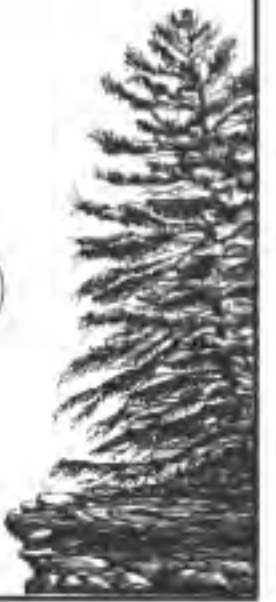




New Marlborough 5 Village News

VOL XVIII
NO 1
May 2017



Clayton • Hartsville • Mill River • New Marlborough • Southfield

A SPIRITED NEW OWNER FOR THE MILL RIVER GENERAL STORE

By Barry R. Shapiro

Jessica Holcomb did not get much sleep on the night of Saturday, April 1. She got into bed quite late, returning from her job tending bar at a restaurant in Connecticut, and she knew she had to be up early. "Sunday, April 2, was my first day as the new owner of the Mill River General Store. I had to be up at 5:00 a.m. and didn't want to be late. I didn't get much sleep. I was very excited. It was a beautiful sunny day."

Grabbing a green juice drink from the fridge, Jessica sped off to the store. She wasn't surprised when Dave Herrick, the outgoing owner of the store, was already there to greet her. It was to be a big day in both of their lives.

A steady stream of Sunday morning regulars was greeted by Dave, smiling and introducing Jessica as the new owner. News of the sale rapidly spread through town with people stopping each other at the transfer station, the fire house, and the Meeting House where volunteers were breaking down the set up from the prior night's potluck dinner. "Everywhere I went," said resident Michael Richman of Southfield, "people were talking about the sale. It was nice to hear."

Jessica Holcomb, age thirty-three, is a bundle of energy and enthusiasm, interrupting her interview with this reporter a number of times to answer calls or assist in the store. She is a native of Massachusetts, born in Framingham and growing up in Southborough (next to Marlborough which, as



Former Mill River Store owner Dave Herrick with new owner, Jessica Holcomb

Photo by Barry Shapiro

everyone knows, is our town's namesake.) An only child, she graduated from Algonquin Regional High School in 2002 and attended Framingham State College. She worked in the hospitality industry as a hostess, waitress, bartender, and caterer in Southborough before moving to Clarksville, Tennessee, in 2005. There she tended bar and met her husband, Todd, who was in the Army at nearby Fort Campbell. They will be married ten years this August. Todd works for Home Depot, where he is very happy. "It's a great company," said Jessica. "They are very good to veterans."

In 2016, Jessica and Todd decided to relocate to Massachusetts to be near family. Jessica's father, Peter Alsterlund, a farmer, resides in Southfield. They were looking to buy a home in town when she learned that the Mill River Store was for sale. After some preliminary meetings with Dave Herrick, Jessica and Todd decided, even though they did not have a signed contract, to take the plunge. "I talked Todd into this," said Jessica. "We literally sold everything and moved up here in June,

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Mill River General Store, continued

2016." Todd and Jessica now live on Norfolk Road, near her father, along with their two mixed-breed dogs, Missy and Zeke. Todd transferred to the Home Depot store in Torrington where he works as a sales associate, and Jessica took a job bartending in Connecticut, a job she intends to keep, at least for now.

"It took time to put together the right deal," Jessica stated. "I knew I needed to be here to get the deal done and work through the negotiations and learn what is involved in running the store.

Jessica and Todd now own the business but not the building. They are leasing the space from Dave and have an option to buy the building, something which they hope to accomplish in the next year. Terms of the purchase are being kept confidential.

Jessica beams when she talks about her ownership of the store. "The store is mine. I said that throughout the first day. Why do I want to do this? I guess I'm crazy. I want my own business. I want to succeed. I want the option to do things in my life that owning a business will allow me to do. To have a house and land. I want to live in New Marlborough, which I love. You know that there's not lots of things that young people can do here to thrive. This is my way to make it. My way to live and thrive is to be part of the community. Young people need to be able to live here, and I want to help build that. My goal in life is to be part of something."

The importance of the Mill River store to the New

Marlborough community is not lost on Jessica. "I've been here for months now, helping Dave and learning about the store's operations. I know that this is the heart of the community, and I love it for what it is. I plan no major changes. For sure, we'll spruce it up and add some new items, such as more hot sandwiches, salads, and the like, along with some healthy eating options. We also plan to sell local produce and even sell some plants out on the porch. I am so grateful to this amazing community for their encouragement and support. I'm also so grateful to Dave, and I know I have big shoes to fill."

Dave Herrick, who owned the Mill River General Store for almost twenty-five years, could still be found on a recent cloudy afternoon sitting in his usual spot behind the counter. He is a very happy man these days. "I feel real good about this," said Dave. "It is strange, though, to get up at 7:30 a.m., instead of 4:00. Jess and Todd are very nice people. I'm introducing them to our vendors and helping them learn the business. I'm going to make this a smooth transition, although it's going to take a bit of time to transfer over the liquor and ammo licenses. Once that's all over, I intend to get my camper fixed up, go out on some road trips, and enjoy the next chapter of my life."

Jessica regards herself as a tough boss, but she leans hardest on herself. "I've really got to get going," she said smiling. "I've got tons to do." □

THE 2017 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT

In a Nutshell

The warrant for the May 1, 2017, Annual Town Meeting is composed of thirty-seven articles. In something of a departure from past years, wherein the first set of articles have been standard material, normally sped through in a matter of minutes, the first three Articles this year actually involve the transfer of funds relating to road repairs on Clayton Mill River Road and Brewer Hill Road, \$51,721 from Free Cash and \$18,494 from last year's Roads and Bridges Expenses Fund.

Articles 4 through 12 then deal with the standard authorizations that are almost always given unanimous approval. **Article 13** seeks to set the salaries of elected Town officers for Fiscal Year 2018, and, with the exception of a \$616 increase to the Town Clerk position, there are no changes from the previous year. **Article 14** goes further in asking for a vote to raise and appropriate those salaries, as well as the expenses associated with the functioning of Town government, for a total of \$337,137. This is a net decrease from FY 2017 of slightly more than \$4,000.

In **Article 16**, dealing with the Highway Department's

salaries and expenses, the asked-for amount, \$961,510, is virtually the same as the previous year.

Article 18 is all about the school budget. The Operating and Transportation account includes an increase over FY17 of \$217,550, in large part due to hikes in the cost of busing. The Capital account asks for an increase of \$80,784. The total school budget for New Marlborough is \$3,009,520, and the Finance Committee does not recommend approval of this article.

Article 20 deals with salaries and expenses related to protection of persons and property—police, fire, emergency medical, tree work, and animal control. The total funds requested come to just under \$2,000 less than FY17 — \$302,207. **Articles 21 and 22** are also related to emergency services, specifically the New Marlborough Rescue/Comstar Reserved Account, which is funded by the insurance payments for ambulance transport by New Marlborough Rescue 1. This year, for clarity in accounting, expenses, and salaries (stipends to EMTs in this case) are being considered separately. Hence the need for two Comstar articles.

continued

Under “Unclassified Expenses,” **Article 25** asks the voters to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds the amount of \$50,000 into the Stabilization Fund. **Article 26** covers various forms of insurance coverage for Town employees. Sizeable increases in group insurance (\$14,390) and Workers Compensation (\$7,455), as well as other smaller spikes have driven up the overall cost of this budget item to \$505,901.

Continuing under “Unclassified Expenses,” **Articles 28 through 33** seek permission from the voters to transfer a number of sums of money for a variety of purposes:

Article 28: \$50,000 from Free Cash to the Stabilization Fund

Article 29: \$54,500 from Free Cash for the purchase of a one-ton plow truck

Article 30: \$25,000 from Free Cash for snow plow wing

Article 31: \$25,000 from Free Cash for tree maintenance

Article 32: \$20,000 from Free Cash for refurbishing of the 2009 Mack dump truck

Article 33: \$15,000 from Free Cash for replacement of the highway garage boiler

Article 34 seeks to transfer \$255,660 from the

Stabilization Fund to the Roads Projects Account, for road repairs. Approval of this article will require a two-thirds favorable vote.

