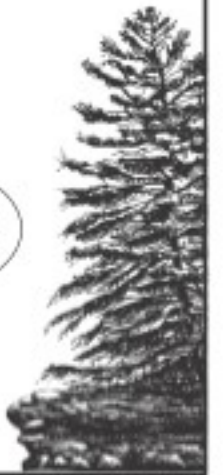




New Marlborough 5 Village News

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Clayton • Hartsville • Mill River • New Marlborough • Southfield

MASTER OF THE HOUSE

Dave Herrick and the Mill River General Store

(This is the first in an occasional series about landmark buildings in New Marlborough and the people who make them special.)

By Barry R. Shapiro

Times Square is known as the “Crossroads of the World.” The Mill River General Store can’t quite compete with that sobriquet, but to locals it’s the one place in town where, if you sit there long enough, you’ll likely see everyone you know — or at least those people lucky enough to live here.

The latest in a very long line of proprietors of this local landmark is Dave Herrick, who purchased the store in November 1992 and who has made the store the very axis on which the town seems to revolve.

“The first record of the building, which was built as a general store, is in 1830 and I have a complete list of every owner since,” said Dave. “The store has undergone many changes over the years. For example, it was Stanard’s Drug Store in the early 20th century. Back in the 1950s and 60s when it was owned by Jim Ware and Lee Barnes, it was known for its high quality meats, with people throughout Berkshire County making their way to the store. We still have the pulleys in the back, where they would hang calves and there’s a chicken puller, used to strip a chicken down, behind the door to the back room.”



Photo by Barry Shapiro

Dave Herrick

Mill River Store is the only general store.

Dave recalls that when he bought the store he closed it for almost two months to do some renovations, with post office access preserved during that time period. “Of course, since it was November, the first thing I did was go deer hunting. When I came back, Some buddies and I started the work in earnest. First thing that happened was that my back went out so I scooted around the floor, scraping up crud, on an auto mechanic’s sled. We reopened in January 1993.”

“I’ve made lots of changes to the place since I bought it. There was a staircase leading to the upstairs apartment in the back where the liquor room now is. We ripped that out so the only access upstairs is from the outside. There was a wall running down the middle of the store. We took that out also. Look up and you can still see the support beam. We built display cases using wood shelving which had been down in the basement for years. Those cases are still in use today. The deli counter was where

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At one time, the store was one of four such general merchandise stores in town with other stores located in Southfield (on the site of the Southfield Store), Clayton (at the four corners) and Hartsville (on Route 57 close to the Monterey town line). Today, of course, only the Mill River and Southfield stores survive as commercial establishments, and the

the coffee bar is, and the display case was where the tables are. All of that changed.”

The store used to contain a hardware room with lots of bins and supplies. The hardware is long gone but the vintage bins, located in the room to the left of the store, remain along with some rather unusual vestiges of the room's former purpose. “If they ever bring back smudge pots, which were used years ago to mark construction sites, I've got the market cornered for smudge pot wicks,” quipped Dave.

Long-time residents will remember that there used to be a Texaco gas station in front of the store which was removed when, like so many other old stations, a leak developed which required years to remediate. Dave bought the building in 2000 after the site cleanup was finally completed, although monitoring wells remain in place to this day.

It was important to Dave that everyone be able to come in, chat, purchase what they might need, and enjoy the store's welcoming atmosphere. “The only way to access the store for those who couldn't use the stairs was a very steep ramp at the post office end of the porch that was essentially unusable. I added the ramp in front to make it easier for everyone to get in without difficulty.”

Well known for his wry sense of humor, Dave describes the rules of the coffee club, which he introduced “on day one” and which has over 200 members, to include the following: (i) if you went on vacation on Friday, coffee is free on Saturday, and (ii) coffee was free on every holiday when the store was closed.

Dave, a vigorous seventy-five-year-old, is a native of Berkshire County, having grown up on a dairy farm in Lee “right where the Exit 2 clover leaf is today.” Before opening his own furniture store in Pittsfield, Dave's father was the general manager of Maloney's Furniture

Store in Great Barrington, where Tom's Toys is today. “You can still see the painted sign for the store on the bricks behind the store,” notes Dave. A graduate of Lee Junior High School, Cranwell Preparatory School, and Boston University, where he majored in business, Dave

served in the Air Force for four years, specializing in airborne photographic equipment and rising to the rank of sergeant. After the service, Dave worked in industry for thirty-five years, living in Illinois, Connecticut, and Michigan, before deciding that he had had enough of corporate life and that it was time to return to the Berkshires and become his own boss. It was then that Dave bought the General Store. He's never looked back.

Dave has been a member of the fire department since 1996 and captain since 2002. A dedicated Red Sox, Patriots, and Bruins fan, he has seen the rich and famous come through his doors, including Meryl Streep and Liam Neeson, but it is his commitment to the people of New Marlborough that gets him out of bed at what most people would consider a ridiculously early hour. “The people of this town are the favorite part of my job. I really enjoy getting to know them and being the information center of the town.”

The hours, however, are also the least-liked part of Dave's day. “It's not a secret that the store is for sale and that I'd like to retire. One day soon, I hope to be able to hang out here and just drink some coffee. I'd also like to spend more time camping and hunting.”

Hopefully, this historic building, so central to life in New Marlborough, has absorbed into its DNA the qualities of dedication and service to the town that Dave brings with him every day, and the store will remain a focal point of New Marlborough life for generations to come. □



The store around 1948

photo from the New Marlborough Historical Society photo archives

HEY DAVE! YOU'RE
OUT OF SUGAR!

OUR WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS

On January 20th, Dave Herrick reports sighting a Sasquatch in Mill River...



Diane Barth

IT COULD HAVE BEEN WORSE

On April 18, a beautiful Saturday afternoon, the smoke detectors at the Southfield home of Jim and Fran Stevens suddenly sounded at around 4:00 p.m. Workers applying foam insulation in the house's attic smelled smoke. Mrs. Stevens called 911. Mr. Stevens made sure the workers exited the house; he and his wife also evacuated the building. No one was injured.

In short order, units from seven fire departments were in motion and responding to the fire call. Appearing on the scene were elements of the fire companies of New Marlborough, Sheffield, Monterey, and Great Barrington. Providing coverage in the fire stations of the smaller towns were units from Becket, Otis, and Norfolk, Connecticut.

Firemen broke through the attic roof to vent the heat and smoke, while others opened the second floor ceiling and the walls of the two rooms directly below the fire's attic source. They sprayed water on the fire, quickly extinguishing it. Damage was limited to the attic and the two rooms below. No furniture or personal property was lost. The house was undergoing some renovation of the two damaged rooms, so everything had already been removed from them.

While the fire was being extinguished upstairs, firemen on the first floor were moving furniture and furnishings out of the rooms directly below, to protect them from water damage. The Stevenses are extremely grateful for the skill of the firemen in effectively fighting the blaze above, while minimizing the damage below.

The cause of the fire, as of this writing, was undetermined.

Many neighbors, friends, and contractors immediately offered help to the Stevenses, for which they are very thankful. They both observed that this community response is exactly why they live here.

The turnout of the various fire companies was deemed necessary because so many of the houses in the village



Photo by David Lowman

Ceiling torn out to reach the attic fire above.

are old, close to one another, and the day was very windy. A fully-involved fire could have easily spread to other houses. Difficult as this fire was, and the damage it caused, it could certainly have been a whole lot worse.

David Lowman

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN

March 23: The meeting was convened at 6:30 p.m. with all three selectmen present.

After approving the minutes from the March 16 meeting, the Board voted to add a Proposition 2½ debt exclusion question for the WiredWest borrowing to the ballot for the Town election on May 11. That assumes, of course, that voters approve the WiredWest borrowing at the Annual Town Meeting on May 4. The amount is expected to be in excess of \$3 million.

The Board appointed Peter Gay as town treasurer, effective immediately. The selectmen had previously approved a salary for the position of \$20 per hour for what is expected to be a 12-to-15-hour workweek. The appointment is contingent on his being bonded. (For more on the Town's new Treasurer see page 9.)

