



New Marlborough 5 Village News

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Clayton • Hartsville • Mill River • New Marlborough • Southfield

DUAL-STREAM

Rethinking the Transfer Station

By Joe Poindexter

Life for town residents is going to get slightly more complex — maybe not immediately, but at least sometime in the next three years. Clients of the New Marlborough Transfer Station, who have gotten used to combining all their recyclables in single receptacles, will, starting as early as July, have to begin separating paper from plastic and glass. New Marlborough is going dual-stream.

The reversion to dual-stream recycling was triggered by the need to decide by January 31 whether to sign on with Materials Recycling Facility (MRF), a state-owned operation that disposes of paper, plastic, and glass, located in Springfield. The Town currently contracts with Valley Roll-Off Dumpster Service of Lee to take care of Transfer Station waste. Under the present setup, the Transfer Station owns two compactors — one for wet waste, one for single-stream recycling of paper, glass, tin cans, and plastic. It also rents, from Valley Roll-Off, five containers, one each for the two compactors and additional containers for household goods, scrap metal, and tires. (Owning the containers, which would have required two round trips — one to take away the full container and another to return it empty, turned out to be uneconomic.)



A dividend for Transfer Station users: the Gift Shop

photo by Joe Poindexter

Complicating matters, there are two components to getting rid of our trash. It has to be hauled away, and then it has to be disposed of. At present, Valley Roll-Off handles both. In preparation for a new contract, Town Administrator Mari Enoch prepared a spreadsheet comparing the costs of remaining with Valley with those of two other contractors. She also presented a fourth option: that of having disposal of recyclables handled by MRF.

The optimum combination: Valley Roll-Off for hauling and disposal of wet waste and MRF for disposal of dual-stream recyclables. According to Ms. Enoch's figures, this arrangement, had it been in place in 2019, would have cost the Town \$52,343, compared to the \$60,709 spent with Valley Roll-Off. At its January 28 meeting the Board of Selectmen voted to sign a single-stream contract with MRF, with the intention of moving to dual-stream as soon as an extra container can be properly outfitted. Since haulage is priced by weight, not volume, it will make sense to keep the bottle and plastic container covered, so that the Town is not paying to haul rainwater. The dual-stream contract will be for five years, and with admirable foresight, the Board received voter assent to enter into a five-year contract (rather than the heretofore maximum of three) at the 2019 Annual Town Meeting.

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Dual-Stream, continued

As Transfer Station users adapt to separating paper from bottles and cans, they should bear in mind that it is still one of the few bargains left in life. For the current fiscal year, some 350 Transfer Station permits, plus fees for disposal of tires, electronics, and the like, raised \$47,467. But that covers only a fraction of the annual cost, which, including salaries,



The Transfer Station team: Bobby Litchfield, left, and Alvin Stalker
photo by Joe Poindexter

maintenance, and rental of the land on which the Transfer Station is located, topped out at \$93,688 in 2019. And that's not counting the intangible value of the Gift Shop and the gossip that accompanies every visit to the Transfer Station. Permits for the 2020-21 season will soon go on sale at Town Hall. □

CULTURAL COUNCIL AWARDS — 2020

The New Marlborough Cultural Council is pleased to announce that we have awarded \$16,050 in grants to nineteen organizations that provide cultural and educational programs for people of all ages in New Marlborough. In keeping with our mission, our grants are awarded to applicants that are New Marlborough residents, to organizations that provide programs that benefit residents of our town, to programs that feature the creative work of New Marlborough residents, and for events or creative works that occur in New Marlborough, including in our schools.

The New Marlborough Cultural Council is supported by an annual grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, funding from the Town of New Marlborough and, most importantly, by the wonderful generosity of the residents of New Marlborough. We look forward to seeing you at the upcoming Town Potluck on April 4 and, of course, at Burrirt Day on August 15. Many more events are planned! If you'd like to join the Council or just volunteer to help at one of our events, drop us a line at nmculturalcouncil@gmail.com. Thanks!

2020 New Marlborough Cultural Council grant recipients

- Aston Magna Foundation – 2020 Aston Magna Music Festival
- Bidwell House Museum – Young History Scholar Internships
- Michael Brady – The Café Plays by Michael Brady
- Ken Longstreeth – Concert by Jeff Gavioli and his Bad News Jazz Big Band
- IS 183 Art School of the Berkshires – Learning through Arts Program at Southern Berkshire Regional Schools
- Robert Olsen – Music at the Southfield Church
- Berkshire Children's Chorus – Scholarship Program
- Chesterwood – Voices of Poetry: Inside the Studio at Chesterwood
- Berkshire Pulse – Cultural Traditions: Music and Art of Africa at So. Berkshire Regional Schools
- Berkshire South Regional Community Center – Berkshire Ukulele Band and Berkshire Sings!
- New Marlborough Meeting House Gallery – Publicity in support of gallery shows
- Jane Burke – Science Saturdays at the Library
- Great Barrington Public Theatre – Wet Ink/
Bear Tales Series
- Shakespeare & Co – 2020 Fall Festival of Shakespeare
- Maggie McRae – Traditional Music & Dance
at Dewey Hall
- Greenagers, Inc. – Nurturing a New Generation of
Environmental Stewards
- Jane Burke – Exploring Clay
- New Marlborough Village Association – 2020
Music & More Concert Series
- Flying Cloud Institute – SMArt Kids: Science and
Art for New Marlborough Youth



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REIGNITING THE FLAME

David Herrick Wants To Revive the Longest-Running Show in Mill River

By Joe Poindexter

If you had stopped into the Mill River General Store on a day in February, you would have seen the familiar face of David Herrick. And you would have seen a red baseball cap on his head with what, at first glance, seems to be a familiar slogan. On second glance, however, you get the intended message: "Make Mill River Store Great Again," it says.

Surrounded by bare shelves and the comings and goings of electricians, plumbers, and carpenters — and with Crow, his Siberian husky at his side — Mr. Herrick has returned to his haunt of thirty years. He sold the business to Jessica and Todd Holcomb in 2017 but retained ownership of the building, renting it to them for \$1,600 a month until they could structure the financing to buy it. In what developed into a fatal flaw, however, a firm price for the building was never contractually established. Meanwhile, according to Jessica Holcomb, physical deficits in the building were slow to be corrected — or never addressed at all. On January 31, the Holcombs, unable to negotiate a price for the building, relinquished their relationship with the Mill River General Store.

On February 2, even as New Marlborough residents gathered at the New Marlborough Public Library to express their gratitude to the Holcombs, David Herrick was across the road selling the *New York Sunday Times* and welcoming customers with free coffee and muffins. He and Crow have been there, 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., ever since, selling papers and handing out coffee. Following an end-of-January inspection, the Board of Health issued an order to the store to stop selling food.



David Herrick and Crow



Jess Holcomb is presented a bouquet of appreciation by Natalie and David Hosford.

With help from his brother, Richard Herrick of Lenox, Mr. Herrick is addressing the violations. He has also erected a partition between the store proper and the area occupied, until February, by the Mill River Post Office. The Postal Service, which signed a new, five-year lease on the space last September, has declined to continue operations there while the space is exposed to an unoccupied business next door. It continues to pay rent to Mr. Herrick (who remained the beneficiary of the lease agreement even while the Holcombs rented the rest of the building). Meanwhile, however, the Postal Service has shifted operations to the Southfield Post Office. A postal worker handling Mill River mail there said that the arrangement was temporary but could not provide a date for a return to Mill River.