The purpose of **Article 35** is to codify the Town’s revolving funds, including the addition of a new by-law into the Town’s General By-laws. The revolving funds in question include those for the plumbing inspector, the gas inspector, the Board of Health, and tax title fees.

Article 37 is from the Planning Board, and it seeks to put a one-year moratorium on the proposal or construction of large-scale solar energy facilities. Such a facility would be capable of producing more than ten kilowatts of DC power, and would be ground-mounted. The moratorium would not include domestic, roof-mounted solar panels. As this would be a change, albeit temporary, to the Town’s Protective By-law, a two-thirds majority vote is required.

In addition to the proceedings of the Annual Town Meeting on May 1, there will be a ballot question on May 8 – for an additional assessment of \$150,000, “in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of funding the operation budgets of the Town and Regional School for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2017.” □

Larry Burke

ARTICLE 37: IS A MORATORIUM NECESSARY?

What happens when two worthy causes collide — when, for example, an effort to harness clean energy technology threatens the rural beauty of a New England town? Answer: Article 37 of the Town warrant. At present, according to Patricia Hardyman, chair of the New Marlborough Planning Board, the Town’s by-laws regarding renewable energy are out of date. They do not make a distinction between commercial and home installations, and every project, no matter what the size, must receive a special permit. The Planning Board would like to develop a by-law that defines what homeowners and businesses can do by right and what regulations will apply to those installations that need to be permitted. Having been granted the services of a consultant from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to assist its update, the Board expects to have a revised by-law by the fall, but, chastened by the defeat of a by-law revision at a Special Town Meeting in 2016, wants to wait for the 2018 Annual Town Meeting to present it for ratification.

But there’s a catch. A Massachusetts state program to promote solar will expire at the end of 2017 or early ’18 — to be replaced by a new set of significantly less generous incentives. According to Ned Wilson, a New Marlborough resident who works out of the Westfield,

Massachusetts, office of SunBug Solar, “A person who might otherwise want to install a 25Kw system would be limited to only a 10Kw system under the moratorium, thereby losing out on a substantial amount of incentive money that would have been available to them if the moratorium did not exist.”

Ms. Hardyman emphasizes that the moratorium specifically exempts roof-mounted systems of the sort most commonly used by homeowners. Mr. Wilson responds that there are a number of small businesses that, lacking roofs suitable for solar panels, could reap “net-metering” credits (credits for excess electricity that is pushed back into the grid) with a ground-placed system but will lose them because of a moratorium.

Mr. Wilson sees no need for a moratorium of any length. “The idea that these things [large-scale arrays] will be sprouting up is not realistic,” he says. “The Planning Board can request such remediation as vegetation [to hide fencing] or access roads on a case-by-case basis.”

On May 1, the voters get to decide which is the wiser course. □

Joe Poindexter

Town Business Is Your Business

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

March 20: With all three selectmen present the Board met with Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring to discuss two items on tonight's agenda that were included as a result of an Open Meeting Law complaint filed by town resident Tom Stalker with the state attorney general. One was regarding a possible change in scope to the Clayton Mill River Road reconstruction project, while the other concerned a cost overrun on last year's culvert replacement.

According to the complaint, as previously reported, both issues should have been discussed as separate agenda items at the Board's January 24 meeting. Instead they were brought up as part of the town administrator's updates, "thus obscuring from the public significant issues."

So, with Chairman Yohalem leading him through the discussion, Mr. Loring informed the Board, just as he did on January 24, that he's considering recommending the Town not replace two stream-crossing culverts, as originally planned, because the project has encountered an unexpected – and unbudgeted – expense of \$53,000 for Verizon to move its wires from utility poles on two traffic islands the Highway Department wants to eliminate. He said the budget for the project, funded by a \$1 million MassWorks grant, is very tight, and if he has to choose between the two, he said, it's more important to eliminate the traffic islands from a road-safety standpoint than to replace the culverts, which, as he noted, are in no danger of collapsing and could last another five to ten years.

As for the cost overrun, Mr. Loring said three different engineers worked on the culvert project going back to 2013 and that the third one was not comfortable with the original design and proposed changes that ultimately, in



Mr. Loring's view, resulted in a stronger, more stable culvert, but which also added to the cost of the concrete and required an expensive crane to hoist the redesigned culvert into place, resulting in a \$45,000 cost overrun. He said he was able to cover the overrun using money from the Highway Department's Roads and Bridges Account.

When Mr. Loring was done, Mr. Stalker, reading from a list of questions, asked him, among other things, **why the culvert project wasn't bid out**, since, according to state procurement law, any project over \$35,000 has to be separately bid, and why there's nothing in the paperwork saying how much the project is going to cost?

Mr. Loring explained that it had been his plan all along to replace the culvert using the Town's "on-call" construction contract with Wilkinson Excavating, a contract for local infrastructure that is bid out annually. One advantage to employing Wilkinson, he added, is that the company allows the Town to augment its workforce with Highway Department employees on New Marlborough jobs with Highway Department employees and equipment, thus saving the Town money.

Mr. Yohalem rejected Mr. Stalker's complaint about the lack of paperwork, saying, "There is a document in the file, because I saw it, that itemizes the work to be done, totaling \$180,000," the amount approved by the taxpayers at the 2014 Annual Town Meeting.

When Mr. Stalker questioned the wisdom of delaying the replacement of the culverts, Mr. Loring responded, "that the safety of the intersection was one of the keys to getting the grant. We pushed for the grant for the safety of that intersection. So to ignore it now and say we're just going to blow it off I think is wrong."

But Mr. Stalker continued. He said it was his



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impression from reading the MassWorks website that their grants don't cover utility work, in this case, the \$53,000 Verizon was charging the Town to move its wires. At this point, Mr. Yohalem jumped back in to say, "If the state's not going to pay for it, they're not being moved, period. So don't be concerned about it." (A subsequent email from the state confirmed that Mr. Stalker's concerns were misplaced: the MassWorks contract does in fact cover the utility work.)

But Mr. Stalker still wasn't done. "One thing that I want to point out with the MassWorks grant," he said, "is there are a lot of things that can go on with the grant but when you get to the end and the project is done, any changes, anything the Town ends up paying for, they're all strikes against us in getting more grants from the state." And there was more, most of it having to do with paperwork, payment records, invoices, and expenditure reports. But when he had finished, Mr. Stalker thanked the Board for listening.

In the final item for the night, the Board approved the wording of a temporary moratorium on large-scale solar arrays to be placed on the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting, and then Town Administrator Mari Enoch circulated the latest draft of the FY18 budget for the Board's review.

March 29: With all three selectmen present, the meeting was called to order shortly after 9:00 a.m. The main topic of discussion was the Fiscal 2018 budget. But first the Board took care of some routine business, **appointing Peter Tiso to the Planning Board to fill one of two empty seats.** Mr. Tiso, a resident of Hartsville, is on the faculty of Bard College at Simon's Rock where he designs and teaches courses in geographic information systems (GIS). He previously served as a GIS & GPS analyst with the New York City Parks Department. His term will run until Town elections on May 8. **And with**

that the Board turned its attention to the budget in a discussion that lasted nearly five hours.

Adhering to guidelines established at its March 13 meeting – to keep Town services and stipends level while providing for a 2 percent cost of living, or COLA, increase for Town employees – the Board went through all 134 budget items line by line, and by cutting discretionary spending where it could, managed to keep the year-over-year increase to just under \$3,000, plus another \$24,000 in aggregate annual salary increases for the Town's twenty-eight full- and part-time employees, including those with contracts.

But none of that includes budget increases due to contractual obligations and assessments, that is, items over which the Board has little or no control. When those

are factored in, the year-over-year increase comes to \$232,000 for a preliminary budget of \$5,660,000 for the upcoming fiscal year.