In budget actions this week the Board approved the following appropriations:

Police Salaries: \$93,517, a \$6,261 increase

Emergency Management Salary: Level funded at \$4,330

New Marlborough Rescue Expenses: Level funded at \$56,350

Stabilization Fund: \$10,000, a \$40,000 decrease

Tax Title (Treasurer): \$6,000, a \$1,000 increase

Following the lead of the Finance Committee, the Board unanimously voted not to recommend the Southern Berkshire Regional School District's operating budget of \$2,504,250 because, as the Board noted, it includes \$161,000 for the Monterey School. "Any budget that contains expenditures for a school that has six or seven students should be rejected," Selectman Nat Yohalem said, adding, "particularly when history has shown that approximately half of those students do not continue their schooling within the district." In addition, the selectmen had formally asked the School Committee in a letter to level-fund the budget, but instead the town is facing an \$81,086 increase in its assessment. The Board also rejected the district's capital budget of \$82,832.

In an update on the search for a new administrative assistant, Interim Administrative Assistant Joe Kellogg said the Town has received only one resume to date. He said the problem may be the title of administrative assistant. He said although the salary is competitive and the job comes with benefits, "the title does not clearly define what the job is." So he suggested that the Board consider changing the title to town administrator, which he thinks more accurately conveys the job's responsibilities. However, according to state law, the change needs to be ratified by the voters at the Annual Town Meeting. So Mr. Kellogg said he would draft a warrant article that, if approved by the voters, would authorize the selectmen to change the title to town administrator.

The Board voted to refer two proposed changes in the Town's Protective Bylaws regarding accessory dwellings back to the Planning Board, which would then allow the Planning Board to hold a public hearing on the changes, and then schedule them for a vote at the town meeting on May 4. (For a description of the changes see Board of Selectmen report in the December 2014 issue of the NM5VN.)

March 30: The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m., with all three Board members present. The first order of business was a discussion with Jan Johnson, the owner of Mill River Farm, about her plans to start an organic poultry operation at the farm. She said she's applying to the state for a license to process up to 2,500 birds per year, both chickens and turkeys. Her initial plan calls for processing just 1,500 chickens and fifty turkeys, because

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turkeys, because that's the level she feels comfortable with at this early stage. She said she expects to sell her poultry to local restaurants, at farmers markets and to possibly have "a farm stand at some point once we're well established," she added. However, she said that before the state will grant her a license, she needs the approval of the Town's Board of Health, which is why, she explained, she's appearing before the selectmen. She wants to brief them on the proposed operation and hopefully get their support. Board members expressed their enthusiasm for her plans and unanimously passed a motion to support her application with the Board of Health. "This is the kind of business we want to encourage in the town," Selectman Nat Yohalem said.

Chairman Tara White announced that the Town had been awarded \$56,163 in "pothole" money from the state's Winter Recovery Assistance Program, about the same amount it received last year.

The Board voted to recommend approval by the voters of five financial articles that will appear on the warrant at the Annual Town Meeting on May 4. All five articles have already been approved by the Finance Committee. They include the transfer, or rollover, of \$5,000 from the Fiscal 2015 Assessors Consultant Account to the same account for Fiscal 2016; the transfer of \$2,700 from the Perpetual Care Interest Account to the Cemetery Expense Account for the purpose of maintaining the Town's cemeteries; the appropriation of \$8,500 to provide vocational school tuition, as required by state law, for a town student attending the agricultural program at Housatonic Valley Regional High School in Falls Village, Connecticut, and the transfer of \$46,550 from the Comstar Fund account to the Comstar Expense Account to fund the operation of the town's ambulance. And finally, the Board authorized revolving fund accounts for the gas, electrical, and plumbing inspectors and the health agent.

The Board deferred action on four other financial articles pending further discussion with the Finance Committee at a joint meeting scheduled for April 9. These

included using \$60,000 from the Free Cash Account to purchase a mower for the Highway Department, which the Town would share with Sheffield; \$10,000 in Free Cash for an emergency generator for the highway department garage, and the transfer of \$90,000 from Free Cash to the Stabilization Account to be used for the purchase of capital items. Also deferred was a discussion of whether to recommend the appropriation of funds for the Town's share of the WiredWest construction costs.

Chairman White reported that School Superintendent David Hastings, a resident of Southfield, will once again organize and preside at the Town's Memorial Day celebration, and that Charlie Parton, a World War II veteran who recently celebrated his ninetieth birthday, will be the keynote speaker. (For a profile on Mr. Parton, see the March issue of the NM5VN.) Memorial Day will be celebrated on May 25.

Peter Schuyten

April 6: After approving the minutes of the meetings of March 23 and 30, the selectmen, all three being present, listened as Chairman Tara White read a letter from School Superintendent David Hastings, itself a response to a January 12 letter from the Board requesting a level-funded school budget. While regretting that costs beyond the administration's control had increased the budget by 3.34 percent, Mr. Hastings expressed a desire to work with Town officials going forward. Selectman Nat Yohalem suggested the Board reply with an equally conciliatory "wish to work with you in a spirit of cooperation."

The selectmen then turned their attention to a draft of the thirty-two articles on the Town Warrant. The forty-four salary and expense items in Article 13 — representing a total increase of 2.7 percent over the current year — elicited little comment, except for a brief, whimsical exchange when Selectman Michele Shalaby questioned a \$500 appropriation for Finance Committee expenses. "Oh, we need that for all the lavish parties we throw," said Committee Secretary Prue Spaulding,



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who was in attendance. Once the hilarity subsided, Ms. Shalaby clarified that she suspected the Committee's expenses exceeded the allocation and was suggesting it might be raised. It wasn't.

Article 16, explained Mr. Yohalem, was placed on the warrant in response to an email from School Committee Chairman Carl Stewart, asking if New Marlborough residents had ever voted on whether to close the Monterey School. This article does so.

Unclassified expenses in Article 25 specify significant increases in general and group insurance payments. "These items were severely underfunded in past years," explained Interim Administrative Assistant Joe Kellogg. "It's better to fully fund these expenses than to make up the shortfall out of Free Cash at the end of the year."

A discussion of an article asking if voters wanted to borrow \$3.4 million as the Town's share of a fiber-optic broadband network revealed that there are two descriptions of the borrowing being considered by various towns in the network. The selectmen rejected the longer version offered by WiredWest, which would own and manage the network, and opted for the simpler one being promulgated by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, the quasi-state governmental body that proposes to build it. Mr. Kellogg briefly summarized a discussion he had had with the Town's bond counsel, Clark Rowell, in which Mr. Rowell advised that the Town's debt service should not exceed 10 percent of its total annual revenue. (See further analysis on page 14.)

Finally, a detailed animal-control bylaw was rejected in favor of a simple leash law that requires dogs to be on a leash when they are not on their owner's property. At present, the Town has no leash law.

Administrative Secretary Sharon Fleck said she has been in discussion with Colonial Power, which was offering a rate of from 7 to 9 cents per kwh if the Town would agree to be locked into the rate for five years. Mr. Yohalem asked that "they give us something in writing." At present, the Town is locked into a contract with Hampshire Power at 12 cents per kwh. until November.

The meeting, which began at 6:00 p.m., adjourned at 7:30.

Joe Poindexter

April 13: All three selectmen were present for a discussion with Highway Superintendent Loring of his post-winter road repair plans for the Town. High on the list was the Clayton Mill River Road from the intersection of Brewer Hill Road all the way to the bridge by the Library. Mr. Loring estimates the all-in cost of the project at around \$1 million, which includes drainage and two "stream crossings" that will require new culverts designed to the specifications of the Army Corp of Engineers. Other road work outlined by Mr. Loring included the paving of Sisson Hill Road

(South), damaged last July by torrential rains, at a cost of \$50,000, putting a top coat of asphalt on County Road for \$133,000, and the resurfacing of about 3,500 feet of Canaan Southfield Road about two miles south of the Hadsell Street bridge for \$123,000. He said he'll also be repairing a 200-foot stretch of Lumbert Cross Road near the intersection of Canaan Southfield Road, and he said he's planning to use the \$56,163 in "pothole money" from the state's Winter Recovery Assistance Program to repair roughed-up sections of Great Barrington Mill River Road

Selectman Nat Yohalem pointed out that the Town is eligible this year to apply for a MassWorks infrastructure grant of \$1 million, which he said could be used to fund the Clayton Mill River Road project. He noted that the Town could cite some of the same reasoning in its application that it used in the successful application for the \$500,000 MassWorks grant used to replace the Canaan Southfield Road bridge near Foley Hill, namely that it's a major link to Connecticut. In fact, as he pointed out, that was why the town of Canaan was able to get the Connecticut state legislature to provide support for the grant application. The other repairs will likely be paid for with money from the Town's share of the state's Chapter 90 local road and bridge repair fund, which Mr. Loring estimated is around \$450,000. The Board asked Mr. Loring to firm up his estimates and come back for



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final approval of the work. It also asked him for a list of major equipment purchases the Highway Department will need to make over the next five years for the Town's capital planning purposes.