During a *5 Village News* visit to the store in mid-February, Mr. Herrick, even as he looks for a buyer (the building is currently listed at \$295,000), seemed determined to keep the centuries-old establishment alive. He said that he was about to make arrangements for a relationship with a Chicopee distributor of packaged foods — cereals, soups, snack, dog food, packaged sandwiches. He expects the store to be fully stocked and ready to roll by mid-March, selling grab-and-go items, milk, eggs, hardware, newspapers, and, of course, coffee. The north wall, in what was otherwise a hauntingly empty space, was filled with cups, the names of their Coffee Club owners neatly turned to the outside. It was a haunting reminder of the irreplaceable role the Mill River General Store has played. □

Joe Poindexter



Town Business Is Your Business BOARD OF SELECTMEN



January 28: With all three selectmen present, Lucinda Shmulsky of Hartsville, who was concerned with a recent Planning Board proposal to allow up to two medical marijuana and marijuana research facilities to be licensed in New Marlborough, was called to the table. Ms. Shmulsky, assured that, once vetted by the state, a bylaw voted at a town meeting was binding. She then cited the votes for bylaws at the 2019 Annual Town Meeting allowing “a medical marijuana facility” and “a marijuana research facility.” **Selectman Nat Yohalem** argued that the intent of the bylaw was to define the type of marijuana business acceptable to New Marlborough residents, rather than the precise number, but granted that it was ambiguous.

The Board went on to assure Ms. Shmulsky that an amendment to a proposed bylaw could be offered from the floor when the bylaw came up for a vote at the Annual Town Meeting (which this year takes place May 4). Alternatively, a substitute bylaw, supported by at least ten signatories, could be placed on the warrant by petition. Deadline for submission, according to Town Administrator Mari Enoch, is March 20.

The Board thanked Ms. Shmulsky for her engagement in Town issues and moved on to financing the

operation of the Transfer Station. Referring to a spreadsheet, prepared by Ms. Enoch, detailing the equipment rental, hauling costs, and disposal charges from three bidders, the Board voted to remain with Valley Roll Off for rental and hauling, but to sign on with Springfield Materials Recycling facility for disposal — with a target of switching from single-stream to dual-stream recycling within ninety days of the new contract.

Next up: committee appointments. The newly formed New Marlborough Regional District Planning Committee — which will join similar committees in other South County towns to consider school consolidation — received two responses to a call for members, one from Southern Berkshire Regional School District School Committee Chair Jane Burke and one from Susan Smith, a lawyer practicing in Great Barrington. After declining invitations from Tara White and Mr. Yohalem to recuse themselves from voting on Ms. Smith because both are clients of hers, the Board approved both applicants. This left the Committee short by one member. It was about to extend its appeal for volunteers when Ms. White, who has represented the Board in earlier consolidation meetings, volunteered to fill the third slot. Her intent, she made clear, was to forestall



Among those attending a grant-award ceremony in Williamsburg were Chuck Loring, left, Sharon, Fleck, second from left, and Richard Long, sixth from left. Also present were State Representative Smitty Pignatelli, right, and State Senator Richard Hines, third from right.

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a delay in forming the Committee and added, "For the record, if anyone wants to step in, I will resign." After recusing herself, Ms. White was voted onto the Committee.

The Board then moved with dispatch to appoint Joyce Hackett to the Cultural Council. Her term, starting immediately, will end December 31, 2022.

An approval of the service agreement with BETA Engineering, which will oversee the long-overdue resurfacing of Route 57 in sections of Sandisfield and New Marlborough, was tabled for lack of information from Sandisfield officials. On January 23, Administrative Secretary Sharon Fleck, Selectman Richard Long, and Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring attended a MassWorks ceremony in Williamsburg at which the \$2-million grant for repair of this section of road was awarded.

Then, another dive into the ever-full catchment of red tape. The Board approved, in principal, procurement procedures as defined by the Berkshire Regional Planning Council for the renovation of Town Hall to meet the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act. According to Mr. Long, the Designer Selection Committee planned to adopt these procedures at its January 31 meeting. Following this, Mr. Long signed a contract for a \$20,000 planning grant that is step one in Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness, a state-sponsored program to encourage resiliency to the ravages of climate change.

Moving on, Mr. Yohalem noted that the Board had received a letter from New Marlborough Fire and Rescue that expressed an enthusiastic vote of confidence for its newly re-elected fire chief, Chuck Loring. The letter stated that David Smith, Rob Scott, and Eli Dvorchik had similarly been re-elected to the posts of president, treasurer, and secretary, respectively.

The Board then signed business licenses for PJS

Maintenance, LLC, and Windemere Lake Corp., both located on Windemere Drive; JL Enterprises, a retailer and wholesaler owned by Jenifer Lipsky in Hartsville; DBA ProDetailing, Ronald Clavette's automotive cleaning service on Canaan Southfield Road; and BDL Enterprises, the property services firm of David and Barbara Lowman on East Hill Road.

Following a review of minutes of the January 13 meeting and two on January 16 — an interminable process for any attendee who had had the poor judgment of postponing dinner until afterwards — the meeting was adjourned.

Joe Poindexter

February 3: With Chairman Yohalem traveling, Ms. White and Mr. Long met with Peter Platt, owner of the Southfield Store. He was there to complain about police harassment of his customers for parking on the street in front of the cafe, a popular eating spot on Norfolk Road in Southfield.

He said in the thirteen years he has owned the store he has never had any problems regarding parking there. Until, that is, "the last few weeks, [when] we've had interference by the police asking customers to move their cars from spots we always thought were legal, and from one place in particular, a small pullout area directly across from the entrance to the store." He cited the case of one customer, a Southfield resident, who regularly parks there but was recently told by the police to move his vehicle and that if he parked there again he'd get a ticket. "That place has been used as a parking spot for the store for probably one hundred years," Mr. Platt asserted. The store also has its own private parking for some ten to twelve cars just off the street across from it.

When Ms. White pointed out that there is a No Parking sign posted at this pullout, Mr. Platt said he had been told by the former police chief that the sign, first

A substitute marijuana bylaw, supported by at least ten signatories, can be placed on the warrant by petition.



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erected some ten years ago, was actually intended to stop people from parking around the corner on East Hill Road and that it should have had an arrow indicating that. "They didn't have any signs with arrows on them," Mr. Platt was told, "so they used what they had." According to the former chief, parking on the Norfolk Road pullout was permitted.

The current police chief disagreed. "We must have had twenty complaints about parking in Southfield specifically in front of the store and on East Hill Road," said Graham Frank, who was also present at the meeting, adding that when one person parks in the pullout "we get five other people parking there, in front of it, behind it and on the other side of the road." Mr. Platt said that this is simply not true.

But what really seemed to rankle Mr. Platt is that there doesn't appear to be parking enforcement elsewhere in town. "All over town people park in the road, people doing lawn work, Verizon trucks, garbage trucks, any other kind of truck. Someone's having a tag sale, the cars are all over the road. Do these people get tickets, are they asked to move? No. Why are we picked on? It doesn't seem right. I want this to be a town that's friendly towards businesses, not a town that is dying to have businesses not do well here and leave."

And the Board apparently agreed with him. After further discussion, Mr. Long said the Town ought to make the pullout across from the store a legal space, while Ms. White took it a step further, saying, "I agree with Richard, we can look at that as a spot that's legal to park in, **but we've also got to review the parking regulations, the parking policy, the whole thing and see what may or may not need to be adjusted.**"

Moving on, the Board invited Chief Frank to come forward from the audience area to the table to discuss appointing him Animal Control Officer. Town Administrator Mari Enoch noted that Chief Frank has been serving as the New Marlborough's temporary Animal Control Officer since the resignation of John Springstube from that position last July. She also noted that he has as yet, received neither the training nor the special equipment, such as a bite glove, an animal control pole or transfer cages, that goes with the job. Further he has not been compensated for the extra responsibility. Ms. Enoch concluded by saying that the chief's duties would need to be redefined and his salary adjusted, both of which adjustments would require town counsel approval.