As always, the largest single item is the Town's share of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District Operating and Transportation budget, which this year comes to just over \$2.8 million. That's a 6.0 percent, or \$167,000, increase over last year. The highway department budget, the Town's second largest, was increased by just over \$7,151 to \$924,297, and all of that was for salaries. And finally, it was with regret that the Board rejected two proposals by Police Chief Graham Frank, one, to upgrade a permanent part-time position on the force to full-time and the other, to add another six-hour shift. Taken together, the two proposals would have increased his budget by nearly \$30,000. But, instead, adhering to its no-increase-in-Town-services dictum, the Board basically level funded his budget, except for the salaries, at \$123,000.

But in all of this the number that matters most is the

The Board went through all 134 budget items line by line, ... cutting discretionary spending when it could.

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amount by which the increase in the budget exceeds the state-mandated 2½ percent levy limit, and at this point the budget is coming in roughly \$100,000 over the levy limit and likely will require an override needing voter approval at the Town elections on May 8.

Last year the Board proposed – but the Town voted down – a \$300,000 override, leaving the selectmen scrambling to cut the budget below the levy limit. This year the Board is considering asking for an override of just half that amount, or \$150,000, and a ballot question to that effect was put forward in a motion by Selectman Shalaby that read: “Shall the Town of New Marlborough be allowed to assess an additional \$150,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of funding the operating budgets of the Town and Regional School for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2017.”

But none of this is cast in concrete, even the ballot question, which can be amended. Instead, the Board’s next step is to review the numbers at a joint meeting with the Finance Committee at its regular meeting on Monday evening April 3.

April 3: With all three selectmen present, the meeting was convened at 6:05 p.m. Before getting down to business the Board took care of some housekeeping chores, approving the minutes from the March 20 meeting and announcing that because Passover is being observed on Monday next week’s meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 11.

Chairman Yohalem provided an update on the Clayton Mill River Road project, saying Highway Superintendent Loring now believes that **due to the continuing drop in the cost of blacktop there should be enough money in the budget to replace one of the stream-crossing culverts and still pay Verizon its \$53,000 to relocate**

its wires from the two utility poles on traffic islands the Highway Department wants to eliminate.

In broadband developments, Mr. Yohalem said the four MLP towns of Monterey, Sandisfield, Tolland, and New Marlborough will hold their first negotiating session with Frontier Communications on Tuesday, April 4, in Sandisfield. He said a list of issues has been sent to Frontier to frame the discussion, or as Mr. Yohalem put it, “so they’ll know what’s on the table.”

The Board received a letter from Town resident Paul Clark, an architect with offices in Great Barrington, to express his concern about the path the Town appears to be taking with regard to broadband.

Specifically, he said he and others at the Board’s March 13 meeting were concerned that the Board and the Broadband Committee appear to have already “chosen” Frontier over WiredWest, despite the Board’s assurance that “all options are still on the table.” The letter goes on to state that when asked why it couldn’t conduct negotiations with both entities simultaneously, the Board indicated that its next step would be to get the best deal it could from Frontier, while at the same time casting doubt on the efficacy of

...at this point the budget is coming in roughly \$100,000 over the levy limit and likely will require an override...

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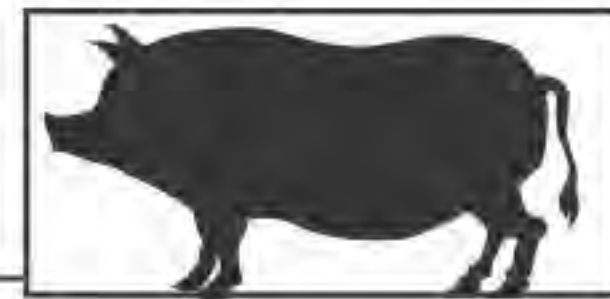
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the WiredWest proposal. The letter concluded by urging the Board and the Broadband Committee to "parse the options inclusive of the most up-to-date facts on the ground and present [sic] for a Town vote" as soon as possible. In reply, Mr. Yohalem said "that's exactly what we're doing." He said the Town is negotiating with Frontier, is open to other possibilities, and has "heard the proposal from WiredWest, and that as of now there's nothing else on the table. So we'll continue our negotiations with Frontier." He said that a final contract will, of course, be subject to a vote by the Town.

In other matters, Mr. Yohalem said the Town has been notified by the state that its Chapter 90 local infrastructure funding this year will total \$340,562, or about \$4,000 less than last year. He also mentioned the Board received a copy of a letter from the Board of Selectmen in Monterey to the Southern Berkshire Regional School District School Committee stating that both the Monterey selectmen and Finance Committee have voted to reject the school district's proposed budget for next year. The letter then goes on to urge the School Committee to restore funding for the Egremont School program, which, as previously reported, was "suspended" as part of the school district's budget-cutting efforts.

Separately, Mr. Yohalem said at a recent shared services meeting that the Mount Washington representative, Selectman Gail Garrett, after expressing grave concern over the high cost of health insurance, asked the towns attending the meeting to add an article to their warrants seeking voter approval of a resolution asking the state legislature to adopt a single-payer health insurance system. The Board, at Mr. Yohalem's urging, then voted to do so.

The Board convened a **joint session with the Finance Committee and together they spent the next two hours reviewing and making minor adjustments to the budget.** They added \$5,369 to Police Department salaries to reinstate the chief's proposal to add a 6-hour shift to the Department's coverage. The proposal had initially been rejected by Board. They also approved a \$2,291 one-time payment to town employees currently enrolled in the health insurance plan to offset the increased cost of a deductible that's being added to the policy this year. In other actions, they added \$400 to website expenses to cover the increased cost of maintaining the Town's Internet domain name. They also reduced the animal inspector's stipend back to \$600, from \$1,000, as per the budget guideline level-funding Town stipends. But then they turned around and added \$400 to the animal inspector's expenses, so the net effect was to leave things unchanged. And finally, the Board eliminated the entire

\$8,500 from the vocational-technical education line-item, as no applications were received this year to attend vocational school.

But what the Board and Finance Committee did not get to this evening were the capital spending requests, which they had planned to review. So instead, they scheduled a special Thursday evening session for April 6, to again include the Finance Committee, and also invited Highway Superintendent Loring to attend, since the bulk of the requests are from him.

April 6: With two selectmen present, Mr. Yohalem and Ms. Shalaby, the Board met in joint session with the Finance Committee for the second time this week. The goal for

tonight's meeting, which lasted two and half hours, was to review and approve **capital spending for the upcoming fiscal year.**

As noted earlier, most of the requests came from the Highway Department, for equipment, facilities, and maintenance-related items. They included a one-ton pickup truck and plow, at \$54,000, for the superintendent's use; a snow plow wing, at \$25,000, to increase blade width and plowing efficiency; a new boiler for the highway garage, at \$15,000, and a storage shed, at \$125,000, to house equipment "that doesn't need to be kept in a heated garage," Mr. Loring said. In addition, the Board approved \$20,000 to repaint and refurbish a 2009 Mack dump truck, which Mr. Loring estimated would extend its useful life for at least another five years. The truck, when new, cost the Town \$200,000. And there was \$255,660 for road projects, including Brewer Hill Road and East Hill Road, plus \$25,000 to replace a culvert on the unpaved section of Brewer Hill Road.

The Board also approved the library's request for new carpeting at \$20,000 and agreed to add \$30,000 to the \$70,000 currently in the Town Hall account to bring the building into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), to include the bathrooms and a lift of some kind to provide access for people with disabilities to the building's second floor. As Mr. Yohalem noted, "it's time to do these things, and while there may not be enough money to do both, this will get things started." One request that was not approved was \$75,000 to pave the driveway at the highway garage.

The Board will meet again in joint session with the Finance Committee Tuesday, April 11, to go over the operating budget and the capital items one more time and to review the warrant.

There was also **discussion of the Town's free cash position, with Town Administrator Enoch providing an analysis of how the \$739,000 certified by the state**

"While that [free cash] number looks really wonderful, and it is wonderful, it's not typical and it's probably never going to happen again."

was generated. As she noted, it's important to look at the components making up the free cash number so the Town can better plan for the future.

"While that number looks really wonderful, and it is wonderful," she said, "it's not typical and it's probably never going to happen again." She then proceeded to explain how the number got so big.