Members of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District's School Committee met with the Board to work out a compromise after the selectmen voted not to recommend passage of the district's budget by the Town's voters. "We're here to appeal to you to reconsider your vote," said committee member Vito Valentini, who is also chairman of the SBRSD Finance Sub-committee. He was joined at the meeting by School Superintendent David Hastings and New Marlborough's two School Committee members Fran Lartigue and Kristin Sparhawk. The Board had made it abundantly clear both in a letter to the School Committee and at a recent meeting of the Finance Committee, which all three selectmen attended, that its support for the budget hinged on the School Committee taking some kind of concrete steps towards closing the Monterey School. As Selectman Yohalem put it, "it need not be closed in September, but if I believed a process was going to be put in place in good faith to evaluate and ultimately close Monterey say a year from now, I could see myself recommending passage of the budget," he said, a statement with which the other Board members agreed. For the School Committee, the issue has taken on added urgency after Sheffield's selectmen

joined New Marlborough's in voting not to recommend approval by their voters of the District's budget, since it takes the approval of four of the five towns that make up the district for the budget to pass.

A proposal outlined by Mr. Valentini in effect would empower the superintendent to suspend an educational program, if in his opinion the program is no longer academically viable. That would set the clock running for supporters of the program to work with the superintendent and members of the School Committee to come up with a way to make the program viable. But if after a year the program is still not viable, the superintendent could then recommend it be terminated. Although the proposed policy would apply to any district-wide educational program, it was clear from the meeting that it would be used initially, if approved, to resolve the selectmen's issue with the Monterey School.

"I believe this is a viable process, a method of going forward," Mr. Valentini said. "It doesn't point fingers at anyone, and it creates a standard, which is the opinion of the superintendent." He said he would bring a motion to the floor proposing the new policy at the next School Committee meeting on April 29, and said he believes he'll have the six votes necessary to pass it.

Asked by Mr. Yohalem whether this is a responsibility he'd be willing to undertake, Superintendent Hastings said, "Absolutely." "Then, if that were to occur, that




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the motion is made and it's approved," Mr. Yohalem said, "I would certainly be willing to change my vote and recommend passage of the budget," adding that he would also urge the Finance Committee to do the same. However, Mr. Yohalem emphasized that, by the same token, if the School Committee votes not to support the motion, "then we're back where we are now."

Administrative Assistant Joe Kellogg submitted to the Board for its review another draft of the thirty-

two articles comprising the Town Warrant, including a much simpler version of the leash law, requiring dogs to be on a leash when they're not on their owner's property. As Chairman White noted, the warrant must be signed and posted by April 27, one week prior to the Annual Town Meeting on May 4. So a motion was made to accept the draft as written and unanimously approved. □

Peter Schuyten

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

April 19: The meeting was called to order by Commission members Ned Wilson and John Schreiber.

After an early morning site visit to the Crosby Mill Site in Mill River, the Commission reviewed the Request for Determination (RDA) submitted by the New Marlborough Land Trust. Land Trust Executive Director, Martha Bryan, was on hand to explain the plan to install a temporary fence at the perimeter of the property to contain four goats which will make the fenced area their home for the summer. The Commission asked for clarification about the installation of the fence and the materials used for the fencing. The Commission agreed that the fence would not "alter" or "dredge" the

resource area giving the permit a negative determination meaning the proposed activity did not require any further permitting.

With no other business on the agenda, the mail was reviewed. In reply to an email received from Victor Mulholland of 123 Brockway, which described his intent behind removing several trees near the Lake Buel shoreline, the Commission resolved to invite Mr. Mulholland to appear before the Commission to further clarify his actions.

After several newsletters were circulated between members, the meeting adjourned. □

Martha Bryan



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HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT SEEKS FUNDING

By Chuck Loring

At the Annual Town Meeting, the highway department is asking for approval of two items. The first is a tractor-mounted boom mower. This is used for reaching over guardrails, reaching up and down steep banks, and reaching farther off roads than conventional roadside mowing. The highway department is always cutting and trimming brush from the sides of the roads to improve travel and sightlines, and also to let sun and airflow help to dry out the roads. With this machine, this would be greatly improved. This tractor would be in addition to our current contracted roadside mowing, but would probably reduce the number of contracted hours. In the past, the Town has rented this machinery, but it is becoming more difficult and expensive – over \$2,600 per week. If an emergency arises and the roadside cutting can't be done, the Town is still charged for the whole week. Owning it would give the department greater flexibility. The cost of the tractor is \$120,000, which we propose splitting with the Town of Sheffield. We would have a contract regarding the use and maintenance responsibilities. This concept is not new: we currently share the speed trailer between police departments. The towns of Sandisfield, Tolland, Otis, and Tyringham all currently share a mower like the one we propose.

The second is a propane generator for the highway garage, with automatic start-up and weekly testing.

There seems to be an increase in major storms and natural disasters; when these occur, the highway department is usually working. We need backup power for communication, fuel for equipment, heat, lights, and garage doors. The cost for the generator, installation, and a propane tank is \$10,000.

Please consider voting for these items at Annual Town Meeting. This equipment would greatly increase the department's ability to serve the Town. Please feel free to stop by the garage or call 413-229-8165 with any further questions. Thank you. □

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PETER GAY, TOWN TREASURER

There's a new treasurer in town. Peter Gay, a resident of Aberdeen Lane, was appointed by the selectmen in March to replace Jennifer Goewey, who left to become executive director of the Senior Center in Sheffield. Like a lot of recently-retired New Marlborough seniors, Mr. Gay says he was looking for something to do that would, as he put it, "keep me out of trouble but allow me to keep my hand in." He said he thought about looking for something full time, but realized "I'll just get myself into the same hassle I was in when I was working eighty hours a week and killing myself." Instead, he'll be putting in what the selectmen expect will be a twelve-to-fifteen-hour workweek as the Town's new treasurer. Although Mr.



Peter Gay

Gay has no prior experience in municipal finance, he is a CPA and has extensive business experience, having spent virtually his entire working life in the insurance industry, first in the Hartford area at Aetna Insurance and then in Great Barrington, where he was operations

manager for Wheeler and Taylor Insurance. After seven years at Wheeler & Taylor, he and a partner went out on their own and founded the GoodWorks Insurance agency, based on the unique marketing proposition that it would donate 50 percent of its annual operating profits to support local community services, hence the name Good Works Insurance. That was in 2004 and he put in ten years with the agency, which now has branches in five or six locations in western Massachusetts and nearby Connecticut, before retiring in 2014 at the age of sixty-seven. A veteran of the United States Air Force, where he reached the rank of captain, he and his wife Maria, a local sculptor, built their Aberdeen Lane home in 1999,

where they now live with their ten-year-old border collie mix, Slate. Mr. Gay has a BA in economics from the University of Massachusetts, and a BS in accounting and an MBA from Western New England College. □

Peter Schuyten

TOWN CAUCUS AND ELECTION

Thirty-three voters turned out for the annual town caucus on March 31, which establishes the ballot for the town election on May 11. All candidates were invited to submit statements for publication. The statements of those who responded appear below. The polls will be open at Town Hall in Mill River from noon to 7:00 p.m. on Monday, May 11.

► Moderator, one year: BARRY SHAPIRO

Since my wife, Marjorie, and I made New Marlborough our home in 2007 (full time in 2010), we have been looking for ways to get involved and help this wonderful town which has welcomed us so warmly. In addition to my service as treasurer of the New Marlborough Village Association and member of the *Five Village News* editorial board, and Marjorie's work on the Cultural Council, I am excited about the opportunity to serve as town moderator. Having practiced corporate law for over four decades, having been trained as a mediator and having served as the chair of many meetings and organizations, I believe that I can achieve an important balance at our town meetings. I'd like everyone to feel comfortable exercising their right to speak. I'd like everyone to benefit from honest and open discussion of the important issues which we face and I'd like the proceedings to move along briskly so that we can get our work done efficiently. I hope that I will have your vote and I would be happy to speak with anyone about my qualifications. Just call me at 229-3993. Thank you.

► Board of Selectmen, three years: TARA B. WHITE

New Marlborough is continually changing and with these changes comes the challenge of maintaining and improving services in the community. We must be sure that we can meet our obligations both today and in the future without relying on state revenues. The challenge that we face as a community is what taxpayers can afford, since most of our revenue comes from taxes, and what the Town can accomplish with this revenue.