According to Chief Frank, the state provides two eight-hour training sessions for the position. Addition-

ally, an Animal Control Officer Certification Academy provides courses, although these are not a requirement for the position. Since there is currently no budget for either the training or the equipment, Ms. Enoch said that the Board will either have to apply to the Finance Committee to tap the reserve fund or draw money from the Board's contingency budget until a fully-funded budget

can be created and approved by the voters at the Annual Town Meeting in May.

In concluding, Ms. Enoch said she's "very grateful Graham is willing to do this. He lives nearby so we'd get quick response, and it's the police who are often called in to take care of these kinds of cases anyway. I think it's a win-win. So if the Board is supportive, we'll

work out the specifics and then come back to do the appointment another night."

The next two agenda items were put on hold. According to Mr. Long, the contracts governing a service agreement with Beta Engineering for the Route 57 engineering work were not yet ready. And approval and award of the Municipal Viability Preparedness study contract from BSC Group also needed to be delayed because of a conflict of interest with Mr. Long. BSC has extensive experience in the climate resiliency area, he said, but since he was formerly president and chairman of BSC and still has equity participation in the company, he needed to recuse himself. For the signature of at least two selectmen, approval of the contract would have to await the return of Mr. Yohalem.

Two business licenses were approved by the Board, one for Pontier Construction of Berkshire Woods Road, and the other for Rob Johnston's Johnston America Fine Art of Sisson Hill Road.

Peter Schuyten

February 11: With Ms. White and Mr. Long present and Mr. Yohalem participating via phone, the Board

"I want this to be a town that's friendly towards businesses, not a town that is dying to have businesses not do well here and leave."



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opened the meeting at 5:34 p.m. with a discussion of the contract with BETA Engineering for the design work to repair Route 57. Mr. Long informed the Board that the contract changes the Town had requested were completed and then made a motion to approve Ms. White's signing the revised contract in the amount of \$20,000 on behalf of the Town. After assuring Mr. Yohalem that Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring had reviewed and okayed the contract, the motion was approved.

Mr. Long said that Francesca Hemming, chief of MassDOT District 1 in Lenox, informed him that an engineer had reviewed drainage and culvert needs on Route 57 and that it would try to increase the grant to cover those needs. Ms. White cautioned that the state would have to move quickly to increase the amount of the grant, since the original amount had already been approved. Nevertheless, the Board agreed this was good news and would wait to see if more funds were made available.

The Board then moved on to the Municipal Vulnerability Planning (MVP) Study contract. Mr. Long reminded the Board that the Town had received a \$20,000 grant for a study that would lead to its being designated an MVP climate community. Once this designation is received, the Town will be eligible to apply for grants to address those vulnerabilities.

Mr. Long then argued for the hiring of BSC Group to carry out the study. He noted that BSC, which is doing environmental studies for a number of surrounding towns, knows New Marlborough well and had submitted the original grant to the state on behalf of the Town on a pro bono basis. Reminding the Board that he was recusing himself from any vote on the contract itself because of his prior affiliation with BSC, Mr. Long, with Ms. White's assent, moved that the Board approve the BSC Group proposal as submitted with a completion

date by June 30. In answer to a question from Mr. Yohalem, he said that the grant money would cover all the costs of the study. Ms. White and Mr. Yohalem then voted to accept the contract with BSC.

Next, Ms. White moved to establish New Marlborough's participation in the Regional School District Planning Committee by recommending that the

town moderator appoint Southern Berkshire Regional School District School Committee Chair Jane Burke and town residents Susan Smith and Tara White. The motion, with Ms. White recusing herself, carried. The Committee — there is one for each of the eight towns in the Berkshire Hills and the Southern Berkshire school districts — will serve until a successor school consolidation committee is formed. It has received a state grant of \$50,000 to help move the planning process forward.

Ms. White said that MassDOT has written to the Town regarding deficits in a bridge on Lumbert Cross Road. Highway Superintendent Loring, she said, has spoken with MassDOT and is addressing the deficits so that the bridge doesn't have to be closed. Ms. White cautioned that the Board needs to follow up with Mr. Loring for a status report.

The Board then approved business licenses for Johnson Carpentry; Neil W. Lidstone, Electrical Contractor; and Southfield Wood Products. It also approved a warrant to hold a state presidential primary on March 3. Before adjourning — to move on to a joint meeting with the Finance Committee that was to begin at 6:00 p.m. — the Board heard from Daniel Alden of Hartsville New Marlborough Road. Mr. Alden voiced his concern about the large amounts of litter being tossed onto town roads, submitted a report on the types and locations of the discarded trash, and asked that the Board communicate this blight on the town to the Police and Highway Departments.

The Board invited Police Chief Graham Frank to move forward from the audience area to the table to discuss appointing him Animal Control Officer.



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February 11: Joint Finance Committee-Board of Selectmen Meeting: At the joint meeting, starting at 6:00 p.m., Ms. White and Mr. Long participated in person, Mr. Yohalem, via a phone line. Finance Committee members present were Robert Miller, John Pshenishny, Michele Shalaby, and Sandra Walker. Steve Klein joined via phone. Also in attendance were Town Administrator Mari Enoch, Administrative Secretary Sharon Fleck, Assessors Clerk Marsha Pshenishny, Assessor Wendy Miller, and Paul Kapinos of the real estate appraisal firm of Paul S. Kapinos and Associates, which has been performing the Town's property assessments for sixteen years.

To address the principal purpose of the meeting, Ms. Enoch asked Mr. Kapinos to explain the mechanics and timing of the property assessment and taxation process, and to shed light on how tax rates might go up even if assessments go down and how a drop in value in one neighborhood might affect the entire town.

Mr. Kapinos stated that in early November he sends a report detailing all the values and percent changes by location to the town assessor, before he sends it to the state for approval. Values are based on sales, said Mr. Kapinos, and different sections of town saw increases from 2 to 5 percent. He continued that each year the state requires towns be at full and fair cash value based on the median assessment value, not just during recertification years. The Department of Revenue (DOR) allows towns to be assessed between 90 and 110 percent of value. **Historically, New Marlborough has been assessed at 95 percent of value which, according to Mr. Kapinos, is the safe place to be.** He said a lower value would raise red flags with the state and a higher value is unnecessary. Last year New Marlborough ended up at 91 percent of value, hence the 4 percent increase in values this year

to maintain a 95 percent assessment value. Based on his review, Mr. Kapinos predicted another 4 percent increase in assessed value for FY21.

In answer to a question from Mr. Klein, who asked whether sales from other towns were included in the calculations to arrive at the assessed value, Mr. Kapinos said that values reported to DOR are based on sales in New Marlborough only. He said, however, the trend in sales in New Marlborough was similar to other towns in Berkshire County.

Property evaluations based on sales over the past two years are adjusted annually in New Marlborough. Anomalies, such as foreclosures or family-to-family sales, are weeded out so they don't skew an overall fair evaluation. Cyclical re-evaluation, requiring individual assessment of each property in town, must be completed every ten years (rather than nine, as was required until

2017). The next re-evaluation must be completed for FY27, said Mr. Kapinos. This means that every property must be re-evaluated by the assessor before June, 2026, in order for the data to be updated in time. This is usually done over a three year period, which is easier on a town budget and allows time for the assessor to visit each property. **The assessment process is complicated, said Mr. Kapinos, by the fact that property owners are not legally obligated to allow entry and that the assessor's entry rate into a home averages only 10 percent.**

In answer to a question from Mr. Klein on valuation of home improvements and additions, Mr. Kapinos stated that all building permits that come in by January 1 are entered into his system, inspected sometime that spring, and added to the tax rolls for the following year based on the percent of completion of the project at the time of inspection. The property will be re-inspected upon the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.