She said \$157,000 of it was left over from last year's free cash, leaving \$582,000, as the amount of free cash generated by the Town this year. Of that amount, she said, \$181,000 is money that was released to the Town by the state after the Town was finally able to reconcile its books. As she pointed out, that's a one-time adjustment "and it's money that's never going to show up again."

"So now we're down to roughly \$400,000," she said, "of which \$156,000 was money budgeted but never spent by the Highway Department from its winter roads budget because of the mild winter a year ago." The Town also received \$55,000 back from the school district, the result of budget cuts made last March to resolve the school district's budget assessment crisis.

And that brings the total down to \$190,000, she said, of which \$44,000 was money that was not spent from the Highway Department's diesel and propane budgets, but, as she pointed out, those budgets are being pared back this year, "so that's money that's not coming back again either."

That leaves not quite \$150,000, which according to the state Department of Revenue and the Town's own auditor is within the range of what a town this size should generate in free cash, she said. But as she further noted in conclusion, "The tighter the town budgets, the less free cash it can expect to get back each year!"

April 11: After approving the minutes of the March 6 and March 29 meetings, the Board, with Mr. Yohalem and Ms. Shalaby present, appointed Police Chief Graham Frank assistant town constable. As Mr. Yohalem explained, "Our constable is not in good health and we thought it wise to appoint an additional constable." Mr. Yohalem also noted that because next

Monday is Patriot's Day, the Board will hold its regular weekly meeting on Tuesday, April 18, at 7:00 p.m.

The Board met with Historical Society President and Vice President Joe Poindexter and John Schreiber to discuss their concerns about the condition of the **Campbell Falls bridge**. As Dr. Schreiber pointed out, it appears to have been constructed sometime between 1820 and 1835, and has clearly been deteriorating over the years, including the stonewalls that are the guardrails. He said the Historical Society would like to bring in the engineering firm of Atkinson-Noland of Boulder, Colorado, which specializes in the repair and preservation of stone bridges, to do a one-day engineering study of what, if anything, needs to be done to preserve the bridge. He said they'll be in the area on another project this summer.

He said the society would fund the \$3,800 cost of assessing the condition of the bridge and simply wanted the Board's approval of this initiative. "There will be no cost to the Town for the initial assessment," Dr. Schreiber said, and if the study shows significant deterioration, "our goal would be to partner with the Town to raise the resources privately to repair it. But we'd like to make sure the selectmen are comfortable with it." Mr. Yohalem, with Ms. Shalaby concurring, said the Board is very much in support of the effort. "It's a fine gesture and would be helpful to the Town."

With both the new and former owners of the **Mill River General Store** present, the Board voted to approve the transfer of the store's package store license to the new owner, **Jessica Holcomb**. The vote was greeted with a round of applause, both to salute former owner Dave Herrick, who ran the store for twenty-four years, and for Ms. Holcomb, who with her husband, Todd, recently moved here from Tennessee to buy the store. (For more on the sale and new owners, see page 1.)

The selectmen approved and then signed the Berkshire County Public Safety Mutual Aid Agreement authorizing the Fire Department "to go to the aid of another city, town, or fire district." According to Town Administrator Enoch the agreement is renewable every three years.

There was to have been a discussion about a possible change in venue for the Annual Town Meeting, from the Town Hall to the New Marlborough Meeting House, but the Board was concerned there are voters in Town who may not know where the Meeting House is located, or would simply be confused by the change in venue. So they decided not to change the venue, but instead to hold the meeting as usual at the Town Hall.

The Board met with Joshua Seitz regarding a potential real estate development project on the site of the former Kolburne School. Mr. Seitz, who has a background on Wall Street and lives in New Jersey but said he has a family home in Sandisfield, said he's



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interested in purchasing the 141-acre campus for use as a marijuana manufacturing and production facility. He said initially it would produce product for the medical market, but in the future, if regulations allow, he will consider expanding to include the recreational market. But, as he emphasized a number of times, there would be **no retail operation on the site**. "You cannot come up to buy anything," he said. "It will just be an agricultural and production operation."

He said he plans to refurbish the existing buildings, while adding greenhouses, and said the development would provide its own twenty-four/seven security, including cameras, and a perimeter fence possibly topped by barbed wire. He envisions a number of businesses coming in as tenants, including a laboratory for testing product and a supply company selling bags of dirt and fertilizer, nutrients, and grow lights, which he'd like to locate along the road somewhere so that local residents could take advantage of it. There would also be a food service facility, space for a restaurant and, of course, growers. He claimed to have letters of intent from a number of these entities, although when asked how many, he wouldn't answer directly, saying instead enough to fill "essentially the footprint of all the existing buildings," which is about 46,000 square feet. He also refused to reveal where in New Jersey he lived, to the puzzlement of some in the audience.

He painted the venture as being very beneficial for the town, providing significant tax revenues, a hundred jobs – "And they would be good jobs," he said, "\$15-an-hour-plus; I'd love to contribute to the local economy." He even spoke of helping the Town with its broadband efforts, although he didn't get specific, and also said he would build his own home on another part of the site, "outside the fence."

What he needs from the Town, he said, is "consent and consensus. I would never do it without obviously checking with you all first and making sure you understand the plans."

He said he's also looking at other places in Berkshire

County, but said he spent part of his youth in the Southern Berkshires and would prefer to do it here. When the floor was thrown open for questions, there were concerns about the aesthetics of the fence, questions about his corporate structure and even a question about whether he'd be growing hemp out in the open, to which he seemed to be saying yes.

Speaking for the Board Ms. Shalaby said, "**I think there are probably many, many questions to be answered.** But I think our task as a board, because we don't have many business proposals or businesses coming into town and this is such a new kind of business is to take a step back and get a handle on what are the questions we need to ask, who do we need to discuss it with, what does the process need to look like so that it's thorough but efficient and expeditious – and how do we get input from residents."

For his part, Mr. Yohalem said he'd like to put it on the agenda for discussion next week, and he asked Mr. Seitz to do a brief write-up – "a page or two," he said – spelling out his plans, which the Board could then give to Town Counsel in advance of next week's meeting to determine what permits would be required.

Finally, the Board turned its attention to the main business of the evening, which was to review the warrant and by extension the budget and capital items that will be put before the voters at the Annual Town Meeting.

During the nearly two-hour discussion that ensued, the Board **removed several previously-approved capital items from the warrant**, added \$25,000 for a tree work project and deleted the proposed resolution in support of a state-enacted single-payer health insurance system. As Mr. Yohalem put it, "We don't have enough information about it to answer questions from the voters."

The capital items removed from the warrant included the \$30,000 that was to be added to the \$70,000 already in the Town Hall account for bringing the building into compliance with the ADA. As Ms. Shalaby said, "we have no idea what the \$70,000 will get us, and to add \$30,000 to that to me seems arbitrary when we don't even have a plan."

The Board also cut \$125,000 for the Highway Department shed and, at Librarian Deb O'Brien's request, the \$20,000 for new carpeting at the library, because she reportedly feels it would be too disruptive at this point to have to move all the books and book shelves in order to lay the carpeting.

But in the end the Board had to put off finalizing the budget and capital plan because only two members of the Finance Committee were present – which is not enough for the quorum needed to approve the changes that were made. So instead, the Board and Finance Committee will regroup next Tuesday, April 19, to finally put the warrant to bed. □

Peter Schuyten

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VIEW FROM THE BOARD

It's time for the unique New England event of Annual Town Meeting. While we are, again, asking for an override, there is a significant difference: This year, we are asking for a \$150,000 override, rather than \$300,000. The \$150,000 request is a conservatively-estimated amount that will allow the Town to set the tax rate to cover all FY18 expenditures that Town Meeting approves. It is Town Meeting (and Town Meeting *only*) that determines what amounts of money can be expended and for which purposes.

Thanks to a diligent, cooperative effort by the Finance Committee, we have trimmed numerous budgets by examining trends of unspent funds. Although some budgets are trimmed, we are proposing a Town operating budget that finances essentially the same services that are being provided in the current fiscal year. The same services with inflationary costs and a 2 percent cost-of-living increase for employees results in an increase of approximately 2 percent over FY17. This half of our budget is within the limits of Proposition 2½.

