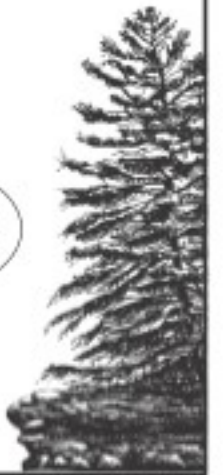




New Marlborough 5 Village News

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Clayton • Hartsville • Mill River • New Marlborough • Southfield

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

By Larry Burke

The Great Room of Town Hall was filled to near-capacity for New Marlborough's Annual Town Meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, May 4. To kick the meeting off on a positive note, the crowd was treated to a recap by Mount Everett High School student Jordan Chretien of the recently concluded Tech Challenge World Championships in St. Louis, at which the Mount Everett team, the Higgs Bots, distinguished itself by finishing twenty-sixth out of 128 robotics teams from the United States and abroad. A well-deserved round of applause for the remarkable achievements of our students followed Jordan's remarks.

The meeting was called to order and the nomination of Barry Shapiro for town moderator was quickly made, seconded, and approved. Thereupon, Mr. Shapiro laid out the ground rules for proper meeting etiquette and plunged right into the business of acting upon the thirty-five articles that comprised the evening's warrant. It was pretty much clear sailing for the first sixteen articles, most passing unanimously, with just a few asked-and-answered questions along the way: On Article 9, Edgar Zukauskas wondered about the change in designation from administrative assistant (the position currently held by Joe Kellogg) to town manager; Selectman Nat Yohalem



Photo by Larry Burke

asking for a yearly audit, rather than biannual. Doug Newman asked why such an important position as grant writer would be cut, and Mr. Kellogg answered by saying that he would be taking over the grant writing duties as part of his job, so that position was being consolidated. Bill Garrett had questions about the tax collector and treasurer salaries, expressing the thought that, since these positions are currently held by interim officers, the pay should be less and should be on an hourly basis. Mr. Kellogg held that the requested salaries were essentially place-holders and may be adjusted once the positions are filled by the new hires. The answers to all these questions seemed to have done the trick, as the motions were voted and approved.

The evening was warm to start with, but the temperature in the room rose a bit more when Article 17 came around. This article proposed that the Town of New Marlborough should advise the School Committee of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District to close the Monterey School. Superintendent David Hastings stood to argue against the idea, and was followed by the Monterey representative to the School Committee, Maria Rundle, who argued passionately in favor of the Monterey School. Selectman Nat Yohalem then took the floor to argue the other position, stating, "This is not a question of money, but a question of education." He followed that by saying there would be a savings of \$125,000 if the school were closed. He closed his remarks on the subject by stating that he and the other selectmen had come to their conclusions, but felt that it was time, "to let the people decide." Other

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stated that this is a "cosmetic change," and the duties of the town manager remain the same. On Article 13, pertaining to funding of general government, Patricia Hardyman wondered why the amount recommended for the audit was nearly double the previous year, and was informed by Joe Kellogg that the commonwealth is now

Annual Town Meeting, continued

contributions to the discussion included the following: Jane Burke: "This is divisive and inappropriate." Michael Brady: "What goes around comes around. Sometime in the future New Marlborough Central will be on the chopping block." School Committee Representative Fran Lartigue: "We are dealing with a District relationship that has soured."

At the conclusion of discussion, Moderator Shapiro called the vote and, remarkably, the count was even, forty-nine for, forty-nine against, and so, by the narrowest of margins, the motion was not passed.

The next bone of contention came with Article 20, to raise and appropriate the funding for New Marlborough's share of the District's school budget, \$2,504,250 in operating and transportation, and \$82,832 in the capital account. The Board of Selectmen was asked by Patricia Hardyman why the Board did not recommend passage of this article. Nat Yohalem replied that the selectmen did not like seeing \$30,000 in the capital budget for non-specific improvements to the three out-lying schools. Nor did they like seeing money allocated to the Monterey School in the operating budget.