Ms. Pshenishny stated that in the past building

*Based on his review,
Mr. Kapinos predicted another
4 percent increase in
assessed value for FY21.*

SUSAN M. SMITH
Attorney At Law

38 Mahaiwe Street, Suite 1 Telephone: (413) 528-4300
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permits didn't differentiate between a renovation and an addition and that she didn't always receive the Certificate of Occupancy, but that the new building inspector has instituted changes that have improved the accuracy of the tax rolls.

Mr. Kapinos said the system is working well. This year the Town received only eleven abatement applications, a comparatively low number, he said, and that over the last five or ten years, it has made just three or four abatements.

In a discussion about properties that have access to

water or views, Mr. Kapinos said that these attributes are reflected in sales and therefore in assessed value. A so-called resident exemption, which would differentiate the tax burden of full-time residents from that of part-timers — it's a popular policy in heavily touristed areas such as Cape Cod, said Mr. Kapinos — was not an option favored by anyone at the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m. with an agreement to meet again in late October, after Mr. Kapinos has completed his FY21 report. □

Sandra Fusco Walker

View from the Board IT'S SPRING (WELL, ALMOST)

If you're like me, when the calendar says March, two thoughts enter your mind. First — enough already! I've had it with the cold, wind, snow, and gray skies. The other is — it's almost spring, and that means bursting bulbs, bright flowers, grass to mow and, eventually, the welcome change from fleece and flannel to shorts and T-shirts.

Similar feelings prevail at Town Hall. The Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee are in the middle of their budget season. In the middle of the month, we get to know the Town's share of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District budget, which makes up about half of our Town budget. We should be able to finish our total budget proposal shortly thereafter and give shape to the new fiscal year.

This is also the month when candidates for Town offices place their names on the ballot for the Town caucus. Now before you say "who cares," let me say you care, or you should. Elected officials are the people who run the Town, the people to whom you complain if you feel something is wrong, the people who determine which roads will be repaired, and, most critically, the people who decide where and how your money will be spent. Let your voice be heard. Vote at caucus time

(March 31, 6:00 p.m. at the Town Hall). Better yet, as I exhorted you in this space last month, run for office! The time commitment of a couple of hours a week is well worth it. Take it from me: Contributing to the Town can engender a good, no, make that a great feeling.

Here in the first week of March, it may not yet be time to put away the snow shovels, the sleds, or the skis. But it is time to perk up, look ahead, and think about running for public office. Contributing to your community will, like spring, make you feel alive.

So, hold on. Just a few short weeks to go. □

Nat Yohalem



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April 4, 6:00 p.m.
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**Bring a dish and enjoy conversations
with your New Marlborough
friends and neighbors.
Music by Tom Ingersoll.**

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Potluck contributions by last name
initials ~ bring
A - G ~ dessert
H - P ~ main dish
Q - U ~ salad or vegetable
V - Z ~ appetizer or snacks

Please feel free to bring your own wine or beer

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PLANNING BOARD

February 12: The regular semi-monthly meeting of the Planning Board was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on the button by Chairman Daniel Doern. Members Mark Carson and Rob Hartt were on hand, along with recording secretary Angus Kerr and one member in the audience, Deanna Mummert of Mill River. Eric Schaefer was not present. Mr. Doern began the meeting by reading an email from Historic Commissioner John Schreiber, in which Dr. Schreiber suggested the Planning Board undertake the writing of a new bylaw that would apply to the historic districts in New Marlborough (currently Mill River and New Marlborough Village). This bylaw would create a "demolition delay" on buildings within the historic areas, perhaps a period of six months, during which time residents and authorities could determine the potential impact of tearing down an existing building to make way for a new one. Mr. Doern thought this to be "an interesting idea," but expressed his feeling that the Planning Board should put off tackling the issue until they had come to a resolution on the marijuana bylaw. Mark Carson and Rob Hartt agreed.

Turning to the main agenda item – review of, and action on, feedback from the January 18 public hearing on the marijuana bylaw, which is due to be voted upon at the Annual Town Meeting on May 4 – Chairman Doern began by giving the floor to Deanna Mummert. Ms. Mummert had come prepared with a list of suggested revisions that she and Rebecca Schreiber had put together. As it turned out, most of the points on the list had already been identified by the Board as topics that needed to be addressed, and, with the knowledge that a final draft of the bylaw must be in Town Counsel's hands by March 13, Mr. Doern asked Ms. Mummert to allow the Board to work through its own list, in order to push through the remaining issues as expeditiously as possible. Stating that while the bylaw "would not be perfect for everybody, but necessary for the future," he named the most pressing points that had encountered concerns at the public

hearing: 1) the number of establishments of each of the two allowed licenses; and 2) the issue of allowing medical marijuana establishments to operate aspects of their business in up to three locations.

On the first question, the bylaw draft presented at the public hearing had proposed that there be a limit of two research facilities and two medical marijuana clinics. The feeling of Deanna Mummert and Rebecca Schreiber was that the limit should be reduced to one each. Board member Rob Hartt, who had stated to his fellow members that he intended "to be very conservative, as the town wants," said that he agreed with reducing the number to one for each type of license. Discussion ensued, with Mark Carson holding the point of view that allowing a single license would essentially create a monopoly. Dan Doern spoke to the fact that much of what the Board is doing "is academic," and it doesn't matter a great deal whether it's one license or two, since the number of research facilities in the United States can be counted on one hand, and, in the case of medical marijuana treatment centers, the trend is toward "co-location," meaning a combination of medical and retail under one roof, like Theory Wellness in Great Barrington. Nevertheless, a resolution was needed on this question, and Mr. Doern went on to make a motion that the proposed bylaw allow just one marijuana research facility and one medical marijuana treatment center. Furthermore, he added to the motion that all three components of the medical treatment center – growing, processing, and selling – would have to be in a single location, as opposed to the possibility of those components being spread over three different sites. The motion was adopted unanimously after a bit of further discussion, neatly disposing of the two most pressing points.

Moving on to other feedback from the public hearing, the Board members talked over the size limitations on gross building dimensions – 20,000 square feet in the rural residential district and 5,000 square feet in the village



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center residential district – and settled on leaving those as is.

As to worries about odor from a growing facility, should there ever be one, all agreed that a new section devoted to this issue was required. Mr. Carson said he thought it was more of a Board of Health issue, and he volunteered to coax the Board of Health members to come up with some language on noxious odors, which could then be worked into the bylaw. Dan Doern thought that adding to the setbacks for outdoor cultivation might help, and Mr. Carson said that he had heard of certain municipalities limiting the strains of cannabis plants to those that produced less aroma. Deanna Mummert spoke up to say that she was opposed to any outdoor cultivation, and pointed out that, statewide, only two outdoor growing facilities out of over 200 applications had so far been granted approval by the Cannabis Control Commission.

Chairman Doern asked his fellow members if they would like to ban commercial outdoor growing of marijuana in New Marlborough entirely. Mr. Carson resisted the idea, and it was then decided to assign Eric Schaefer the task of researching what language exists on controlling odor in outdoor cultivation, and to come up with a strategy for protection from unwanted odors. Mr. Doern said, “If he cannot find a good solution, then the Board will take outdoor cultivation off the table.” He later added that an odor study, including any technical assistance needed, would be added to the section of the bylaw on submission requirements.

Continuing on, Rob Hartt accepted the task of combing through the existing draft to clean up and clarify any uncertain or incorrect phrasing by the next meeting. It was agreed that any action on expanding setbacks in the rural districts would await the outcome of Mr. Schaefer’s

research. As for water protection, Mr. Doern pointed out that a usage report is required; Mr. Carson said that aquifer protection is a very tough problem to solve and suggested that some language be included that would allow the Special Permit Granting Authority (SPGA) the ability to hire specialists on a case-by-case basis to determine aquifer locations. Deanna Mummert wondered about the quality of water that is discharged from a growing site.

On the subject of the degree to which the SPGA should enjoy leeway to waive certain requirements, the Board agreed to delete the language on waiving any aspects of the applications, with the exception of dimensional standards on existing structures that an applicant wishes to repurpose.