The reason for the override is, essentially, to fund the school budget. New Marlborough's assessment is approximately 6 percent greater than FY17. Despite the significant increase in what we will be assessed, the Board of Selectmen is asking you to support this school budget and the override.

Early in the budgeting process, we learned that New Marlborough would be assessed a greater share of the FY18 budget, due to a shift in the balance of resident students in each of the five towns. We let the School Committee know of our low excess budget capacity and likelihood that our assessment would cause us to ask for an override. The Committee has been very responsive and bold. Some cuts they propose are quite controversial, but they address several of the complaints their critics have voiced in the past: that programs and staff need to be reduced according to student population decreases. We believe that the budget they are proposing is deserving of our support, that it will enable our District to deliver

education with greater efficiency while maintaining quality. Although New Marlborough's share of the assessments is increasing significantly, the total school budget is increasing by approximately only ½ percent.

If our override is not supported but four of five school district towns support the school budget, the school budget passes and any reductions to meet Proposition 2½ limits will have to be from the Town operating budget. We estimate the magnitude of these reductions to be approximately \$100,000. After last year's override failure and \$50,000 reductions, along with the Finance Committee's trimming this year, it is difficult to see how we can reduce without affecting services.

Capital expenditures and use of Free Cash and Stabilization will follow our budget decisions. We are in a unique position of having balances that are higher than usual. This is due to a combination of a few one-time events, unlike any we will see next year. We have the opportunity to plan our purchases. This year, we will not propose to purchase all that has been requested. We will, instead, reserve some of our funds for the larger purchases on the horizon: road projects that are in the five-year plan, a road grader, and possibly broadband service.

As last year, the question of using some of our Free Cash to fund next year's budget is possible. Looking back at last year, our thoughts on this are the same now. It is similar to using personal savings for living expenses like groceries and gasoline, and is not a financially secure strategy. If we don't want to commit to funding our annual expenses with annual revenue streams, the fiscally responsible answer is to reduce our annual expenses.

There is much more information that cannot be expressed via this article. We hope you've attended our Budget and Capital Presentation to learn more and ask questions. If you were not able to attend, please don't hesitate to contact us. □

Michele Shalaby

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CONSERVATION COMMISSION

April 15: Commission members Ned Wilson, Freddy Friedman, and John Schreiber presided over the month's meeting.

The meeting started by continuing the hearing for a Notice of Intent (NOI) submitted by Tighe and Bond, contractors for National Grid, regarding the installation of five new poles to service 747 Rhoades and Bailey Road. In a recent site visit the Commission noted that the proposed location of one of the poles is directly in a wetland and that the proposed permit requires the removal of ten trees. After some discussion with the two representatives from Tighe and Bond present at the meeting, the Commission asked that an alternative solution be considered which would reduce disturbance to the wetlands. The representatives asked to continue the hearing until next month and agreed to ask National Grid to consider an alternative strategy for locating the poles.

Next Mark Reynolds and Marc Delgrande from Kelly Granger and Parsons presented a Request for Determination (RDA) for John Gillespie of 105 Hatchery Road. Mr. Reynolds explained that the existing septic system had failed. Without much discussion, it was agreed that the siting of the new system was in the best location possible given the constraints of the lot and the wetlands resources nearby.

The Umpachene Falls Park Commission was scheduled to address the Commission regarding the NOI for work to restore the banks of the Umpachene River at the park. However, the Park Commission notified the Commission that they would not be able to attend the meeting and requested that the hearing be continued until next month. The continuation was granted.

The Commission agreed to issue an Enforcement Order for wetlands regulations violations at 194 Canaan Southfield Road involving piling fill on the riverbank.

Next the mail was reviewed. Rona Easton of 136 Adsit Crosby Road (and a member of the Commission) requested an extension of the order of conditions issued in 2014 for renovations to her existing residence. The Commission agreed to grant a three-year extension. The Commission received a written complaint from resident Gene Rosenberg concerning site activity at his neighbor's property at 529 Rhoades and Bailey Road. The Commission agreed to follow up with a site visit.

Finally, Ned Wilson submitted his resignation from his role as Conservation Agent to the Commission.

The next meeting was scheduled for Saturday, May 27, and the meeting adjourned. □

Martha Bryan

WANTED: WHITE ELEPHANTS

Once again the New Marlborough Cultural Council is collecting items for the annual white elephant sale on Elihu Burritt Day, August 19. It's time to gather strength to plumb the depths of your cellar, attic, garage, or scary closet in search of treasures – things that you no longer need or want, but might be just perfect for someone else. Please, no clothing, obsolete electronics, skis, or large pieces of furniture!

This year, thanks to the New Marlborough Land Trust, items will be collected at Rooney House, on the campus of the former Kolburne School, located on the east side of the New Marlborough Southfield Road. The collection will begin on Saturday, May 13, from 10:00 a.m. until noon. Subsequent collection dates will be June 10, July 8, August 5, and August 12. It is imperative that the collection times be respected; otherwise, your contributions will be open to the weather. If these dates or times are inconvenient, Council members will be happy to pick up donations. Please call Barbara Lowman at 229-2369 or Louise Yohalem at 528-1409.

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 to the silent auction. This is a good way to ensure that the item draws the greatest value. All proceeds from the white elephant sale and silent auction go to support grants for programs in the arts and sciences for New Marlborough children and adults.

As in years past, Charles Flint, the antiques dealer and appraiser based in Lenox, will be at Burritt Day. This is a great opportunity to get an expert opinion on items that you think might have value, but aren't sure. You may bring the actual items to him or, if that is inconvenient due to size or weight, he can work from photographs. Cost is modest: \$5 for one item, \$10 for up to three items, which Mr. Flint then contributes to the Cultural Council. It's a win-win situation, since in addition to the appraisal, you're also making a contribution to the Cultural Council grant programs. □

Barbara Lowman

ANNUAL TOWN ELECTIONS: STATEMENTS BY OUR CANDIDATES

Fifty-one voters turned out for the annual town caucus on March 28, which established the ballot for the Town election on May 8. 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 8.

MODERATOR, ONE YEAR: BARRY SHAPIRO

I have been honored to serve as Town Moderator since my election in 2015. I have continued to take my responsibilities very seriously and remain active in the Massachusetts Moderators Association, working with moderators throughout the Commonwealth to perfect "best practices" for town meetings. I am excited to again be standing for reelection to this important position in our town. I believe that my four decades as a corporate and business attorney, my training and service as a mediator and my service as the chair of many meetings and organizations, have prepared me for my position as Town Moderator. My objectives continue to be (i) to make everyone comfortable speaking at Town Meeting, (ii) to encourage an open, respectful, and collegial discussion of the important issues which the Town faces, and (iii) to balance the need for thorough dialogue with the efficient and brisk conduct of the meeting. 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: NATHANIEL "NAT" YOHALEM

My thanks to the community for electing me to serve as a selectman for the past six years. Here are highlights of what was accomplished during my terms:

- Obtained grant of \$1 million to redo Clayton Mill River Road.
- Obtained \$500,000 grant to replace Foley Hill Road Bridge.
- Founded and co-chaired the Shared Services Committee which is a coalition of six Southern Berkshire towns. By sharing equipment costs with Sheffield our Town has saved approximately \$84,000, in addition to cost savings from joint purchases of sand, salt, and gravel.
- Ended the need for interim borrowing and decreased tax delinquencies by implementing quarterly tax billings.
- Convinced Massachusetts Department of Transportation to replace the Hadsell Street Bridge (scheduled for this year), a savings of approximately \$2 million.
- Structured a financial plan to cover capital expenses over the next five years.

- Met with School District representatives resulting in a reduction this year of \$390,000 in the proposed School budget, saving the town almost \$90,000.
 - Sold tax foreclosed properties bringing in over \$300,000 to the town.
- Some goals for the next three years:
- Bring broadband to the entire town.
 - Continue collaboration with neighboring towns to share equipment, services and purchasing to reduce costs.
 - Work with four other towns to convince the State to take ownership of Route 57 and be responsible for its repair.