Superintendent Hastings spoke of the achievements of the students in our tiny district – the success of the robotics team against schools with much larger student bodies and resources, as well as the distinguished list of colleges to which our graduates have gone. Bob Bradley made an amendment to level-fund the operating budget, which would remove \$81,957 from the budget. The motion to amend received a second. School Committee Representative Kristin Sparhawk informed the meeting that level funding would mean the loss of nine staff positions in the District. Mark Carson, a member of the Finance Committee, countered by saying that level funding was needed so the Town can pay for the repair

of its roads and bridges. After some further discussion, the motion to amend was voted down, and the original article, to fund fully, was voted and approved.

Articles 21 through 30 then passed with just a few comments along the way, giving way to what promised to be one of the most heated articles of the evening –



WiredWest representative Tim Newman proposed postponing a vote on the project until a future Town Meeting.

to see if the Town would vote to appropriate \$3,400,000 for its share of the WiredWest initiative to bring a high-speed broadband network to underserved towns in Western Massachusetts. Tim Newman, who is the Town's representative to WiredWest, spoke of the virtues of the plan, but he also spoke of the resistance on the part of some of our citizens and of the less than 40 percent of households who have, to

this point, expressed the desire to receive the Internet via fiber optic. He moved to postpone action on this article until such time as a clear majority of the town sees the necessity of WiredWest. The motion was seconded; then a succession of voters, including Doug Newman, David Shalaby, Liz Kormanik, Larry Rosenthal, and John Schreiber, spoke of the need and the virtues of the high-speed network. Eventually the motion to postpone was voted upon and passed. The decision on WiredWest may be revisited at a Special Town Meeting within the year.

In the waning minutes of the meeting, Article 33, which would amend the Town's Protective By-laws to broaden the rules on creating accessory apartments within single-family dwellings, passed with no debate.

Likewise, Article 35, which would confine unleashed dogs to their owner's property unless the dog is, "working, hunting, or at such events as field trials or training." Apparently, that article, like the proverbial dog, can hunt. It passed, as then did the 2015 Annual Town Meeting into the annals of history, at 9:10 in the evening of May 4. □

Photo by Larry Burke

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MEET THE MODERATOR

Passing the Gavel

When at last the gavel came down to end the most recent Annual Town Meeting, it was being wielded by the Town's new moderator, Barry R. Shapiro who, although acting as a volunteer at the meeting, was formally elected to the post a week later at the Town election. The Annual Town Meeting was not his first time behind the podium here. He also officiated as a volunteer at the Special Town Meeting convened back in the March to approve the recent school bond issue.

A recently retired corporate lawyer, Mr. Shapiro has been a full-time resident of New Marlborough for nearly five years. But serving his community is nothing new for him. In fact, he's been deeply immersed in community activities both locally and in the New York area for many years, serving on the boards of such well-known organizations as the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, Shakespeare & Co., Project Native, WNET Channel 13 in New York, and Volunteers in Medicine (VIM). He has also chaired the boards of the Long Island Philharmonic and public television station WLIW21. He also serves as the president and chief executive of the Dr. Robert C. and Tina Sohn Foundation, a charitable organization dedicated to supporting causes that promote the environment, alternative health care, and the arts. Here in New Marlborough he's treasurer of the New Marlborough Village Association, and also writes for the



Moderator Barry Shapiro at the Annual Town Meeting.
Photo by Larry Burke

5 Village News. (See his latest story on the origins of the Old Inn on the Green on page 8 of this issue.)

But that clearly wasn't enough for this service-minded individual. So when the moderator position came open after former moderator and town police chief Scott Farrell moved with his family to the eastern part of the state, Mr. Shapiro volunteered to take up the gavel. It's a natural enough fit for a man who spent four decades in corporate boardrooms, shareholder meetings, and mediating disputes. He knows how to conduct a meeting, is thoroughly familiar with Robert's Rules of Order, but is not averse, as he points out, to deviating from them when he feels it's necessary. Dealing with conflict? "There's nothing wrong with conflict at a meeting," he says, "as long as it's productive and doesn't interfere with the People's business."

