Monarchs Are Missing: A Butterfly Mystery*, by Rebecca E. Hirsch  
*The Girl Who Drew Butterflies: How Maria Merian's Art Changed Science*, by Joyce Sidman

### Books on CD

*An American Family: A Memoir of Hope and Sacrifice*, by Khizr Khan  
*Death of an Honest Man*, by M.C. Beaton

### DVDs

<i>Coco</i>	<i>Tulip Fever</i>
<i>Homeland Season 6</i>	<i>Vera Season 7</i>
<i>LBJ</i>	<i>Wonder</i>



**Library Winter Hours**  
**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.**  
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### ▶ Book Discussion Group

Please join us March 24 at 10:00 a.m. for bagels and a lively discussion of *Stolen Beauty*, by Laurie Lico Albanese

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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 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.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; 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 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

A late fee of \$150 can be paid by mail.

Please enclose a self-addressed,  
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### Emergency calls:

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### New Marlborough Highway Department

Located on Mill River-Southfield Rd.

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

Joe Poindexter, issue editor; Diane Barth, designer;

Martha Bryan, Jane Burke, Larry Burke,

Barbara Lowman, David Lowman, 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

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

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