For the next draft of the proposed bylaw, the Planning Board will add a list of Town boards and commissions that the SPGA may approach for advice. That list will include the Planning Board, Board of Health, Conservation Commission, Historic Commission, Police Chief, Fire Chief, Highway Superintendent, and Building Inspector.

The meeting ended at 9:15 p.m. after a lengthy discussion on improving the draft’s language around the protection of children. Chairman Doern found the phrase, “where children commonly congregate,” to be troublingly vague. With some room for further tweaking, the Board more or less settled on specificity – a 1,000-foot setback from the New Marlborough Central School and 500 feet from the Town Library.

The Planning Board will be putting the final touches on the proposed marijuana bylaw at its meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 13. Interested citizens are urged to attend. □

Larry Burke

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

January 25: Commission members Freddy Friedman, David Herrick, and John Schreiber presided over the meeting, in which no formal hearings were scheduled. The bulk of the meeting was devoted to reviewing outstanding business and continuing a discussion of the Berkshire Scenic Mountain Act.

Since it had not yet received permission to visit the site, the Commission agreed to continue the public hearing for a Request For Determination submitted by Emily Renshaw and Mico Menchetti of Morgan, Lewis and Bocklus LLP on behalf of Margaret and Joseph Kerner of 2128 Canaan Southfield Road.

The Commission agreed to issue an emergency permit to Nate Redman, the New Marlborough tree warden, to remove a tree on Clayton Mill River Road. Mr. Redman wrote the Commission that the tree poses an imminent

danger to the public.

The state Department of Environmental Protection has notified the Commission of a procedural change for submitting permitting decisions. Going forward, all permitting decisions by the Commission should be filed electronically, as well as transmitted by snail mail.

The minutes from last month’s meeting were approved with several minor edits.

Lastly, John Schreiber reported on the Commission’s consideration of the Berkshire Scenic Mountain Act and its applicability for adoption by the town. The Scenic Mountain Act is a provision in Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 131: Section 39A that allows a designating agency, such as a conservation commission, to adopt “reasonable rules and regulations relative to the mountain regions situated within ... a town to pro-

continued

protect watershed resources and preserve the natural scenic qualities of the environment." Several maps created by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission were displayed, showing two data points for considering the "base elevation" of the watershed to be regulated by the act: the town's geography with elevations at 1,300 feet and at 1,500 feet. The base elevation would determine the threshold for applicability of the regulations to an activity proposed by an applicant seeking a permit.

With resident Molly Crine joining in, a hearty discussion ensued considering what is appropriate for

the town and what might be the parameters for adopting the provision. The Commission agreed to continue the conversation until next meeting where a map showing the town's geography at 1,400 feet would be presented. It was noted that the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission is available for technical assistance to the commission.

With no further business on the agenda, the meeting adjourned. □

Martha Bryan

Upcoming: Events Calendar for March and April

March 3: Massachusetts Democratic Primary; our state joins fifteen other Super Tuesday states in registering its choice for a Democratic presidential nominee; registered Democrats and Independents are eligible to vote; polls are open at the Town Hall 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

March 23: Caucus ballot deadline; candidates for elective Town offices have until 3:30 p.m. to have their names filed with the Town Clerk, at Town Hall, for placement on the caucus ballot; nominees must thereafter certify their acceptance with the Town Clerk by 3:30 p.m. April 3.

March 26-29: *The Drowsy Chaperone*, a high school musical with performances at 7:00 p.m. on March 26, 27, and 28, and at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, the 29th; at TACPAC, Mount Everett High School in Sheffield

March 31: Town Caucus, 6:00 p.m., Town Hall

April 4: Potluck Dinner, bring a dish and dish with friends and neighbors, 6:00 p.m. in the New Marlborough Meeting House gallery

April 18: Red Hot Blues Bash, the Land Trust's third annual welcome to springtime and another season in the outdoors, 6:00 p.m. onward at the Gedney Farm in New Marlborough Village; tickets go on sale March 13

April 20: Voting registration day; at the Town Hall between 8:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. and for those tied up at work, 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.

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Broadband Update

THE LONG MARCH TO MAKE READY



As motorists around town are well aware, Verizon trucks are everywhere. The company is scrambling to meet its obligations in preparing New Marlborough for broadband and now hopes to complete its work by March 6, a month beyond its original deadline — and more than a year after National Grid finished moving its power lines.

According to Steve Klein, chair of the town's Cable Advisory Committee, Verizon resources are being stretched, as it is engaged in similar make-ready work in thirty-five towns in western and central Massachusetts. Since it is a regulated company, however, it is in weekly contact with state agencies to report its progress. Assuming the Verizon deadline is not further extended, there remains one final step: the re-installation of the so-called middle-mile cable, which has provided high-capacity broadband to the Firehouse in Southfield, Town Hall, and the New Marlborough Public Library.

"Make ready," a misleadingly modest designation, is actually a major upgrade to infrastructure. The present network of utility poles was installed to carry two sets of wires, one for electrical power and one for telephone land lines. Some 200 poles around town were not tall

enough to accommodate a third cable — gaps between wires must be at least forty inches — and needed either to be extended or replaced. Once make ready is completed, Charter-Spectrum, New Marlborough's internet provider will begin stringing fiber-optic cable under the other two lines, and according to the contract, Charter has twelve months to complete the build out.

As the installation progresses, Charter will also — could this finally be happening? — start connecting individual New Marlborough residences. According to Mr. Klein, pricing has not yet been definitively established, but he expects it to be in line with what Charter charges in other Berkshire towns. Connection to the home will be charged \$49 for distances up to 250 from the nearest utility pole, whether it is on a public or private road. There will be a surcharge for greater distances. Mr. Klein expects those charges to be reasonable. He has been told, he says, that Charter "is in the business of hooking up customers, not in making hookup a barrier to becoming a subscriber." The Cable Advisory Committee plans to invite a Charter representative to a meeting in New Marlborough in late March to answer questions. □

Joe Poindexter

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LAND TRUST NEWS

It's going to be a "really big show"! The third Red Hot Blues Bash is brewing. We promise another exceptional evening in celebration of our community and of the land we all share and love. Saturday, April 18, Gedney Farm.

The evening will be full of gifts from several community talents: house décor by Pamela Hardcastle, Garden Design and Floristry; graphic presentations by David Cicchetti, Creative Direction and Design; video projections by Joe Wheaton AKA VAGUEBUTSOOTHING; and music by DJ BFG. As in prior years we will have a unique silent auction with irresistible must-have experiences. New this year is a raffle of a truly awesome item. You get the picture. Be there or you will truly miss out. Oh, and when you encounter the Burma Shave-style signs authored by Robin Tost on the roadside, that will be your cue that the evening is imminent. Tickets go on sale March 13.

*It's much too early for the frogs
To bop and jive on mossy logs
But not too soon to make a splash
If they come join us at the Bash!*

It's much Red Hotter than the bogs!


This year the Land Trust's goal is to raise \$10,000 as seed funds to cover the costs of an educational series in field studies for elementary and middle school students during the summer and fall. The funds raised will be used to host field research for students facilitated by natural science educators as well as to cover the logistics for visiting our properties. We need informed youth to lead us forward!

In other news, so far it has been a relatively snow-less winter and the walking trails are accessible despite some icy areas. What is the first true sign of spring you anticipate noticing in the woods? And when you see it post it to our Instagram account #newmarlboroughlandtrust and share the good news!!!!

Martha Bryan



The days are getting longer — 5:00 p.m., February 19, at the Richard Stebbins Suspension Bridge, 1000 Acre Swamp.