I ask you to re-elect me so that I can continue to work with you for the betterment of our town. Please feel free to call me at 528-1409.

PLANNING BOARD, FIVE YEARS: PETER TISO

I chose New Marlborough to be my home because of the good things that sustain from its past: a beautiful landscape, clean land, air, and water, and most of all a strong, active community. As the world changes with us, we are blessed with the chance to keep these things as we adopt innovations in technology, policy, and land use. I am seeking election to the Planning Board to use my decade of professional experience in geographic analysis and municipal decision-making in the service of our town by providing a data-driven, analytic approach to finding ways for us to adopt policies that will encourage continued progress in how we make our town welcoming and productive without sacrificing the irreplaceable beauty nature has given us.

I grew up in Westchester County and left high school to attend Simon's Rock College, where my studies included Berkshire County's natural history, and developing a trail system at the college. After school I remained here, working in town and volunteering as an EMT with Southern Berkshire Volunteer Ambulance, then moved to New York where I worked for the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. My eight years there were spent analyzing geographic data to help decide how to best implement the city's street tree-planting program. I left this job to move to New Marlborough, where I've bought a home and live full-time. I've spent the past year working on my garden and teaching at Simon's Rock.

FINANCE COMMITTEE, ONE YEAR: SANDRA FUSCO-WALKER

In May 1997, my husband and I bought property in New Marlborough, and we're still working on our forever home. I retired in 2013 after twenty years in my position as patient advocate in Washington, D.C., for the Allergy & Asthma Network/Mothers of Asthmatics. Working with medical and school communities nationally along

with federal and state legislators, I had the privilege to help change laws and protect students' rights to carry and self-administer their lifesaving medications during the school day. I also sat on committees at the Food and Drug Administration, Centers for Disease Control, and National Institutes of Health, helping formulate best practices for the treatment of patients living with asthma.

As a mom worried about her three children with asthma, I never imagined I would end up helping to write policy and change laws, but my experience taught me you don't need a degree to participate in a democracy; you need to be willing to listen and learn.

We are very fortunate in New Marlborough to have so many dedicated people who volunteer to help manage our town, and I'd like to help by participating as a member of the Finance Committee.

If elected, I'll work with the Committee and Town to develop fiscally responsible budgets based on best practices, share the details how and why recommendations and decisions are made, and seek suggestions and opinions from all town residents so that together, we can all do what's best for our town. I'm happy to answer any questions and hear your concerns. Please call me at 644-0088 or email sfwalker1@verizon.net.

TOWN CLERK, THREE YEARS: KATHERINE CHRETIEN

My name is Katherine Chretien, and I am running for re-election to the position of Town Clerk. I obtained my Massachusetts Municipal Clerk Certification in October, 2013, and I continue to attend classes through the Massachusetts Town City Clerk Association with your support. I am a native of New Marlborough and have lived here all of my life. My family has roots in New Marlborough that go back several generations. My son is a senior at Mount Everett High School, and my daughter graduated in 2014. I have been dedicated to and have worked for our Southern Berkshire community while serving as your Town Clerk. I thank you for your continued support.

FINANCE COMMITTEE, THREE YEARS: ROBERT MILLER

My name is Robert Miller. I am a lifelong resident of our town. I am running for a three-year seat on the Finance Committee. I have held a temporary one-year position on the board and would appreciate your support so I can continue supporting fiscally responsible budgets for the Town of New Marlborough. I promise to do my best in representing the people of our town.

FINANCE COMMITTEE, THREE YEARS: JOHN PSHENISHNY

My name is John Pshenishny. I am running for reelection to the Finance Committee. I have lived in

New Marlborough since 1983 with my wife Marsha. I have been a volunteer fireman for forty-four years, and I am still active.

I am retired and I am able to devote the time necessary to work for the people. I have really enjoyed the challenge of being on the Finance Committee, and I would like the opportunity to continue to help the taxpayers, by keeping their taxes affordable. Please vote for me on May 8.

Thank you in advance for your support.

FINANCE COMMITTEE, THREE YEARS: STEVEN KLEIN

I am Steve Klein and I seek a three-year position on the Town's Finance Committee. I have been a renter and owner in New Marlborough since 2012, and have lived here full-time for the past year. During this time, I have come to know and love our town and would like to offer my experience to the community.

My career has been spent in the field of municipal finance. For almost forty years, I have served as an adviser to states, counties, and localities across the country in designing, reviewing, and evaluating their financial status, practices, and plans. I am a registered municipal advisor.

In addition to my professional experience in the field, I have volunteered in my former hometown and school district to provide advice on budget planning, financial performance, and capital expenditures.

Since this past fall, I have served on the New Marlborough Broadband Committee, assisting the Town in its efforts to assess needs, and plans for providing this critical and long-overdue service to our residents. As part of this process, I have come to better understand our town, its needs and its challenges. Balancing the needs of a community like ours, while maintaining its wonderful character and, most importantly, controlling the costs of living here is difficult. I commend those who volunteer their time to address these issues.

I ask for your support and your votes on May 8. I look forward to helping out. Thanks!

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BROADBAND-WAGON

The Day of Judgment Approaches (once again)

By Barry R. Shapiro

After what seems like an eternity of false starts and dead ends, Nat Yohalem, chair of the Board of Selectmen, seemed more optimistic that the serpentine path to bring broadband to Town may finally be nearing a successful conclusion.

"Negotiations with Frontier are moving forward," said Mr. Yohalem. "We've met with them a number of times and gone over key issues. More meetings are scheduled. Some issues have been resolved and some remain open. Counsel is expected to draft an agreement and we are negotiating the open points which relate to all of the four towns that are part of our group (i.e., New Marlborough, Tolland, Sandisfield, and Monterey). Issues relate to each town individually and will be negotiated by each town separately. For example, some towns may want their town halls and libraries wired first. Some will let that happen in the ordinary course of the town being wired. Some towns have large private communities that present special issues for that town. Those will all be addressed by each town."

Negotiations conducted jointly by the four towns are being handled by one representative from each town. For New Marlborough, it's Selectman Yohalem. For negotiations unique to each town, Mr. Yohalem advises that he will be joined by Richard Long, chair of the Broadband Committee.

"I can't give you an estimate as to when our negotiations will be completed," added Mr. Yohalem, "but I'd like to have something by the middle of May. We have a May 7 deadline, which we can extend with consent of Frontier, if necessary."

As to what will happen once an agreement is reached with Frontier, Mr. Yohalem advised that the Broadband Committee will be asked to review the agreement

and to compare it to any other options, which, at this point, would be the possibility of a transaction with WiredWest. All Broadband Committee meetings are open to the public. "We'll ask the Committee to advise whether we should proceed with Frontier or not. We expect that they will review the Frontier agreement in depth and make whatever comparisons they feel are appropriate. If they recommend Frontier, we expect to have an informational meeting to let the Town know why we've decided to go with them. Representatives of Frontier would be present."

Although the selectmen, acting as the board of the Town's Municipal Lighting Plant (which will enter into any agreement with Frontier), have the authority to sign an agreement with Frontier without voter approval, they won't do that in this case. "After the information session we plan to hold, we will have a special town meeting to discuss any recommendation to go with Frontier and the people will get to vote on it. If they approve it, we'll sign it. If not, we'll look at any other options."

Tim Newman, the Town's representative to WiredWest, stressed the importance of a fair side-by-side comparison of the WiredWest option with whatever is negotiated with Frontier. "I want not only the Broadband Committee and the Board of Selectmen but also the citizens to be broadly aware that WiredWest presents a viable option worthy of serious consideration," he said. "We expect to have our internet service provider selected shortly and under contract within sixty days. I've provided data as requested to the Broadband Committee and hope that they will meet with WiredWest so that any questions can be answered. We are prepared to make any adjustment to the financial assumptions in our business plan if there's reason to. I hope that the Committee will see WiredWest as a reasonable, solid approach. I'd also like WiredWest to be part of any informational meeting held for the Town."

So, the beat goes on.