Mr. Shapiro graduated magna cum laude with an English degree from Hofstra University in 1968 and received his law degree from Columbia Law School in 1973. An avid downhill skier and golfer, he lives with his wife Marjorie, a member of the New Marlborough Cultural Council, and their year-old Havanese, Rusty, on Hickey Hill Road, with frequent visits from their four grandchildren, including Clara who loves to perform and takes summer classes at Shakespeare & Co. □

Peter Schuyten

TOWN ELECTION RESULTS

The Town election on May 11 brought 212 voters to the polls, out of a total of 1,033 registered voters. Most of the candidates for Town offices were unopposed, and the following were elected: Moderator – Barry Shapiro; Selectman – Tara B. White; Assessor – Wendy Miller; Planning Board – Mark Carson; Board of Health – Norman Hankey (write-in); Tree Warden – William Ruane; Cemetery Commissioner – Robert Palmer; Library Trustee – Claudette Callahan; and Finance Committee (2 positions) – Mark Carson and Ira Yohalem. In the sole contested position, Edgar Zukauskas out-pollled John Pshenishny by a vote of 130 to 67.

Also on the ballot was the question of whether the Town should exempt from the provisions of Proposition 2½ the amounts to pay for the bonds which would fund

the Town's share of the cost of installing a high-speed broadband network as part of the WiredWest consortium. This question passed by a vote of 108 to 75.

A week previously, on May 4, the Annual Town Meeting had voted to postpone the decision of whether or not the Town should join the WiredWest consortium. That issue would be taken up at a future Special or Annual Town Meeting. Town Clerk Kathy Chretien contacted the Massachusetts Department of Revenue and learned that the approval of the Proposition 2½ exemption would stay in effect until such time as a Town Meeting voted to approve or reject participation in the WiredWest project. □

Barbara Lowman

Town Business Is Your Business



BOARD OF SELECTMEN

April 27: With all three selectmen present, the Board voted to implement an **accident insurance policy** for the police and fire departments, at a cost of \$19,290 for a year's premium.

In response to a request from Tim Newman, New Marlborough's delegate to WiredWest, to place **WiredWest signs on Town property**, Interim Administrative Assistant Joe Kellogg advised that Massachusetts law prohibits political signs, including those addressing ballot questions, on Town property. Although the sign in question advocates signing up as a WiredWest subscriber and does not address the ballot question of whether the Town should borrow to install fiber-optic cable, Mr. Newman withdrew his request.

Mr. Newman then asked if the Board would endorse **WiredWest**. Chairman Tara White said she felt the Board had too little information about the project to endorse it and that the Town had until June 30, 2016, before a vote on a bond issue to finance the installation of optic-fiber cable is required to take advantage of a state subsidy. Mr. Newman clarified his request, stating that he

would like the Board simply to acknowledge New Marlborough's need for fiber-optic connectivity.

Michele Shalaby explained that, as selectmen rather than private citizens, they have to consider the various competing interests for Town financing. Ms. White said, "As a group, we believe this is an important issue and that we will look into . . . how we can put it into the Town plan with the roads and the bridges and the buildings and all the other stuff we have to do and see where that plan lays out and work from there." Mr. Newman said that Ms. White's statement was exactly what he was looking for from the Town. He added that he is pursuing other sources of financing, including private citizens and the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation. He reported that he has conferred with Clark Rowell, the Town's bond counsel, who requested a meeting with Mr. Kellogg, the Town treasurer and at least one selectman. Mr. Newman volunteered his services in working with the Town to evaluate other fiber-optic providers.

Mr. Kellogg reported that the **premium for MIA general insurance**, far from being raised as he had initially been informed it would be, was **actually decreased by 18.6 percent** – primarily due to a reduction in Workman's Compensation. The Board voted to have Mr. Kellogg renew the Town's contract with MIA.

The Board said it wanted to interview one of the eight people who had so far applied for the position of town administrator. It then established an hourly rate of \$13.75 for the Planning Board temporary clerical position that has been offered to Teena Parton.

Chairman White has prepared a letter to be sent to Ryan Chamberland, Governor Charlie Baker's district representative, based in Springfield. At a meeting of the Great Barrington Board of Selectmen, Mr. Chamberland was **urged to consider the needs of small towns in Western Massachusetts** when policy is made in Boston. Ms. White's letter outlines many of the challenges faced by New Marlborough, including its road mileage, the number of its bridges, and unfunded mandates.

Ms. White and Selectman Nat Yohalem said they would attend a meeting of the School Committee's Policy Subcommittee April 29, during which the **viability of school programs is to be discussed**. Mr. Yohalem intends to go to a meeting of the entire School Committee the following day.