Today, we are faced with a large investment in broadband service and repair of our roadways. Both of these are extremely expensive, yet necessary to our community. As a selectman, it is my responsibility to look at and understand our current financial picture and resources, know what we can afford over the next five to ten years, and how we can best use these resources for the betterment of all residents in the town. This process has already begun with the goal that New Marlborough will, in the near future, be able to pay cash for equipment and vehicles and only borrow for the much larger projects.

Taking a proactive approach is the only way to guarantee that we maintain our flexibility to purchase what we need and also allow our residents to continue to live in the community. I would appreciate your vote on May 11 for selectman. If you would like to discuss any issue, please give me a call at 229-7754 or email me at: tarabw@verizon.net

► Assessor, three years: WENDY WRAY MILLER

I joined my husband, John, in New Marlborough in 2001, moving here from Florida. Shortly after settling on the farm, a vacancy became available on the Board of Assessors. I have served on the Board now for several years.

I am committed to the job, accountable for the department and education of the taxpayer while maintaining a fiduciary responsibility to the Town of New Marlborough and its taxpayers. The mission of the Assessor's Office is to value real and personal property fairly and accurately in accordance with Massachusetts general laws and the regulations of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Revenue, which govern such activities. Also in accordance with such laws, rules, and regulations, to administer motor vehicle excise, exemption, and abatement programs and to address questions and concerns of property owners and the general public in

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► **Finance Committee, three years: MARK CARSON**

► **Finance Committee, three years: IRA YOHALEM**

I am seeking reelection to the town finance committee. My reasons and qualifications are as follows:

I have been a part-time and, for the past four years a full-time, resident of new Marlborough for almost forty years. I love the town and, based on my experience in finance (see below), I feel privileged to be able to “give back” to the community.

My experience includes over fifty years as a CPA, having been chairman of a large New York accounting firm for many years. In that capacity I have been exposed to and consulted on any number of financial issues including borrowings, budgets etc. I also serve on boards as both chairman of the audit committee and treasurer of Barrington Stage here in the Berkshires.

I have served on New Marlborough’s finance committee for three years and have, therefore, learned the intricacies of how the town’s finances are managed.

Given my experience and longevity in the community I think my re-election would greatly benefit the town.

► **Constable, three years: EDGAR ZUKAUSKAS**

As many of you may know, I have been battling liver cancer for several years. I am happy to say that I have received a successful liver transplant and am ready, once again, to serve our community as your constable.

A constable’s main responsibility is to maintain the peace within the Town. In addition to this, a constable may assist the Town’s police and fire departments, post public notices, summons, subpoenas, and warrants, and help maintain order during town meetings and elections.

Working for the public is an important job and one I have been doing for many years. I look forward to



WHY DID THE TURTLE CROSS THE ROAD?

Do NOT relocate turtles crossing the road.

They know where they are going (usually to lay eggs) and will try to get back there if you relocate them. If you need to help them, get them to the side that they were headed to.

If you scare them picking them up and they “pee”, that’s not urine, it’s water the females hold to help them lay eggs. So if they’re almost off the road, let them get there while you wait, or carefully move them.

serving all of New Marlborough as your constable again with your vote on May 11. The polls are open at the Town Hall in Mill River from 12 noon to 7:00 p.m.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me anytime at 229-7754, or by email at: ezedgar1@verizon.net

► **Constable, three years: JOHN PSHENISHNY**

I have been married to my wife, Marsha, for forty-two years. We moved to Clayton in 1983. I have been an active member of the fire department for forty-one years. I am still active as a radio dispatcher.

I am a 1966 graduate of Housatonic Valley Regional High School. I worked at Wash & Dry for ten years, until they closed. Then I was employed at Sheffield Plastics for thirty years.

I am retired now and have the time to give to the town. I feel that I could offer some of my experience and knowledge to the town. I have worked as acting constable for the last three years, during the elections.

I would appreciate your support on election day.

► **Tree Warden, one year: WILLIAM “BILL” RUANE**

► **Cemetery Commissioner, three years: ROBERT PALMER**

► **Planning Board, five years: MARK CARSON**

► **Library Trustee, three years: CLAUDETTE CALLAHAN**

It has been a pleasure to be a library trustee for the past twenty years. The library is the cog about which the town turns. Through the years, the library has responded to many challenges. I have been fortunate to have been part of the planning for the growth of the library. In our small town, it serves as a community center, meeting the needs of the old and young alike. If reelected, I will be honored to continue to work with the trustees and the library director in planning for the future library needs.

► **Board of Health, three years:**

No declared candidate



SUSAN M. SMITH
Attorney At Law

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email: ssmithlaw@barringtonlawoffice.com

THE SCHOOL BUDGET: STILL NOT RECOMMENDED

By Joe Poindexter

The watchdogs of the Town treasury were not happy. New Marlborough's Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee were looking for an FY16 budget from the Southern Berkshire Regional School District that was level-funded with the current year. What was proposed, instead, was an increase of 3.34 percent, with a \$2.6-million assessment to New Marlborough that is \$81,086 more than for the current year. (Assessments in other District towns, based on student populations, were increased even more: by \$221,000 in Monterey and \$278,000 in Egremont.)

In a letter to School Superintendent David Hastings and School Committee Chairman Carl Stewart, New Marlborough's selectmen expressed their displeasure, saying that they, together with the members of the Finance Committee, "have voted unanimously to not recommend approval... to our voters at the Annual Town Meeting."

According to Mr. Hastings, the increases in the proposed budget were unavoidable. "As the result of long and strenuous work by the administration and the School Committee," he explained in a letter to the Board of Selectmen, "we level-funded or cut all discretionary budget lines and reduced the faculty by one position. Unfortunately, bargaining unit contract increases that included salary increases and a health insurance 13 percent cost increase resulted in an overall budget increase of 3.34 percent... I hope you will understand that it would be impossible, inappropriate, and probably illegal to attempt to structure a budget to meet a specific assessment number for any one town."

Bruce Turner, business manager of the school district, concurs. He points out that expenses over which the district has no control — including, in addition to insurance premiums, electricity, water, and contract services — push the FY16 budget 4 percent ahead of the current year. Savings of \$67,000 in heating costs from lower fuel prices, \$95,000 in teacher salaries, \$15,000 in transportation costs, achieved by dropping a route, and a \$2,500 reduction in the capital budget, lowers the overall increase to 3.34 percent.

District administrators were sufficiently concerned by the lack of support for their budget that Mr. Hastings and Vito Valentini, chairman of the Finance Subcommittee of the School Committee, showed up at the April 13 meeting of the Board of Selectmen to ask what would change the Board's mind. It turns out there was something: the Monterey School. The future of the community schools has been debated since at least 2012, when an ad-hoc committee recommended that those in Monterey and Egremont be re-purposed as tuition-based pre-schools and day-care programs. (In response to the

report, the School Committee voted unanimously to keep all the community schools open.) In its letter to Mr. Stewart and Mr. Hastings, the selectmen and the Finance Committee revisited the potential savings of eliminating at least one school. "As a first step," it states, "we need to consider consolidation within our own District by diverting funds from the smallest outlying school program and building (Monterey) to the larger, more efficient ones."

According to figures from the District business office, the cost of operating the Monterey School in FY16 is projected at \$168,510 (which computes to \$28,085 per student for the six students enrolled there in the coming school year, compared to \$20,402 each for the 756 students in the District as a whole). It projects a cost savings of \$110,885 through elimination of a teacher and an aide and another \$12,400 in utilities and internet access fees — for a total potential savings of \$123,285. (Transportation costs and the allocation of principal and assistant principal salaries assigned to Monterey would remain.)

At the April 13 Board meeting, Mr. Valentini attempted to lay out a road map that would lead to acceptance of the budget. He proposed that he would seek School Committee approval of a resolution empowering the superintendent to suspend any program that was not meeting the educational needs of the District — and permanently discontinue it if the program were not sufficiently upgraded within one year. The School Committee, however, chose a more deliberative route. It turned the question of program viability over to its Policy Subcommittee, which will take up the matter April 29 and resist pressure to be hurried into program cuts. "It's going to take a couple of meetings to put something definitive in order," Charles Flynn, chairman of the subcommittee, told the Berkshire Record.

"Our vote was to not recommend," says Tara White, chairman of the Board of Selectmen, "and nothing has happened so far to change our mind." □

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Where: Gedney Farm, adjacent to the newly built Argentine and Wood-Fired Oven! Stop by and do some shopping and then enjoy some light fare by the grill.