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THE SWEETEST DAY OF THE YEAR

For Valentine's Day, what could be better than chocolate? Answer: more chocolate. That seemed to be the principle guiding the annual pre-Valentine's Chocolate Celebration at the New Marlborough Public Library. Sale of a mouth-watering array of chocolates, contributed by more than a dozen townspeople, raised upwards of \$500 for the library fund. Librarian Deb O'Brien also invited the younger set to make Valentine cards at a craft table and dip strawberries, marshmallows, and pretzel sticks in a chocolate fountain — some of the chocolate actually got onto the sticks. □



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OUR WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS

photo by Sandra Walker



A black squirrel in Sandra Walker's back yard

Sandra Walker wrote on January 29 to say, "We have an unusual visitor at our feeders. I've never seen a **black squirrel** here, though they were quite common at our home in Michigan years ago. Have you ever seen one around here?" While black squirrels are definitely more common in the Midwest, a number have been spotted in New Marlborough over the past few years. They are actually gray squirrels with a variant pigment gene. Now that a small number of them have come to inhabit our area, it will be interesting to see if their numbers increase over the coming years.

On February 1, **Alexandra Eidenschenk** wrote, "Yesterday morning I spotted a small **bobcat** at my new property on New Marlborough Hill Road. It looked a lot like my chubby tiger cat, Arthur, until it turned around and I saw the stubby tail (LOL, Arthur is an indoor cat so no fear!). Over the last seven months living here, we've heard packs of **coyotes** making a kill, and spotted many **deer, foxes, a family of wild turkeys, pileated woodpeckers, hawks, owls** and even some **bear** paw prints in the construction mud, but I don't have any photos for the 5 Village News...yet!"

On February 8, **Larry Burke** spotted two **foxes** in the field above his house, one hunting and the other curled up in a ball in a sunny spot. "I took a photo of the fox that was hunting for voles, but it was with a telephoto lens through a window, so not the greatest quality." The appearance of these two foxes is a repeat of last year, when a pair, perhaps the same pair, spent more than a month camped out in the field, disappearing only when it came time for the vixen to give birth to her kits.

During a walk to the beaver pond on their property on February 15, Larry and **Jane Burke** came upon an **otter** slide on the beaver dam. The otters and beavers were nowhere to be seen, but there were plenty of coyote tracks imprinted on the icy surface of the pond.

Teena Parton sent this email on February 16: "This morning I saw strange activity along the base of the stone wall near our house. At first it appeared to be two small animals, one black, one white, gamboling along the ground. Alas, it was a mink stealing away with a flopping fish from our pond. And a bit later, another, the same size as, if not larger than, the first! And another fish gone. Must be a large, hungry family!"

Finally, on February 17, **Don Beauchamp** wrote, "Since last month, I've had visiting **doves, starlings, robins, and cedar waxwings**. It seems that birds won't come to feeder when it's raining. I am seeing the regulars – **titmice, jays, chickadees, and cardinals**. Yesterday there were **bufflehead ducks** in the river, and on the river bank a **golden-crowned Kinglet** – a first for me!

The week before last, coyotes were doing a chorus, every night from 5:00 p.m. to midnight, and leaving lots of poop around! No photos this time, sorry." □



A red fox hunting on a sunny morning

photo by Larry Burke

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

Thank You to Our Contributors:

Pamela Bosworth; David W. Sheldon; Susannah Johnston & Vinnie Cohan; Howard & Pat Nourse; Joan & Wayne Smith; William & Anne Tatlock; Carol Parrish & Paul Clark; Lori & Jeff Stockwell; Dede Loring; Crozer Martin; and Garrett Selino

SYRUP SEASON

Yes, true, there are still a lot of winter left to go, but it's maple syrup season again, a welcome harbinger of spring. The sap is flowing and the taps are in the trees, and we get to spend a lot of time outside, tending the fire under the evaporating pan and hearing the returning red-wings and bluebirds and red-tailed hawks.

Our maple-syrup operation has always been pretty rudimentary. More than thirty years ago, Jim Gillette fashioned a stainless steel pan for me, which, at first, I set up on some cinder blocks out in the open and hoped for good weather. Later on, Scott Farrell built a frame for the pan to rest on, and I moved the main operation under cover of an open shed. Our aim has always been to make just enough syrup to get us through a year, plus some to give to family and friends at Christmas. So I only set out eight taps and buckets, but that is sufficient for me to collect between sixty and ninety gallons of sap in a given year.

Overall, it takes me three or four days of feeding a fire under the evaporating pan to get somewhere close to syrup. At the end of the day, when it seems we are pretty close to done, I let the fire die out and decant the contents of the pan into a large pot. From there, it goes into the kitchen, where we finish it off. When our children were little, they pitched in throughout the process. Now our granddaughter is the one who helps Jane with the final, delicious steps of pouring the elixir into jars.

Spring is right around the corner.



Larry Burke



photos by Larry Burke

THE LOG

Police Department (selected entries)

- | | | | | | |
|---------|------------|--|---------|------------|--|
| Jan. 1 | 7:04 a.m. | A driver loses control of his car after hitting a patch of ice on Hartsville New Marlborough Road. | Jan. 17 | 5:48 a.m. | A caller reports a tree down on New Marlborough Southfield Road. |
| Jan. 2 | 1:27 a.m. | A resident, alone in her Pine Street house, is awakened by the sound of a door opening. | Jan. 19 | 3:14 p.m. | Assist Sheffield Fire Department in rescuing two men whose boat has capsized in the Housatonic River. |
| Jan. 3 | 8:36 a.m. | A deer hit by a motorist on Hartsville New Marlborough Road is dispatched by an officer. | Jan. 22 | 6:17 p.m. | Assisting Sheffield following a call from a Polikoff Road resident stating that two cars and a truck were parked at a vacated neighbor's house, an officer is greeted by a real estate agent who is showing the house. |
| Jan. 10 | 6:31 a.m. | A driver reports she is unable to open her driver's side door after a deer ran into it on Hartsville New Marlborough Road. | Jan. 24 | 10:17 a.m. | An officer helps locate a shepherd dog lost on a Steepletop hiking trail off North Road. |
| Jan. 12 | 11:30 a.m. | A caller registers her concern about a small child riding a bicycle past her Hartsville New Marlborough Road residence. | Jan. 27 | 12:41 p.m. | A caller reports a dog, which she believe had been abandoned by a passing van, loose on Canaan Southfield Road. |
| | 3:36 p.m. | The animal control officer is alerted after a Knight Road resident reports that her dog has gotten loose. | | 6:20 p.m. | Branch down on Peter Menaker Road. |
| | 5:11 p.m. | A driver reports he has struck a deer on Cross Road to Canaan Valley Road. | Jan. 28 | 6:17 p.m. | An Alum Hill Road resident reports that her husband, who had gone out for a walk, had not returned; the search party is called off when the husband turns up — with an injury to his neck. |
| Jan. 14 | 3:52 p.m. | A caller reports that a car has driven into a swampy area at the intersection of Routes 57 and 183 in New Marlborough village. | Jan. 31 | 5:17 p.m. | An unlicensed speeder on Hartsville New Marlborough Road is issued a criminal complaint. |
| Jan. 16 | 8:01 a.m. | A driver slides off Hartsville New Marlborough Road just north of Adsit Crosby Road. | | | |
| | 5:31 p.m. | A driver loses control on Mill River Great Barrington Road near Knight Road. | | | |

Graham Frank, Chief of Police

THE OLD HOUSE INVENTORY

Anyone wondering why New Marlborough is also richly endowed with skilled builders and carpenters can get an answer — make that 254 answers — at the New Marlborough Public Library. The library is now the repository of a newly completed inventory of houses in town built in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. And, yes, counting residences, churches, and other structures, there are 254 of them — all needing care and renovation from time to time.