Selectman Michele Shalaby reported she has met with the Town's financial officers toward hiring someone to handle tax titles – with the provision that the person hired know the Softrite program and be familiar with tax



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title issues. Ms. White suggested contacting neighboring Town Hall offices to determine whether or not someone has an interest in this position, noting that it can be done after hours.

May 1: Most of the meeting was devoted to preparations for the Annual Town Meeting. It was decided that residents wishing to speak would be asked to identify themselves and that their questions and comments be limited to two minutes.

Mr. Kellogg was asked to set up interviews with town administrator applicants Anne Sommers and Derek Brindisi on May 11. The Board voted to recommend to the tax assessor that unpaid motor vehicle taxes from FY2000 to FY 2011, as set forth in an April 22 memo, be considered as uncollectible and removed from the books.

Mr. Kellogg reported that Martha Bryan, executive director of the New Marlborough Land Trust, has expressed a desire to plant annuals, perennials, and herbs by the septic system next to the Town Hall. She would provide both topsoil and plantings.

In response to a request from Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring to purchase a hitch rake (cost: \$5,000), Mr. Yohalem asked that Mr. Loring provide by the next Board meeting a list of Highway Department equipment needs for the next five or six years — as well a list of the roads needing repair that are currently unbudgeted and are not eligible for state funds. In a road related matter, Mr. Yohalem reported that Jim Palmer told him that he had damaged his car after hitting a pothole on a Town road. Mr. Kellogg requested a letter from Mr. Palmer within thirty days of the accident with a detailed estimate of the damage, so that a claim could be filed.

Joe Poindexter, from minutes prepared by Administrative Secretary Sharon Fleck

May 4: The Board of Selectmen met in joint session with the Finance Committee at 5:00 p.m., prior to the Annual Town Meeting. All three selectmen were present; representing the Finance Committee were

Prudence Spaulding, John Pshenishny, Mark Carson, and by telephone, Chairman David Herrick.

The purpose of the meeting was two-fold: First, the warrant for Town Meeting was parsed article by article with particular attention paid to articles of financial significance and who of which board might make statements or answer pertinent questions.

The second purpose of the meeting was for each of the two groups to re-affirm its earlier decision to not recommend passage of the school district's proposed budget. This was accomplished by unanimous voice vote separately by each group.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

May 11: The Board of Selectmen met at 11:00 a.m. The meeting was called to order by Chair Tara White. All three members were present. The minutes of four previous meetings (April 9, 13, 27, and May 1) were approved unanimously.

Bids for repaving parts of Mill River Great Barrington Road that had been opened on May 6 were presented. The work will be paid for by the State Winter Recovery Assistance Program. The two bids were: Tri-Town Paving, \$56,400, and LB Corporation, \$61,992. It was moved, seconded, and unanimously agreed to award the work to Tri-Town Paving at the bid of \$56,400.

Addressing the issue of Town administrative structure, Interim Administrative Assistant Joe Kellogg proposed to reduce his hours from twelve to fifteen hours per week to approximately ten hours per week. His lessening work load and budget concerns were his stated reasons.

Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring was present and expressed his concerns about the need to repave Route 57, and the lack of funds to do so. It was suggested that Mr. Kellogg set up a meeting with Peter Niles of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Mr. Loring, Representative Smitty Pignatelli, and Mr. Kellogg to discuss Route 57 and the possible "streamlining" of Chapter 90 (State highway) funding to better serve smaller towns like New Marlborough.



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Ms. White noted that Town Clerk Kathy Chretien had successfully completed continuing education coursework that contributes to her certification as town clerk.

The Board then held **interviews with the two applicants for the position of town administrator, Anne Sommers and Ann-Marie Enoch.** Tara White, citing her status as a Town employee – she is the town’s accountant – recused herself from participating in the interviews. (Shortly thereafter she was called away from the meeting by the news that her father had died.) Each of the applicants was interviewed by Ms. Shalaby and Mr. Yohalem. Following the interviews it was moved, seconded, and **voted unanimously to offer the position to Ms. Enoch.** It was agreed to hold a meeting with Ms. Enoch on May 13 to negotiate the terms of her contract.

Selectman Shalaby expressed her desire to offer Sue Funk the position of Assistant Treasurer (Tax Title). It was moved, seconded, and voted to do so, subject to consulting with Board Chair Tara White.