What: Vegetables, herbs, honey and eggs from New Marlborough's own USDA Certified Organic farms: **Berkshire Bounty Farm**, and **Mill River Farm**. Delicious local cheeses, meats and Gedney's own baked goods. Stock up for the weekend at Gedney Farm



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LOST: Small mahogany drawer

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Alan and Elizabeth Lombardi
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LUXURY OR NECESSITY?

Putting a Value on Being Connected

by Joe Poindexter

Do we want it? Can we afford it? Over the past several months, New Marlborough residents have been grappling with these two questions — from the point of view of both their personal finances and the Town's fiscal health — as to whether the Town should be fully wired with a fiber-optic broadband network. The advantages: high-speed Internet connectivity and low-cost phone service, plus the opportunity to receive television programming over the Internet, tailored to specific tastes. The disadvantages: higher taxes and the possibility that the added debt could make future borrowings more expensive.

Do we want it? In one camp are those residents who are comfortable with the present level of Internet service, or in some cases no broadband access at all. Why, they ask, should they pay, through higher taxes, for a service they will not use? In the other camp are residents who believe that robust Internet connectivity is vital to the future of the town. They consider broadband to be to the 21st century what the automobile was to the 20th.

As projected by WiredWest, a consortium of western Massachusetts towns that proposes to own the network and operate or subcontract an Internet service provider (ISP), the net cost to homeowners depends, in part, on the assessed value of the property. According to the estimates of a WiredWest consultant, the owner of a \$300,000 property would make up the additional \$21 a month he pays in taxes with less expensive phone service — \$25 for full-featured service. The Internet subscription itself would range from \$49 for 25 megabits per second (mbps) of internet to \$79 for 100 mbps to \$109 for a gigabit (1,000 mbps). By comparison, DSL delivers at most 8 mbps. One-time costs would include an installation fee of \$100. Driveways of 750 feet or less would be wired free, assuming they had poles with the capacity to carry a fiber-optic cable. Homeowners wanting their cable buried could run it through an existing conduit or receive an allowance equal to the cost of the overhead wiring of a 750-foot driveway.

By these estimates, approximately half of all New Marlborough residents could come out ahead with WiredWest delivering Internet, phone, and TV to their homes (though the price of television programming has not yet been determined.) Those for whom a tax hike would not be covered by savings would have to determine whether less quantifiable benefits — increased property valuation, enhanced communications for professionals and small businesses, more robust access to the Internet for students — justified their investment. Those who make little or no use of computers will be

faced with a more philosophical calculation: Does robust Internet connectivity provide a social benefit — like, for instance, public education — that warrants the support of the entire community?

That leaves the questions, can we afford it? And can New Marlborough be confident that WiredWest is a good investment? A business model, constructed by WiredWest Treasurer Jim Drawe and refined over the past five years, shows that WiredWest meets its operating expenses when 35 percent of a town's households sign up; returns the cost of debt service at 40 percent, and turns a profit at 50 percent. The model assumes that 85 percent of the subscribers will sign up for a "triple play," Internet, phone, and TV, at an estimated cost of about \$120 a month, and that revenues lost in a decline in phone and TV service — starting in year seven and dropping to zero in year fourteen — will be replaced by increased demand for faster internet.

"This is a model, this is not a promise," cautioned Mr. Drawe at an early-April informational meeting in Becket, sponsored by WiredWest. "If the predicted cash-flow happens, great. If not, be prepared." At the same time, he emphasized that costs and projections were conservatively estimated. Installation of fiber-optic cable, for example, was costed out as if a town were going it alone, realizing none of the efficiencies of multiple-town purchasing. Revenue was figured on the assumption that there would be no increase in the 40 percent of a town's original subscribers — even though experience in other localities shows that once a system is in place, a majority of potential subscribers eventually sign on.

Finally, there is the issue of debt. New Marlborough's portion of WiredWest's total borrowing is now put at \$3.4 million, which includes an apportionment of the \$2.5 million the consortium needs for pre-construction operating capital. How wise would it be for New Marlborough to add this to its current debt obligations?

According to Interim Administrative Assistant Joe Kellogg, New Marlborough will be paying debt service of \$181,000 in FY16, a figure that will rise to \$346,000 in FY17 with the addition of borrowings for the new fire truck and Mount Everett school repairs. With annual revenues of about \$5 million, the Town's ratio of debt service to revenues will stand at 6.9 percent — comfortably within the 10 percent that is widely regarded as a safe upper limit. The addition of debt service for a WiredWest bond — about \$306,000 at 4 percent interest for a 20-year bond; \$476,000 for a 10-year bond — would push the ratio to 13 percent for the longer-term bond or 16 percent for

continued on page 15

AN APPEAL: Our WiredWest Delegate Wants You to Be Informed

By Tim Newman

Infrastructure — the transportation, communication, sewage, water and electric systems that are vital to the economic vitality of a community — has been much on my mind lately. Bringing a fiber-optic Internet network to New Marlborough, while admittedly expensive, would represent a major infrastructure upgrade to our town — one I believe is essential to our future well-being. After years of work and planning, we are on the verge of extremely fast 21st century Internet connectivity. The many exciting services it will provide are tantalizingly close. As our representative on the WiredWest Board of Directors, I have marshaled the necessary facts to communicate all the steps from financing to construction to bringing us the services we want. I am scheduling a series of informational meetings to answer your questions objectively and clearly. The first will take place Saturday, May 2, at 11:00 a.m. at Town Hall.

So, if an Internet infrastructure is vital to New Marlborough, how are we doing? The short answer: not well. Our Internet infrastructure is seriously outmoded. To begin with, not even half our 1,050 households have access to the best available technology in our town — Verizon's already outdated DSL service. DSL is last century's technology; it runs on Verizon's aging copper wires, and is increasingly inadequate to handle our growing bandwidth needs.

But many of you can't even get DSL and are forced to use an Internet satellite dish, or heaven forbid, Verizon dial-up service. You are being penalized with inferior technology simply because of your address. This adversely impacts your ability to work from home and your children's educational opportunities. And, significantly, it reduces the value of your property. Some of our neighbors who have DSL say their service is fine, so they oppose the idea of a fiber bond issue. Why should I vote a tax increase for something I can get along without, they ask? This ignores the questions of fairness and equal access. When viewed from the perspective of our entire town, I'm confident

most of us agree that our current Internet infrastructure is both unfair and woefully inadequate.

So what is the solution? Demand that Verizon provide something better than DSL — like the FIOS fiber service they have brought to parts of Boston and other cities? Or petition Time Warner or Comcast to wire us up with cable? Maybe we should all depend on our smart phones, as some of our neighbors are forced to do? Or invest in a fixed wireless network, because supposedly it's not very expensive? How about waiting for a technology breakthrough, like Internet service from drones, or something amazing being secretly hatched in a lab that will be great, and, of course, cheap? Or how about waiting for the Federal government to write us a big check?

These are some of the well intentioned questions and suggestions WiredWest has been getting from folks who are skeptical of our plan to build a fiber-optic network that will serve every household in our towns. What you may not know is that WiredWest came into being because after years of careful study — looking into these very questions ourselves — we came to the conclusion that none of these scenarios would come true in a time frame that would help our towns. We became convinced that, as a group of forty-four towns, we had to take matters into our own hands for positive change to happen. And that's what we have done.

I will be scheduling information sessions, beginning on May 2, to go over the WiredWest plan and address all such questions (and others you may have) in as much detail as you wish. We need to weigh the risks of staying with the status quo against the vast possibilities for education, commerce, and quality of life. We also need to weigh the costs of building this network and the costs to us as individuals against the savings that it will also generate. I encourage you to come out to talk about fiber and WiredWest and satisfy yourself that this is a very sound plan and good for our town. □

Luxury or Necessity?, continued

the shorter. (These figures would gradually diminish as the principal was paid down over the term of the loan.) At the informational meeting, finance consultant Joe Markarian advised against giving too much weight to the debt-to-revenue ratio. "It's a metric, not an absolute number," he said. "If you can explain why you have gone above that 10 percent and that you will be able to service the debt, then it's not a problem." There is, however, one further consideration: How would additional debt impact the Town's ability to borrow for other purposes, such as the repair of a bridge or the repaving of a road?