The inventory, a project of the New Marlborough Historic Commission, was begun by Helen Liveten and completed by Claudette Callahan. “Two open meetings were held to allow homeowners to check the house information,” says Ms. Callahan. “We are appreciative of the homeowners who have provided information

about their homes.” A binder, as well as a computer disc, containing the fruits of their research is available at the library.

Mill River, with eighty-seven, has the most structures built before 1901. Southfield has sixty-four; New Marlborough Village, thirty-nine; Clayton, thirty-three; and Hartsville, thirty-one. Three homes, says Ms. Callahan, claim 1740 as the date of construction: The Glickman house on Hadsell Street; the house on a hillside off Hartsville New Marlborough Road, now owned by Willow Creek Partners; and the Decotis house in Clayton. For additional information and corrections, please contact Claudette Callahan at 413-229-7771. □

Joe Poindexter

EMERGENCY SERVICES — A FINAL APPEAL

Thanks to all who have contributed to this year's annual fund drive. We're getting closer, but still haven't met our annual minimum to keep Emergency Services supported for the coming year. If you haven't yet donated, please do so via the PayPal link below or by mailing a check to NM-ESF, P.O. Box 263, Southfield, MA 01259.

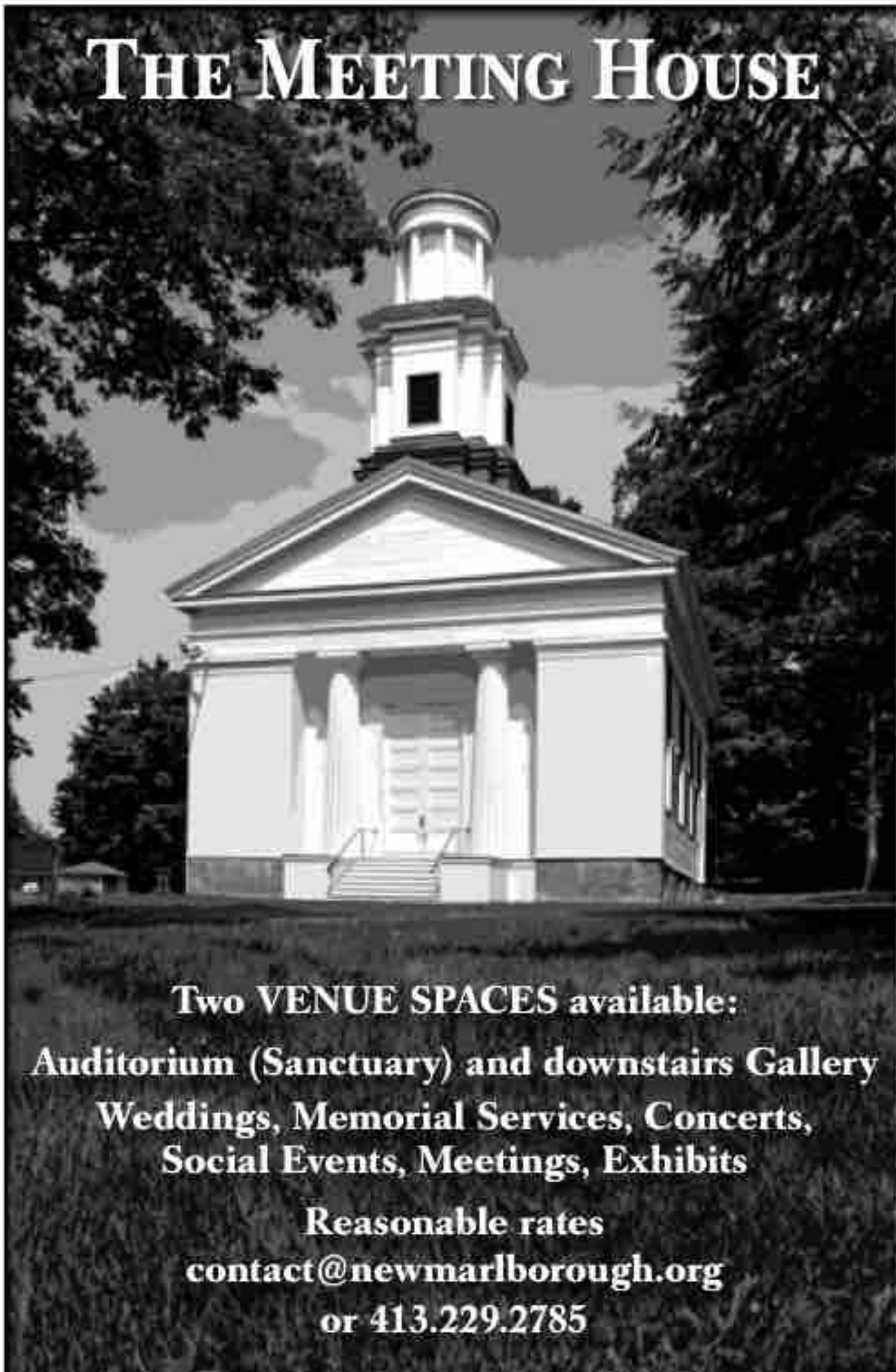
In the early days, the Emergency Services Fund, the fundraising arm of the Emergency Services (Fire and Ambulance) in New Marlborough, provided funding for needed equipment ranging from basic tools to the town's first ambulance. Later on, we helped raise money for the purchase of the land and the construction of the Emergency Services Facility that opened in 2012.

Since then, we have used the fund to service the mortgage on our building, now with a balance of \$263,000, but we help Emergency Services in other ways, too. While most of the day-to-day funding for both services now comes from other sources, we are available to assist with special projects. Potential future fundraising could go to complete the physical facilities for Fire and Ambulance needs and to solidify the financial future of the services by restructuring or retiring the mortgage.

As the members of Fire and Rescue complete their 90th year of voluntary service to the five villages, we have much to celebrate. We have come a long way since one small fire engine served the entire community. As we look forward to our centenary we will, with your help, continue to provide the same dedication and commitment as those who have served since 1930.

Please know that every dollar raised by ESF goes directly to support the town's emergency services. Please help by sending your tax-deductible donation today. A contribution via PayPal can be made at this website: https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_s-xclick&hosted_button_id=24D6YFNN7UDGN&source=url.

We are grateful for your generosity. Thank you. □



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SCHOOL NEWS

By Jane Burke

The Mount Everett Middle School EXPO on February 12 had a whole new look. Gone were the models of pyramids, mummies, and volcanoes of the past three decades. Front and center were students enthusiastically presenting their research on topics of personal interest to them. The change reflected the new curricular approach in the middle school, which was implemented in fall 2019. It stresses the personal engagement of students in this, a highly formative phase of their education.

The year-long themes are outlined for each grade level. For sixth graders the theme is Know Yourself, for seventh graders Know Your School, and for eighth graders Know your Community. Work on Expo began before the Christmas break. Students were asked to choose a topic of interest to them that related to these themes. After framing an essential question, students set out to do research and collect appropriate data to determine an answer that would be presented to the public.

Seventh grader Wyatt Brazie was passionate about his research on the impact of recess on student achievement. On his display board, he listed *Edutopia Magazine* as one of the sources that informed him of the positive aspects of recess. He said he found that, "Kids have higher achieve-



Ivy Webster Ben-David discusses her experiment on the smells that attract a dog with Flying Cloud Institute Director Maria Rundle.
photo by Jane Burke



Wyatt Brazie enthusiastically defends the benefits of recess, which with the demands of state-mandated learning requirement, has all but disappeared from the school day after elementary school.
photo by Jane Burke

ment after recess because it helps them focus better. Being outside gives them exposure to sun and vitamin D, which aids health by building stronger bones. Recess also gives us informal time with other kids, which helps make new friends."