And with that, the meeting was adjourned at 12:47 p.m.

David Lowman

May 18: The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. with all three selectmen present. First order of business was the reorganization of the Board of Selectmen. **Board Chair Tara White nominated Selectman Michele Shalaby as chair** for the coming year, seconded by Selectman Nat Yohalem. It was so voted, and Chair Shalaby took over the conduct of the meeting. The minutes of May 11 were approved with minor amendments. May 4 and May 13 will be considered at the next meeting.

Library Trustee Brian Mikesell described **the problem of drainage at the library, particularly in the winter.** When the walkway from the street to the library porch is shoveled, it then becomes a conduit for snow melt or rain, that threatens to enter the library building. The problem is more difficult because the library is lower than the street. The trustees and Librarian Debora O’Brien have

discussed the problem with Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring, and with Ron Leonard of Mount Everett Landscaping. No solution has been found yet, but Mr. Yohalem urged them to continue to work with Mr. Loring to find a way to divert the water from the library’s porch.

Chris and Nancy Weaver, of Rhoades and Bailey Road, came before the selectmen to **share their safety concerns about their road.** While this past winter was worse than most, the same problems of road maintenance, safety, and mud occur regularly. The Weavers have **explored possibilities of alternative surface materials and the possibility that purchase of an asphalt spreader might provide greater economies in time and manpower.** Mr. Loring pointed out that none of the surrounding towns uses a spreader, and that continued use of the crushed limestone that the Town now uses will gradually improve the quality of the dirt roads. Ms. Shalaby noted that the selectmen and Highway Department are working on a **long-range plan to upgrade all roads.** Mr. Yohalem added that Mr. Loring is making a prioritized list for road improvement, but also noted that the **Town is carrying a heavy load of debt** for equipment and technology expenses.

New residents Emily Rachel and Josh Irwin recently purchased property on the Hartsville New Marlborough Road which includes their house, barn and the former Cantina restaurant. The restaurant building is currently seasonal, **but they plan to turn it into a year-round facility over the coming year. In the meantime, though, they want to turn a family specialty into a series of “Taco Tuesdays” this July and August.** The building inspector and Board of Health are visiting this week to determine whether their special permit is still valid, and whether health department requirements are being met. The Irwins requested eight one-day beer and wine licenses, and will file the necessary paperwork.

The Board voted to **place a stop sign on the Clayton Mill River Road just before the bridge into Mill River proper.** This will clarify the right-of-way issue that currently is ambiguous.



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Mr. Loring updated the Board on the **status of the Clayton Mill River Road bridge**. The necessary paperwork has been filed with the Army Corps of Engineers; he has not yet received a response, but will continue to contact them so the project doesn't get overlooked.

In other highway matters, a project request to the state to put a **top coat on County Road** just needs to be signed by the selectmen. **The paving project on the Mill River Great Barrington Road** (see report of May 11 meeting, above) is slated for the **first two weeks of June**.

The Board **approved the contract for the town administrator** which had been negotiated with Ann Marie Enoch; Ms. White recused herself since she is a Town employee. Ms. Enoch began her training on May 18, balancing it with her temporary position as assistant tax collector; her contract goes into effect on July 1.

In the interest of making interaction between residents and Town employees easier, the **tax collector's office will be moved to the ground floor of Town Hall**. The **treasurer's and town accountant's offices will be upstairs on the first floor**. (Ms. White again recused herself.)

The Town has received a **solicitation request** from Vivint Solar, a company that offers solar equipment and installation, to **approach homeowners directly**. Interim Administrative Assistant Joe Kellogg pointed out that New Marlborough has no bylaw governing solicitation,

so the selectmen cannot approve or deny the request. The selectmen were concerned about residents having no recourse in dealing with unknown agents. Mr. Kellogg noted that a "no solicitations" or "no trespassing" sign in the resident's yard authorizes them to call the police to have the person removed. Town Counsel Jeremia Pollard will be consulted about designing a bylaw to address this situation.

After a few more housekeeping details, the meeting was adjourned at 7:17. □

Barbara Lowman

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THE OLD INN ON THE GREEN

A Story of Survival and Rebirth

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

By Barry R. Shapiro

Picture the scene. A quiet country morning. Perhaps some mist rising from the dew. Perhaps a hint of warmth in the spring air. And then the sound of a shovel, piercing the earth, as a team of craftsmen starts the construction of a new inn on the New Marlborough Village Green.