Stay tuned. □

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UPCOMING: Events Calendar for May and June

May 1: Annual Town Meeting, 7:00 p.m. Town Hall, but come early to register and pick up your voting card

May 8: Annual Town Election, noon to 7:00 p.m. downstairs in the Town Hall

May 13: Farmers Market, the first of a weekly offering on the New Marlborough Village green, 10:00 a.m. to noon, every Saturday through October 28

May 13: Collection for white elephant sale, 10:00 a.m. to noon, Rooney House on New Marlborough Southfield Road, opposite the former Kolburne School administration barn

May 19: Spring Senior Luncheon, 11:30 a.m., Southfield Church Hall, sponsored by New Marlborough Council on Aging; featuring a speaker from a local Hospice

June 2: Eleven Cemeteries, a brief history of who's buried where in New Marlborough, a First Fridays program, sponsored by the New Marlborough Historical Society, 7:30 p.m. at the Meeting House Gallery; wine and cheese following the talk

June 10: Collection for white elephant sale, 10:00 to noon, Rooney House on New Marlborough Southfield Road, opposite the former Kolburne School administration barn

June 23: A Child's World, eighteen local artists re-imagine youthfulness in the new season's first exhibit at the Meeting House Gallery; wine and cheese opening: 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.; thereafter, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays until July 23

HISTORICAL SOCIETY: UPCOMING PROGRAMS

FIRST FRIDAY PROGRAMS

7:30 p.m. at the Meeting House Gallery — with wine and cheese following the presentations:

June 2: A brief history of New Marlborough's eleven cemeteries.

July 7: The Civilian Conservation Corps in the Berkshires — and how the CCC built York Lake.

August 4: The Knox Trail (it passes just north of

New Marlborough) and its role in the transport of Revolutionary War cannon.

September 1: The production of clay in Clayton and the monuments in which it was used.

CEMETERY RESTORATION DAYS

Continuing our work reviving historic headstones in the New Marlborough Village Cemetery, 10:00 a.m. to noon, followed by a light lunch. **August 12 and September 16.** □

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SHARING THE POTLUCK

Story and photos by Sandra Fusco-Walker

The Cultural Council's annual Potluck Dinner on April 1 was by no means an April Fool joke. Hosted at the newly renovated Meeting House, it was the perfect venue for neighbors to meet and partake of some choice dishes made by town residents. Wendy Miller, who provided memorable pulled pork, was kind enough to share her secret recipe listed below.

To top off the desserts, we were all delighted by the barbershop sounds of "Three Guys and a Lead", led by Maurice Brazie, in their very first public performance.

A great way to kick off spring, the annual Potluck Dinner is a chance to meet your neighbors, enjoy delicious foods, and put winter behind you, until next year. □

BROOKMEDE FARM'S PULLED PORK

Wendy Miller

- 1 large sweet onion, chopped
- 4 T. BBQ pulled pork seasonings*
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 1/3 cup cider vinegar
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1-1/4 cups (approx.) Stonewall Kitchen** Pulled Pork Simmering Sauce
- 2-3 T. Schlotterbeck & Foss** Bold and Smoky BBQ
- 5 lbs. Brookmede Farm Premium Berkshire pork shoulder

Chop onion and put in bottom of slow cooker. Remove any excess fat from pork shoulder and place on top of bed of onions. Mix next 4 ingredients together and smear on pork. Then pour about 1-1/2 cups of Stonewall Kitchen Simmering BBQ sauce mixed with 2-3 T. of S&F sauce into crockpot.

Cover and cook on high for 4-5 hours or low for 8 hours. Lift the pieces of pork out of the liquid and transfer to a large mixing bowl. When cool enough to handle, use two forks to shred the meat into pieces. Remove any large pieces of fat or bones. Strain the cooking liquid from the crockpot into a saucepan, let settle and remove fat. Bring to boil, lower heat and simmer uncovered for couple hours to reduce. Serve sauce on side.

If you don't have a crockpot, place pork in a 5- 6-quart Dutch oven or large heavy-bottomed pot (follow directions above). Cover pot, and place in oven on lower rack. Bake at 250F for 6-8 hours until pork is very tender and separates easily when pulled with a fork.

*Use your favorite or mix your own

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SHARING THE POTLUCK — Photographs by Sandra Walker



NEIGHBORS



As this issue was going to press, we were saddened to learn of the passing of **Edgar Zukaukas**, on April 20, after a long illness. A Southfield resident with his wife, **Tara White**, Edgar was active in Town government for decades on the Finance Committee, the Umpachene Park Commission, and as town moderator and constable. Remembrances from his friends and colleagues will appear in the June issue of the *New Marlborough 5 Village News*. □

Neighbors compiled by Barbara Lowman: deeuell@yahoo.com

MAILBOX



To the Editor:

For those who care for New Marlborough as much as we do, we urge you to vote for Nat Yohalem for selectman. Nat has served on the Board of Selectmen for the past six years. He has been fully committed, giving the job his full attention, knowledge, and experience.

Being selectman is, at times, a thankless job, but Nat has not allowed challenges to discourage him. Under his leadership, the Board has achieved some notable financial successes, including obtaining a \$1 million grant to repair Clayton Mill River Road, a \$500,000 grant to replace the Foley Hill Road Bridge, and the receipt of over \$300,000 from auctions of Town-owned foreclosed properties. He founded and co-chairs the Shared Services Committee, a coalition of six Southern Berkshire towns. By sharing equipment costs with Sheffield, our town has saved about \$84,000.

Nat has shown that he is an able leader, levelheaded, and inclusive. He is dedicated to providing openness and transparency in our Town government. He ended interim borrowing and decreased delinquencies through quarterly billings. Saturday selectmen's meetings have given more town residents an opportunity to be heard. Nat has attended almost every meeting of the Town and School Finance Committees.

We urge all voters to cast their ballot for Nat Yohalem on Election Day, Monday, May 8, between noon and 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall.

Nat is available to talk about Town issues and can be reached at 528-1409.

Sincerely,

Mary White
David Herrick
Robert Olsen



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OUR WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS

Back on March 31, Joe Poindexter wrote, “Just a reminder: Perhaps having caught wind of the warning that Massachusetts residents should take down their bird feeders starting April 1, the bears neighboring us on East Hill Road struck in the early hours of March 31. Not shown here: the flock of forty or fifty **goldfinches** that arrived after daybreak to clean up the sunflower seed spread around by the big guys.” Yes, this is definitely the time of year when birdfeeders turn into bearfeeders.



photo by Joe Poindexter

A mortally wounded birdfeeder

Leslie Wheeler reports the following: “On Saturday, April 1, a day of lots of rain and some snow, my companion and I spotted male and female **wood ducks** by my pond on Cagney Hill Road. The male was in the water; female on shore. Over the years, many water birds have visited the pond: different kinds of **ducks, Canada geese, great blue herons**, and even a pair of **sandhill cranes** that roared in (I think of them as the Concorde of birds) and landed on the far side of the pond one Easter Sunday. But this is the first time we’ve seen wood ducks here – a treat!”

Don Beauchamp checked in with this update on things in the Clayton area: “Happy spring! Early in the month the frogs and peepers were singing their songs, while snowdrops, crocuses, and now daffodils are putting on a show. Almost a month ago, on March 17, I snapped a shot of a **bobcat** walking softly on deep snow cover and today, April 14, I saw a **woodcock** that flew away just five feet from me.



photo by Ed Harvey

Buddha Beaver

Don adds, “I hope that online color version is being looked at (nm5vn.org). So much better than B & W!”

Ed Harvey, also from Clayton, explores the length and breadth of New Marlborough with camera always at the ready. On a recent outing to North Road, he came across a particularly charming **beaver**: “I had a friend on FaceBook call the beaver photo Buddha Beaver.