The question of a WiredWest borrowing will come before voters at the Annual Town Meeting on May 4. If it is turned down this year, proponents of a fiber-optic network will have until June 30, 2016, to win over the skeptics. After that, the Town will no longer be eligible for its portion of \$18 million of state money devoted to the design and engineering of the network in WiredWest towns. Whether it is this year or next, the decision comes down to how we see access to the increasingly dense world of the Internet. Is it a luxury, or is it now and ever more so one of life's essentials? □

NEIGHBORS



On April 3, **Laura Davis** came to the end of her seventeen full-time years as a mainstay at the Mill River Store. She has moved on to a part-time position in housekeeping at Lone Oak Campground in Canaan. Laura was really touched by the dozens of people who took the time to stop by to wish her well. "I'll miss seeing the people," Laura said, "but it's time to do other things that I enjoy, like my grandchildren, sewing, and baking. And if I'm on my porch when people drive by, they should stop and visit!" She will miss seeing us, as we will miss seeing her on a regular basis.

April 9 was the 150th anniversary of Generals Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant agreeing to the terms of Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House in Virginia, thus beginning the end of Civil War hostilities. The National Park Service commemorated this event by inviting communities across the country to celebrate by bell-ringing for four minutes, one for each year of the war. Bells were rung at Appomattox at 3:00 p.m., and participating communities rang their bells at 3:15. Here in New Marlborough, **Mary and Emily Hastings** and **Robert Olsen** (left) rang the bell at the Southfield Church. At the same time, **Ben Harms, David Hosford, and Barry Shapiro** were ringing the bell at the New Marlborough Meeting House. Barry then climbed up in the belfry to record the bell in motion.

Going out in style! In his senior year at Mount Everett High School, **Bradley Lupiani**, of Mill River, has won the All-Eagle wrestling MVP (Most Valuable Player) award for the second time. This year he won the western Massachusetts championship at 132 pounds, was a state runner-up, and finished in fourth place in the All State Meet. During the year, he broke Mount Everett's record for most wins as a wrestler. Congratulations!



photo by Emily Hastings

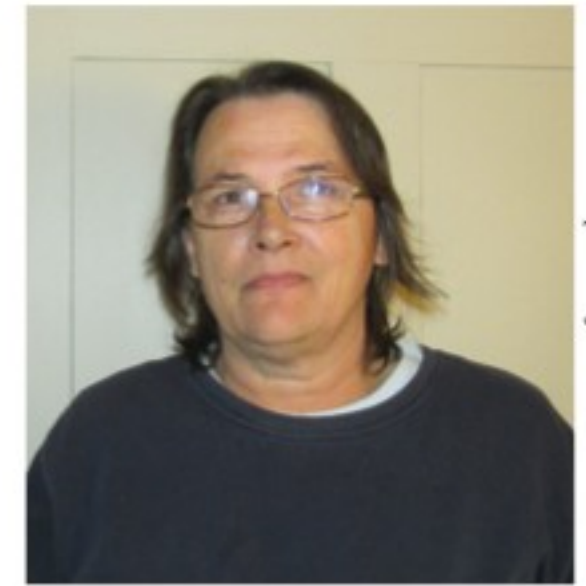


photo by Barbara Lowman



Larry Burke, of New Marlborough, has had a short film, *Autumnal*, accepted for the Berkshire International Film Festival. It will be shown at the Mahaiwe Theater in Great Barrington at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, May 31. The events in the film are documentary in nature, centered on an overbearing rooster on a farm in western Massachusetts; the style of the film is based in non-fiction forms, especially the spare style of the French filmmaker Robert Bresson. □

Compiled by Barbara Lowman: deeuell@yahoo.com

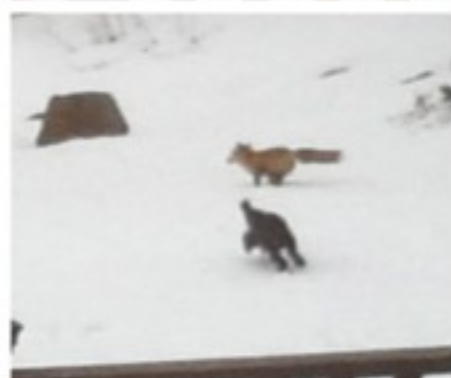
OUR WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS

On March 21, **Mathew Meyers**, who lives in Southfield, writes: While hiking in the Joffe Nature sanctuary, my wife, **Francoise**, and I and our children – **Mirabelle, Isaac, and Quin** – noticed that a beaver had been actively working on a tree. We followed its tracks in the snow for a bit, but could not find any other signs of activity. This morning, while eating breakfast, we saw a bobcat walking through the woods. It had been about two years since we last saw it.

On March 24, **Tara White**, who lives on Norfolk Road, writes: On a walk to the pond yesterday (finally able to walk down on top of the snow!), I noticed several slide marks in the snow near the water. I looked up the prints and concluded it was a **river otter**. Yesterday, while working at home, I looked out the window up the driveway and there he (she) was, crossing the driveway and heading up through the woods toward Betty Taylor's.

Unfortunately, a bird under my feeder did not fare as well. I looked out, saw a strange bird under the feeder, and within a second, a **sparrowhawk** flew off with one of my birds.

Today the **sparrowhawk** was back looking around the feeder, but all the birds knew he was there and took off. Up the road from my driveway, a big **red-tailed hawk** was sitting on the side of the road investigating something and took



photos by Charlie Parton

off when I drove up towards him. A **turkey vulture** was circling above and landed in the tree. Everything is out and about. So good to see all of the wildlife again — that is until the **bear** takes down my feeders.

On March 31, **Charlie Parton**, of New Marlborough village, writes: Our adopted poodle-mutt, Guido, was out in the back yard yesterday and along came Ms. **Fox**, who lives, like us, on Red Fox Road. It took awhile for the two of them to see each other, but when they did the fun began. At first it was a chase to the border. I should explain that our yard is equipped with a buried electric fence and Guido knows where the border is. Foxy soon learned she only had to go so far to be safe, but that wasn't a problem and soon the chase came to a halt, with the two of them three or four yards apart, with tails up, each waiting for the other to move. And then the chase began again, but closer and closer.

Periodically, Ms. Foxy went around the yard to spray some foxy perfume on rocks and shrubs, but Guido wasn't impressed. They rolled around in the snow and flirted back and forth, never quite getting to the touchy-feely part, for about twenty minutes till she finally figured Guido must be a nut or something, but in any case he wasn't going to get into a foxy affair with her, so she left, spraying shrubs as she went off into the woods.

If she tries again ... hmm. I wonder what the kits would look like.

On April 8, **Don Beauchamp**, of Clayton, writes: A scattering of sightings: in mid-March, a pair of **purple finches**, followed on March 20 by a dozen **blue jays** coming and going. Then, a week later, a flock of **red-winged-black birds** arrived, and I saw three **beaver** in the Konkapot.

Bluebirds took over the birdhouse on the thirty-first and have been coming and going since. **Pine siskins** stopped by for one day (April 4), and today **phoebes** are back under the bridge.

On April 13, **Don** adds: On April 9, I saw an **American redstart** by Keyes Hill Road, and the following day **northern flickers** in Clayton, as well as a pair of **titmice** checking out the birdhouse, peering into the hole. Also, on the tenth, the **frogs** started up their noise, and the next day the **spring peepers** joined them. **Red-tailed hawks** flying overhead.

On April 13, **Elizabeth Goodman**, of Mill River, writes: On the morning of April 10, **Don** and I were walking the dogs down by the Konkapot River where we encountered a very busy **beaver**. We wondered if he was trying to distract the dogs away from his young because he was "teasing" them by diving in and out of the water and doing quite a bit of tail slapping. Then that evening, as we were driving up Clayton Mill River Road, and about a half a mile south of Umpachene Falls Road, we saw an **osprey** perched high up on top of a dead tree. We stopped the car and got a good look and he



photo by Don Beauchamp



photo by Don Beauchamp

Bluebird

called out to us in warning, or maybe just saying, "Hello, happy spring to you!"

Additionally, this morning, as I was heading down my driveway for my morning run, I spotted a **fox** trotting up the road, presumably toward our barn, where we believe there is a den under the floorboards.

The **bluebirds** have been around all winter and this spring I moved their feeder up to the house, where it hangs from the eave of our screened porch. I am happy to report they have no problem coming to it and it is not unusual to see four at a time. Their houses have been all cleaned out, and yesterday I noticed that the **tree swallows** have arrived, and are arguing among themselves over which house is best! Thankfully we have plenty of houses to keep all the swallows — as well as the bluebirds — happy!

On April 14, **Scottie Mills**, of New Marlborough village, writes: Maybe you can hear the **wood frogs** in the vernal pool? Near my house they first "quacked" yesterday. Grandson **Milo Potoski** and I are enjoying seeing the first colt's foot flowers by the side of the road, and we have seen several pairs of **wood ducks** in flooded woodlands and a pair of **mergansers** on the Route 57 pond, where they come every year. **Bluebirds** are around in the open fields. We heard the first "neep" of the **woodcock** yesterday at dusk down in my wet field.