Now fast forward some 255 years. The morning may look quite like that 18th century morning and there may be a hint of warmth in the air. The world, however, has changed in ways unimaginable to the workers a quarter of a millennium ago. Yet, incredibly, the inn, which we know as the Old Inn on the Green, is still there, probably recognizable to its patrons from 1760 and perhaps more vibrant now than at any time in its long history.

Constructed only twenty years after the first colonial settlers arrived in New Marlborough, the inn became a crucial stop on the road that connected Westfield and Sheffield, a road that became safer and more user-friendly in 1759 following the end of the French and Indian War.

Travel, however, remained slow and difficult. Consider as evidence this quote from a letter written by one Joseph Hadfield, who, en route from Albany to Springfield by coach in 1785 (a four-day trip) wrote, after being harassed in Sheffield for traveling on the Sabbath: "We went from this [Sheffield] eastward over some horrid hills and bad roads to New Marlborough, a small village, five miles. Here our horses, as well as ourselves, being fatigued we took our night's lodging."

The Inn's first owner was Warren Wheeler, a relative of Benjamin Wheeler, the first colonial settler in town. The innkeeper in those early days (probably from 1770 to 1815) was Deacon Caleb Wright. (Ownership of the property and operation of the Inn were often separate.) Initially offering lodging, food, and rest, along with a stable for tired horses, the inn eventually contained a store selling general merchandise and rapidly became a focal point for the community.

The importance of the Inn to life in town grew even greater when it became a post office in 1806. (Stephen Powell was the first postmaster.) By the mid-1830s, roads had improved and traffic volume was growing. This led



The Inn with general store and post office, late 1800s. Photo from New Marlborough Historical Society archives

to a major advance in the town's communication with the outside world: daily mail delivery by the new Red Bird stagecoach line, instead of weekly delivery by horseback. Created by Postmaster General Amos Kendell, the Red Bird line delivered mail and news from Albany and Hartford on alternate days (the line ran between the two cities, and New Marlborough was

midway between them.)

In 1838, the Inn was acquired by Timothy Babcock and John Wheeler. Seth Norton, who had been the innkeeper since 1832, then acquired it in 1839, in turn selling it to Wilber Landon and Sheldon Wright in 1857. It was during Mr. Norton's early ownership of the inn that General Winfield Scott visited on his way to Albany. General Lafayette and Paul Revere also alit from the stage in front of the Inn in its early days.

During the late 1870s, the inn was known as the I. N. Tuttle Hotel, Store and Post Office, and boasted, according to an advertisement, that "the society is good and the air pure, trout brooks near, the surrounding scenery magnificent, and everything provided for [the guests'] accommodations and comfort."

In 1884, John Bentley purchased the Inn and it was run around 1900 by Edward and George Adsit, long-time residents of the town. In 1921, Patrick and Della Brennan, farmers from Sisson Hill in Mill River, bought the inn and, for the first time in its history, it became

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home to one family. About this time, the post office moved next door where it remained until it closed in 1968 (Mrs. George Lester had been the postmistress for thirty-three years at that time.)

When Mrs. Brennan, then widowed, moved away in 1957, the Inn faced the greatest challenge to its survival as it was largely abandoned and began a long period of vacancy and decline, with the post office and general store closing and one-third of the building being razed.

Enter, serendipitously, Brad Wagstaff, a former magazine publisher, and Peter Murkett, an accomplished woodworker, who were looking for "something to do," as Brad put it. Brad saw a newspaper advertisement for the inn and, after a brief negotiation, he and Peter purchased it in 1973 for \$17,500. "We had no idea what we were going to do with it," said Brad.

Wagstaff and Murkett were gradually restoring the inn when they were visited in the late 1970s by a woman interested in having her son's wedding rehearsal dinner there. The event was such a success that the two entrepreneurs decided to open a restaurant at the Inn, which they did in 1982. Just a few years before, the Inn began taking in guests after housing musicians from the Red Fox Music Camp which was then located on Route 183.

The restaurant was smaller then than it is today and ended where the fireplace in the first dining room is. The room past the fireplace, now known as the gallery, had been razed but, miraculously, all of the original wood had been stored in a local barn. Brad and Peter were able to recover this wood and use it to recreate the original room.