Dasan Eichstedt's booth, also in the seventh grade science room, concerned the topic of stress and anxiety. He produced an attractive PowerPoint presentation that made the case that stress is unhealthy. He had researched how to reduce stress through yoga, meditation, and breathing exercises. In explaining his choice of topic to Superintendent Beth Regulbuto he said, "I was concerned about my dad. He has to be responsible for eleven children. I wanted to better understand how I could help." When asked about stress in his own life he said, "I get stressed about homework and sometimes in sports practice." He offered a breathing lesson that could be used to reduce stress.

In the eighth grade science room, Ivy Webster Ben-David was delighted to share her experience researching her dog's sense of smell. She said, "I really enjoyed learning the dog's olfactory system in books. In my experiment I used my Bernese mountain dog to explore what attracted and repelled him. I hid various smells in a sock and observed if he was interested or not. He liked ketchup and dog treats but not clementines, bitter apple, coffee, or peroxide. Since I only did three trials, I don't think my data is as good as it could have been." She added, however, "I really enjoyed working on this in my classroom, after school, and at home. From an educational standpoint, this EXPO clearly demonstrated that Mount Everett Middle School education is meeting the new state learning standards, which promote mastering the problem solving and communication skills required for success in our ever-changing world. These students demonstrated the ability to gather information needed to make a defensible argument and to share it with others, and they clearly

SCOTT

 MacKENZIE
 EXCAVATING

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enjoyed thinking about an issue of importance to them.

During February, Flying Cloud Institute returned to New Marlborough Central School to offer a residency, funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council's STARS grant program, called Dynamic Dance. Tom Masters' fourth grade students explored the physics of energy, with science educator Rachel Gall, by investigating how energy can be transferred from place to place by sound, light,



Dasan Eichstedt teaches Superintendent Beth Regulbuto how to use breathing exercises to reduce stress. photo by Jane Burke

heat, and electric currents. They learned how speed relates to energy. Dancer Tom Truss then worked with students to depict the concepts of speed, kinetic energy, potential energy, energy transfer, and elastic and inelastic collisions through movement. The final event was a shared dance performance, where the ideas from the science and social studies curriculum were brought to life. □

...AND AT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

January 31: Appearing before the Southern Berkshire Regional School District (SBRSD) School Committee, Mount Everett High School Principal Jesse Carpenter informed the group of a district wide Coordinated Program Review required by the state to look at implicit bias in everything used for instruction and policy. He reported that John Hammill, head of Social Studies, had attended the Anti-Defamation League training, "A World Of Difference," designed to combat prejudice in schools. Student training, to include students from Lenox and Monument Mountain High Schools, was set for February 13 and 27. These students will be peer trainers in their schools. The whole staff will participate in training at a later date.

February 13: The principal business of the School Committee was a renewal of the contract with SBRSD Superintendent Beth Regulbuto. Beginning in December, the entire committee had worked together to craft a contract and to incorporate agreed-upon changes negotiated with Ms. Regulbuto. As a result, the vote on a new, three-year contract was unanimous.

The state-mandated Southern Berkshire Bullying Prevention/Intervention and Education Plan was also presented and approved. The school calendar for academic year 2020-21 was approved: Schools open August 26; winter break will take place December 23 through January 4; and last day of school, not counting make-ups for snow days, will be June 10, 2021.

The formation of the Regional School District Planning Board to consider consolidation of SBRSD with the Berkshire Hills Regional School District (BHRSD) was also on the agenda. Despite a concern that there is an inadequate understanding of the legal process by which the individual town committees would become

a part of the planning board, the School Committee agreed to a meeting of the eight member towns of the two districts March 7 at 10:00 a.m. at the administrative office of BHRSD in Stockbridge. Each town can send three representatives, appointed by their town moderators, to this meeting. The agenda will include the official formation of the Regional School District Planning Board and the election of a chairperson, a secretary, and a treasurer. A state grant supporting this work must be expended by June 30, 2020.

March 5 and 12: School Committee meetings, both at 6:00 p.m. at Mount Everett Library, will be dedicated to presentation and approval of the 2020-21 school budget. The community is warmly invited to attend the March 5 meeting, at which the budget will be explained. □

Jane Burke, Chair, SBRSD School Committee

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Do Not Say We Have Nothing, by Madeleine Thien
American Dirt, by Jeanine Cummins
A Divided Loyalty, by Charles Todd

Adult Nonfiction

Our Wild Calling: How Connecting with Animals Can Transform Our Lives and Save Theirs, by Richard Louv
Ninth Street Women: Lee Krasner, Elaine de Kooning, Grace Hartigan, Joan Mitchell, and Helen Frankenthaler: Five Painters and the Movement That Changed Modern Art, by Mary Gabriel
All Standing: The Remarkable Story of the Jeanie Johnston, the Legendary Irish Famine Ship, by Kathy Miles

Children's Fiction

Bug Boys, by Laura Knetzger
Old Rock (Is Not Boring), by Deb Pilutti
They Called Us Enemy, by George Takei
The Best of Iggy, by Annie Barrows
Race to the Sun, by Rebecca Roanhouse

Children's Nonfiction

The Proper Way To Meet a Hedgehog and Other How-To Poems, by Paul B. Janeczko
Honeybee: The Busy Life of Apis Mellifera, by Candance Fleming

DVDs

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The Good Liar
Mrs. Lowry & Son
Sea of Shadows
Wish Us Luck Seasons 1-3



SCIENCE SATURDAYS RETURN

Thanks to the generosity of the New Marlborough Cultural Council, Science Saturdays will continue in 2020. The group will meet at the New Marlborough Library one Saturday each in March, April, May, September, and October. The first session for children ages six through twelve will be held March 21 from 10:00 a.m. to noon.

This free program is for curious children who are eager to discover why things happen. At each session, there will be a number of challenges in the areas of chemistry, physics, and biology from which to choose. Science Saturdays stress independent thinking and care in gathering data as key ingredients to finding answers. Preregistration is required as the group is limited to twelve. Contact Jane Burke at janesburke@gmail.com to reserve or just find out more.


Library Hours

Mon. Wed. Sat. 10:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Tues. & Fri. 1:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Thurs. 1:30 – 5:30 p.m.

229-6668



New Marlborough Library Cookbook Club

March 25 at 6:30 p.m.

Do you love sharing conversation over a meal?
 Do you love trying new recipes and experimenting with new flavors?
 This book club is for you!
 Each month we will all cook from the same cookbook and bring our dishes to a potluck-style dinner at the library. It's a great way to enjoy the full range of a cookbook while only making one dish.
 For March we will be cooking from, **Jacques Pepin: Fast Food My Way**
 The library has copies available to check out. This is a zero-waste event, so please bring your own dishes, silverware, cups, etc. (we will have some on hand just in case).

(413) 229-2544

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New Marlborough 5 Village News, P.O. Box 243, Southfield, MA 01259

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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, 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

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

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

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

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

Post Office: Mill River (413) 229-8582 — if and when it re-opens:

Window hours: Monday - Friday 11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

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

Southfield (413) 229-8476

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

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

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

Tax Collector: Monday 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

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

Dog and Animal Control Officer: New Marlborough Police Department 229-8161

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

Library: 229-6668

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 ARE DUE JULY 1

and can be purchased for \$125 at Town Hall, the Transfer Station, or by mail. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Late fee of \$150 after August 15.

Emergency calls:

**Police, Fire, Medical
911**

New Marlborough Highway Department

Located on Mill River-Southfield Rd.

Hours:

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

PO Box 99, Mill River, MA 01244

(413) 229-8165

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;

Janice Boults, Martha Bryan, Jane Burke, Larry Burke,

Robbi Hartt, Barbara Lowman, David Lowman,

Peter Schuyten, Barry Shapiro, Sandra Fusco-Walker

Contributing writers and artists: Ann Getsinger, Fiona Kerr,

Mary Richie Smith. Index: Donna Weaver

New Marlborough 5 Village News

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The next issue will be dated April 2020.

All copy must be submitted no later than March 18.

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

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