This spring there seems to be a very healthy population of **hooded mergansers** in the ponds and lakes of New Marlborough.



photo by Don Beauchamp

A Bobcat, after the March blizzard

Larry Burke spent part of the morning of April 8 observing five females and two males in his farm pond on the South Sandisfield Road. Courtship was clearly on the minds of the males, as they postured for the females, showing off the white blazes on their heads in a variety of attitudes. Despite all that impressive preening, the ladies appeared largely indifferent to the attentions of the two gents. Perhaps they were made self-conscious by the guy with the camera! □



photo by Larry Burke

Hooded mergansers a-courting

Compiled by Larry Burke, lburke2@me.com

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THE LOG

POLICE DEPARTMENT (SELECTED ENTRIES)

- Mar. 2 12:54 p.m. A driver, stopped on Route 57 in New Marlborough village, is arrested for operating an unregistered, un-insured vehicle with a revoked driver's license, and charged with being in the possession of stolen property.
- Mar. 3 12:54 p.m. Two persons reported missing in Mill River are located, safe and uninjured.
- 3:10 p.m. Assist the Fire Department with a large brush fire in Clayton.
- Mar. 4 10:57 a.m. A caller requesting assistance with possible criminal/civil issues on behalf of a friend is advised to contact the Disabled Persons Protection Commission; the Department also notified the Berkshire County District Attorney's Office.
- Mar. 5 1:50 p.m. Assist the Sheffield Police with a motor vehicle rollover accident on Route 7.
- Mar. 7 1:00 p.m. Following a report of a driver being harassed by occupants of another vehicle, the accused parties are notified of the complaint and agree to cease and desist.
- 5:45 p.m. A check of New Marlborough Central School determines that a burglar alarm activation was caused by a door that was not secure.
- Mar. 8 2:57 p.m. A Hartsville caller complains of someone in a small white van going door-to-door selling produce.
- Mar. 11 11:16 a.m. In response to a complaint, an unwanted party to a Southfield residence is subsequently issued a No Trespass Order.
- Mar. 16 12:48 p.m. In response to a concerned caller, a police officer checks on the well-being of the caller's Mill River girlfriend and receives assurance that she will contact the Department if services are needed.
- Mar. 17 1:11 p.m. A driver reports his car is stuck in a snow bank on Hadsell Street.
- 1:49 p.m. A Clayton resident reports receiving a call from a possible phone scammer.
- 2:49 p.m. Following a call alerting the Department to a threatened suicide, the subject party is transported to a medical facility in Pittsfield.
- Mar. 23 2:27 p.m. A resident reports that a line of mailboxes, no longer in use, was removed without permission of the owners and that repeated attempts to contact the person suspected of removing the boxes had been unsuccessful.
- Mar. 24 7:45 a.m. Chief Graham Frank and Officer Nick Felix at New Marlborough Central School for "High Five Friday."
- 1:00 p.m. A complaint regarding a returned check from a Southfield resident is determined to be a civil matter; the caller is referred to small claims court.
- Mar. 27 2:49 p.m. A driver calls for assistance after a wheel falls off her Jeep Grand Cherokee on Route 57 east of New Marlborough village.
- Mar. 29 11:04 a.m. Assist Sheffield Police with the arrest of a driver who gave a false name and whose license had been revoked.
- Mar. 30 3:18 p.m. The Highway Department is notified after a caller reports broken glass on the dirt portion of Brewer Hill.

Police Chief Graham Frank



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THE LOG: FIRE AND RESCUE

March 3 1:04 p.m.	Hartsville New Marlborough Road Search	March 11 7:41 p.m.	Konkapot Road CO Alarm
March 3 3:11 p.m.	Canaan Southfield Road Brush Fire	March 17 3:15 p.m.	Konkapot Road Medical Call
March 4 7:00 p.m.	Mutual Aid to Monterey Medical Call	March 17 6:57 p.m.	Calkins Cross Road CO Alarm
March 5 1:47 a.m.	South Sandisfield Road Structure Fire	March 22 1:48 p.m.	Clayton Mill River Road Medical Call
March 5 3:54 p.m.	Clayton Mill River Road Medical Call	March 22 8:10 p.m.	Norfolk Road Medical Call
March 7 2:35 p.m.	Umpachene Falls Road Medical Call	March 25 5:40 p.m.	Aberdeen Lane Fire Alarm
March 7 3:04 p.m.	Stone Manor Drive Fire Alarm	March 26 2:06 a.m.	Hartsville Mill River Road Medical Call
March 11 6:21 p.m.	Mill River Great Barrington Road Medical Call		

Fire Company President David Smith

photo by Ed Harvey



photos courtesy the Norfolk Fire Department

New Marlborough Fire and Rescue members were busy with two serious brush fires recently: at left, the March 3 fire on the Canaan Southfield Road, and above, the April 15 fire on Rhoades and Bailey Road. That fire involved over 100 personnel from thirty-eight departments.



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NEW ACQUISITIONS AT THE LIBRARY

Adult Fiction

- The Burial Hour*, by Jeffery Deaver
- Dark Flood Rises*, by Margaret Drabble
- Murder on the Serpentine*, by Anne Perry
- Lost Order*, by Steve Berry
- The Horse Dancer*, by Jojo Moyes
- The Gargoyle Hunters*, by John Freeman Gill

Adult Nonfiction

- Some Girls, Some Hats, and Hitler: A True Love Story*, by Trudi Kanter
- The American Cancer Society New Healthy Eating Cookbook*, by Jeanne Besser
- The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing*, by Marie Kondo
- Simple Green Suppers: A Fresh Strategy for One-Dish Vegetarian Meals*, by Susie Middleton

Children's Fiction

- Priscilla Gorilla*, by Barbara Bottner
- All Ears, All Eyes*, by Richard Jackson
- We're All Wonders*, by R.J. Palacio
- The Blue Hour*, by Isabelle Simler
- My Awesome Summer by P. Mantis*, by Paul Meisel

Children's Nonfiction

- The Elements Book: A Visual Encyclopedia of the Periodic Table*, by Tom Jackson
- Penguin Day: A Family Story*, by Nic Bishop
- Transportation*, by Gail Gibbons

DVDs

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| <i>Brokenwood Mysteries Series 3</i> | <i>A Monster Calls</i> |
| <i>Fantastic Beasts</i> | <i>Planet Earth II</i> |
| <i>Five Nights in Maine</i> | <i>Wild Oats</i> |
| <i>In Dubious Battle</i> | |



Library Summer 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.

Memorial Day Parade



Monday,
 May 29, 9:00 a.m.
 Mill River Center
 Rain or Shine*

*In case of rain, the ceremony will take place in Town Hall

photo by Sheila Fitzpatrick



Despite strong winds and blowing sleet, the New Marlborough Library's "Spring" Egg Hunt was enjoyed by children and their families!

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Contributions are needed to continue the paper!

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

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

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Town Times

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

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

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

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

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

Board of Assessors: Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

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

Building Inspector: Monday 5 - 7 p.m., Wednesday 8:00 - 10:00 a.m.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(The Southfield Post Office lobby is open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.)

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

Tax Collector: Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

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

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

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

Town Hall: 229-8116

Police: Business office: 229-8161

Transfer Station Hours:

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

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

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

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Hours:

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We welcome advertisements from businesses owned by New Marlborough residents.

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

NM5VN Editorial Team

Barbara Lowman, issue editor; Diane Barth, designer;

Martha Bryan, Jane Burke, Larry Burke,

David Lowman, Joe Poindexter, Jodi Rothe,

Peter Schuyten, Barry Shapiro, Pam Stebbins,

Jon Swan, Marianne Swan, Sandra Fusco-Walker,

Contributing writers and artists: Ann Getsinger,

Mary Richie Smith, Tara White. Index: Donna Weaver

New Marlborough 5 Village News

appears monthly,

also online at www.nm5vn.org

The next issue will be dated June 2017.

All copy must be submitted no later than May 17.

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

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- ♦ **DesignFirstBerkshires:** Architectural design, space planning and renovation management. 413-528-6169 or info@designfirstberkshires.com.
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- ♦ **Reiner White:** General Contractor; 413-229-8450
- ♦ **Ter Mar Triangle Farm:** 106 Sandy Brook Turnpike (Rte 183), Sandisfield; 413-258-2898; fruits and vegetables in season; pork; jam; eggs; honey; sawmill; kiln milling; firewood
- ♦ **Woodruff Mountain Landscaping:** Excavation and landscape contracting, all forms of stone work and masonry, and outdoor services, including lawn mowing and yard work. 413-229-2919 woodruffmountain@aol.com

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