A **bear** was checking out my garage where I keep the garbage but all we saw were his tracks. My granddaughter, **Havana Larraz**, visiting here from Denver, was very excited that a bear had been prowling around. Apparently the fellow also visited **Ben Harms'** porch next door and probably **Cynthia Atwood's** compost. □

Compiled by Jon Swan, joncswan@gmail.com

UPCOMING: *Events Calendar May and June*

May 1: Lecture on Lyme and other tick-borne diseases, by Dr. Brian Fallon, Columbia University, at Columbia-Greene Community College Fine Arts Theatre, 7:00 p.m., free and open to the public

May 2: What WiredWest will mean to you, an informational meeting to answer all your broadband questions, 11:00 a.m., in the main room of the Town Hall

May 4: Annual Town Meeting, 7:00 p.m. New Marlborough Town Hall, Mill River

May 11: Annual Town Election, noon to 7:00 p.m., downstairs in the Town Hall

May 15: New Marlborough Council on Aging Spring Luncheon, noon, Southfield Church Hall; free to seniors, call Prue Spaulding at 413-229-8407 for reservations

May 16: A visit to the Bidwell House in Monterey, 10:00 a.m., sponsored by the New Marlborough Land Trust

May 25: Memorial Day Parade, 9:00 a.m., downtown Mill River

May 30: Pianist Donna Baldwin, playing Scarlatti, Ginastera, Chopin, and others; 7:00 p.m., Southfield Church, free (contributions welcome) and open to the public

June 13: A Land Trust Hike of Old North Road, meet at the Dry Hill parking lot at 10:00 a.m.

June 19: Opening reception for Fine Lines, a juried drawing show open to all area artists; New Marlborough Meeting House Gallery, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., and on view 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Friday to Sunday from June 20 to July 12

June 24: Violinist Hannah Cohen, in concert at the Southfield Church, 7:00 p.m., free (contributions welcome) and open to the public

June 26: Annual Meeting, New Marlborough Historical Society, 6:00 p.m., Meeting House Gallery; a brief business meeting and then wine and cheese



photos by Larry Burke

The floorboards of the Consolati Performing Arts Center saw lots of action over the last weekend in March as Mount Everett High School presented the musical *Footloose*. Based on the 1984 movie of the same name, this musical was first staged in 1998. The story revolves around the struggles of teenagers in a small town in the mid-west to overcome the antipathy of the grownups toward rock and roll and dance. Of course they prevail in the end! The Mount Everett production was directed by Kathy Jo Grover and choreographed by Southfield's own Tom Masters, and featured a cast of twenty-three. The central female character of Ariel Moore was played excellently by Samantha Twing of Hartsville. Also from New Marlborough, both in fine form, were Mary Shalaby and Olivia Marchione (all three pictured above right).

NEWS FROM THE LAND TRUST



The New Marlborough Land Trust was recently awarded a grant for \$1500 from the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, the second grant received to support the Land Trust's "goat project" which plans to use grazing goats to clean the invasive plant growth at the Crosby Mill Site in Mill River. The project will start the end of this month when a four-foot temporary electric fence and a solar powered fence charger will be installed at the perimeter of the site. As soon as the leaf growth on the site is 80 percent mature, enter the four Nubian goats which will make the site their home for the summer months, grazing and discouraging the growth of invasive species. Goats and fences make good neighbors!

Martha Bryan



photos by Martha Bryan

Left: Robin Tost reporting for duty at spring trail cleaning at 1000 Acre Swamp, April 18.

Above: The Land Trust spring trail crew pausing for a picnic lunch at East Indies Pond after cleaning up winter debris from the trail leaving the state boat ramp into Cookson State Forest.

MUSIC FOR ALL AT THE SOUTHFIELD CHURCH

By Robert Olsen

It's funny how an acquaintance from long ago can cross your path years later to make a meaningful impact not only on your life, but on the lives of those around you. Just such a thing has happened to me and to all who gather at the Southfield Church for music-making.

When the Southfield Church began its quest to find a fine piano, I reached out to Donna Baldwin, an old acquaintance from my college years in Kansas with whom I had recently connected on Facebook, for guidance. What I remembered about Donna from our school years was that she and her musical gifts had the dynamism of the sun – bright, shining, warm, and unstoppable. If anyone could give us good piano advice, it would be Donna!

Donna is now a soloist, church musician, and composer who performs regularly in Washington, D.C., and as a guest artist in the Northeast and Midwest. She has played concertos with several orchestras on the East Coast as well as in Japan, Panama, and the Philippines. Currently she studies with Leander Bien; her previous teachers have included Brian Ganz, Menahem Pressler and Claude Frank.

When I was finally able to share the news of our baby grand, Donna offered to come play a concert for us. I confess this offer was simply too good to be true and one I felt completely bizarre holding her to. Last spring, as she made her way back to Washington after a trip to Vermont, she stopped at the church so she could test-drive our piano. After playing the briefest of brilliant

passages, Donna whipped around and exclaimed "This is a great piano! I can play anything on it!" And so she will.

On Saturday, May 30, at 7:00 p.m., Donna will present an exciting program of Scarlatti, Ginastera, Chopin, Bach and Rachmaninoff. No admission will be charged, but a retiring offering to provide care for the piano will be collected. Donna has not only donated her performance and usual compensation; she and her husband have also made a generous financial contribution to our piano fund.

And then on Wednesday, June 24, Hannah Cohen, a remarkable young violinist from Lee, will present a concert for us before she heads off to conservatory in the fall.

So, mark your calendars and join us!

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THE LOG

POLICE DEPARTMENT (SELECTED ENTRIES)

Mar. 2	5:19 p.m.	Mill River resident reports that no-trespassing signs posted on the perimeter of his property have been torn down	Mar. 19	5:38 p.m.	Norfolk Road resident, locked out of her car, advised to call AAA
Mar. 3	1:52 a.m.	A dog reported missing by a resident of Sisson Hill is found by a neighbor and returned the following morning	Mar. 21	10:46 a.m.	Operator of car with Connecticut plates that has run out of gas on East Hill Road is given gas; then drives off erratically, bouncing off snowbanks, according to caller
Mar. 5	1:19 a.m.	Vehicle stuck in snow on Hadsell Street	2: 17 p.m.		One-car motor vehicle accident causes shut-down of Route 57 as driver is assisted
Mar. 6	6:40 p.m.	A possibly rabid raccoon reported hiding in the rafters of a chicken coop on New Marlborough Branch Road	5:23 p.m.		Driver, whose car has lurched across the sidewalk and collided with the Town Library (without causing any damage), fails a sobriety test and is advised to leave her car in the parking lot
Mar. 15	12:36 p.m.	Motor vehicle accident on Norfolk Road at its intersection with Canaan Southfield Road	Mar. 22	10:30 p.m.	Tree branch blocks a section of Mill River Great Barrington Road
Mar. 16	11:33 a.m.	Shunpike Road resident reports a threat of domestic disturbance; two hours later, Connecticut State Police call to say it is checking residence of potential assailant	Mar. 23	2:25 p.m.	New Marlborough Monterey Road resident reports that two deer-hunting tree stands, erected without his permission last fall, are still on his property despite his having posted signs on the stands to have them removed
	4:19 p.m.	Tree reported on electric lines on Norfolk Road	Mar. 28	10:18 p.m.	Motor vehicle rolls over on County Road; two injured in the accident are transported to Fairview Hospital
Mar. 17	8:28 p.m.	Report of a domestic disturbance at a Mill River Great Barrington Road residence			
Mar. 18	8:39 a.m.	Pole broken and wires tangled in a fallen treetop on Norfolk Road			
	3:17 p.m.	Wires down on Hatchery Road			

FIRE AND RESCUE

March 5	9:26 p.m.	Church Road Medical Call	March 20	7:14 p.m.	New Marlborough Monterey Road Medical Call
March 6	12:54 p.m.	Mutual Aid to Great Barrington Medical Call	March 21	11:06 a.m.	Route 183 Medical Call
March 12	1:01 p.m.	New Marlborough Monterey Road Medical Call	March 22	9:07 a.m.	Juniper Hill CO Alarm
March 15	12:54 p.m.	Norfolk Road MVA	March 27	10:25 p.m.	Hartsville New Marlborough Road Fire Alarm
March 16	1:04 p.m.	New Marlborough Monterey Road Medical Call	March 28	10:18 p.m.	County Road MVA
March 17	1:10 p.m.	Canaan Southfield Road Fire Alarm	March 30	6:30 p.m.	Canaan Southfield Road Medical Call

Members of the Fire Company would like to thank members of the community who purchased tickets for the annual Spring Dance. Because of slow ticket and table sales, we unfortunately had to cancel this year's event. If you purchased tickets, please visit the Mill River General Store and speak to David Herrick about a refund. As always, we are grateful for the support of the community. Please mark your calendars for the annual Pig Roast on Saturday, August 15. We hope to see you there!

THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS!

Tania & Mark Walker; Hope Crocker; A.K. Bass; Michael Skrak; and Bob & Debbie Beham

CULTURAL COUNCIL NEWS

Photography Exhibit and Potluck

Thirteen New Marlborough photographers contributed a wide range of photographs from mushrooms to flowers to bears to the Southfield bridge grate for the third annual photo show sponsored by the New Marlborough Cultural Council. Each photographer's pictures were mounted on black foam boards that decorated the walls of the Southfield Church Hall on April 11 and 12.

On April 11, approximately sixty people, young and old, gathered for a potluck supper at the church hall, using the opportunity to appreciate the photographs as well as their neighbors' culinary offerings.

White Elephant Collection

Once again the Council is collecting items for the annual white elephant sale at Elihu Burritt Day, August 15. This year the collection returns to its former location, the Levine/Olenbush barn across from Town Hall in Mill River, on Saturday, May 9, from 10:00 a.m. until noon. Subsequent collections will be on June 13, July 11, August 1, and August 8, all from 10:00 until noon. It is imperative that the collection times be respected; it is simply unfair to the barn's owners to have boxes of stuff left outside the barn. If these dates or times are inconvenient, Council members will be happy to pick

up donations. Please call Ned MacDowell at 229-2637 or Barbara Lowman at 229-2369.

In addition, the Council will conduct a silent auction at Burritt Day. If you have an item that is unique or of greater value than usual for a white elephant sale, please consider donating it for the silent auction. This is a good way to insure that the item draws the greatest value. All proceeds from the white elephant sale and silent auction will support grants for programs in the arts and sciences for New Marlborough children and adults. □

Barbara Lowman

Barnbrook

Mary White
Broker Owner

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or 413-229-8256
or ELIZABETH LOMBARDI at
elizabeth.mill.river@gmail.com or 413-229-8972

NEW ACQUISITIONS AT THE LIBRARY

Adult Fiction

- Falling in Love*, by Donna Leon
- Adeline: A Novel of Virginia Woolf*, by Norah Vincent
- The Patriot Threat*, by Steve Berry
- The Angel Court Affair*, by Anne Perry
- The Stranger*, by Harlan Coben
- A Dangerous Place*, by Jacqueline Winspear

Adult Nonfiction

- Raising Chickens for Dummies*, by Kimberly Willis

Children's Fiction

- The Penderwicks in Spring*, by Jeanne Birdsall
- The Island of Dr. Libris*, by Chris Grabenstein
- Mouse Guard 1: Baldwin the Brave and Other Tales*, by David Petersen
- My Pen*, by Christopher Myers
- The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend*, by Dan Santat
- If You Plant a Seed*, by Kadir Nelson

**LIBRARY
SUMMER HOURS!!**

Monday, Wednesday, Saturday
10:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday & Friday
1:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Thursday 1:30 - 5:30 p.m.

**New Marlborough Friends of the Library will hold their
Annual Memorial Day Weekend Bake Sale
on Saturday, May 23, at 10:00 a.m.
All proceeds benefit library programs.**

PIE CHART



- Pie I have eaten
- Pie I will eat today

► Book Discussion Group

Join us for coffee, bagels, and a lively discussion of the book, *Thunderstruck*, by Erik Larsen, May 9 at 10:00 a.m. at the library.

photo by Sally DiCarlo



On March 28, the library held a Shadow Puppet Workshop, lead by Meredyth Babcock. Forty children and their families participated. There was also a surprise visit from the Easter Bunny.

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Contributions are needed to continue the paper!

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

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

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

HERE IS A TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION OF \$_____ (payable to NM5VN)

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Town Times

- * **Board of Selectmen:** Every Monday at 6:00 p.m.
- * **Planning Board:** Second and fourth Wednesday at 7 p.m.
- * **Board of Health:** First Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m.
- * **Conservation Commission:** Last Saturday of the month at 10 a.m.
- * **Board of Assessors:** Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
- * **Fire Department training:** Every Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the fire station
- * **Building Inspector:** Monday 5 - 7 p.m. Wednesday 8 - 10 a.m.
- * **First Responders:** meeting/training: First and third Wednesday at 7 p.m. at the fire station
- * **Cultural Council:** Second Thursday at 4:15 p.m at the library
- * **Town Treasurer:** Wednesday 3:30 p.m. - 6 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. - 10 a.m.
- * **Tax Collector:** Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- * **Selectmen's Administrative Secretary:** Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- * **Dog and Animal Control Officer:** John Springstube 413-232-7038
- * **Town Clerk:** 229-8278; 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. weekdays; Saturday by appointment
- * **Town Hall:** 229-8116
- * **Police:** Business office: 229-8161

Emergency calls: Police, Fire, and Medical: 911

Transfer Station hours:

Wednesday: 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m.- 4 p.m.
Sunday: 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.

PERMITS ARE DUE ON JULY 1

They are available at
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for July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016
FEE IS \$105, AFTER AUGUST 15, \$125

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New Marlborough Highway Department

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Hours: Monday - Friday 7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
PO Box 99, Mill River, MA 01244
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We welcome advertisements from businesses owned by New Marlborough residents.

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

NM5VN Editorial Team

Barbara Lowman, issue editor; Diane Barth, designer;
Martha Bryan, Jane Burke, Larry Burke, Kenzie Fields,
David Lowman, Joe Poindexter, Jodi Rothe,
Peter Schuyten, Barry Shapiro, Pam Stebbins,
Jon Swan, Marianne Swan
Contributing writers: Ann Getsinger,
Mary Richie Smith, Tara White. Index: Donna Weaver

New Marlborough 5 Village News

appears monthly,
also online at our new website! www.NM5VN.org

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All copy must be submitted no later than May 15.
For advertising, contact Barbara Lowman, tel: 229-2369
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- ♦ **Campbell Falls Carpentry:** Licensed and insured contracting at campbellfallscarpentry@gmail.com (413)229-6097 and (413)429-7677. Mass Contractors # 7614140, HIC# 170377
- ♦ **Corashire Realty:** Serving New Marlborough for 40 years. Let experience, knowledge, and personal attention work for you. 528-0014
- ♦ **Dellea:** Dellea.biz offers affordable on-site Windows computer repairs, virus removals, and more to homes and small businesses in southern Berkshire County. Browse <http://www.dellea.biz> or call (413)528-1141.
- ♦ **Design+Planning:** Christopher Blair; Since 1986, creative, budget aware design. Achieve your goals for additions, alterations to an existing home or new construction. 413- 528-4960. chris@design-planning.com.
- ♦ **DesignFirstBerkshires:** Architectural design, space planning and renovation management. 413-528-6169 or info@designfirstberkshires.com.
- ♦ **Fine Jewelry:** Designers and manufacturers; custom orders/commissions welcome; expert repairs. 45 years experience. Sachs Reisman, Inc. 25 Maple Ave., Sheffield 229-0050
- ♦ **One call does it all!:** Vinyl siding cleaning; pressure washing; deck refinishing; floors refinished; window washing; odd landscape jobs; all odd jobs. David Goewey, (413)229-2787
- ♦ **Project Bee** meets on the last Saturday of every month from 10:30 until noon at the New Marlborough Library in Mill River. See www.projectbeeline.org or Project Bee on Facebook.
- ♦ **James Edelman:** General Contractor, Real Estate Sales. Best Results. Construction License #090773. Home Improvement Registration #152035. Real Estate Sales License #9086247. 413-528-0006 or cljvedelman@aol.com
- ♦ **Susan M. Smith:** Attorney At Law; Concentrating in the areas of Estate Planning, Estate Administration, Elder Law, Real Estate and Zoning Matters. ssmithlaw@hughes.net or 229-7080
- ♦ **Reiner White:** General Contractor; 413-229-8450
- ♦ **Woodruff Mountain Landscaping:** Excavation and landscape contracting, all forms of stone work and masonry, and outdoor services, including lawn mowing and yard work. 413-229-2919 woodruffmountain@aol.com

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