The legendary murals which adorn the walls of the restaurant and bar were added by Bart Arnold in the

1980s. "Bart studied the buildings and the green for a few days and then started to paint, one color at a time until he had created these wonderful murals," said Brad.

A series of talented chefs led the kitchen over the ensuing years, with the restaurant "booming" during the late 1980s and 1990s, culminating in the hiring of Peter Platt in 2002. "We heard that he was available,



Bart Arnold's murals of the Village Green in the restaurant's main dining room.

Photo by Barry Shapiro

knew of his reputation and grabbed him," said Brad. "In 2005, I was so busy with my work at Gedney Farm and Mepal Manor that I knew I needed to scale back. Peter was the perfect purchaser, and I'm thrilled that he and Meredith agreed to make the Inn their home and the center of their lives."

Chef Peter Platt and his wife, Meredith Kennard, have indeed made the Inn the center of their lives, taking it, as Brad said, to "a whole new level." With its

charming guest rooms and candle-lit dining rooms, they have built the Inn into not just one of the finest places to dine (and stay) in Berkshire County, but one of the "30 Great U. S. Inns" (Travel and Leisure), one of "America's Top 50 Hotel Restaurants" (Food and Wine), as well as the recipient of a top food rating by Zagat and accolades from *The New York Times*, *Wine Spectator*, *Town & Country*, and *Departures*.

The Inn is renowned by locals and visitors not only for its exquisite food and service but also for the unique candle-lit ambiance of its dining rooms which do not have any electric lights. "We sometimes go through 140 candles on a busy night. It adds up to \$30,000 per year," noted Peter. "Happily, they are dripless."

Peter's background made him well suited to undertake this remarkable growth. A native of Chicago and a graduate of Williams College, Peter trained at the Parker

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House Hotel in Boston and was then executive chef at Wheatleigh for seventeen years. Meredith, who met Peter when both were working at the Parker House Hotel, is a native Bostonian and a graduate of Emerson College with a passion for historic farming and gardening, working for a time as an historic gardener at Hancock Shaker Village where she remembers selling Peter organic tomatoes for the Wheatleigh restaurant.

Peter and Meredith married in 1984 and have two children, both notable athletes. Their son, Alex, twenty-eight, is a professional BMX rider in California, and their daughter, Jessica, twenty-six, is a ski instructor and coach in Aspen in the winters, substitute teaching and coaching the girls' varsity soccer team at Monument Mountain High School. She also finds time to assist in her parents' busy restaurant business.

"We feel like the stewards of this remarkable inn," said Peter. "It is so rich in history and we trust that the people who come after us will feel the same way. We derive great satisfaction in creating a total experience which is so meaningful for people. If you don't have a passion for that, you're in the wrong business."

"Inn-keeping is a labor of love, particularly when the inn is an historic building," noted Meredith. "Peter and I complement each other and we love what we do."

Surprisingly, the Inn is a major employer in New Marlborough, employing forty-five full-time people in the busy summer season at both the Inn and the Southfield Store, which the couple also owns.

"Many of our staff have been with us for years," said Peter. "James Stahl, our sommelier, has been at the Inn since 1998; David Crane, our bartender, has been with us since 2001; Gustavo Perez, a line cook at the Inn and the chef at the Southfield Store, has been with us since 2007; and Paolo Guidolin, a much-beloved member of our wait staff, since 2002. And we are very pleased to have such great more recent staff members as Max Megan join us. We are very proud of our amazing team."

Not ones to tinker with success, Peter and Meredith plan few changes in the future. "We've begun plans to market some of our products, such as our granola, gelato and pastries, under the Old Inn name," Meredith noted. "Occupancy of our eleven lovely guest rooms is over 90 percent in our busy season so we're pretty much at capacity. We'd like to increase our occupancy during the rest of the year. It's very gratifying that we do this with virtually no advertising, relying mostly on very strong word of mouth."



Inn owner Peter Platt

Photo by Barry Shapiro

Peter and Meredith are also proud of their commitment to the Berkshires community. "We are very grateful to the community for their support and are proud to donate between seventy-five and one hundred dinners to be auctioned off by local charities each year. I also enjoy serving on the board of Berkshire Grown," said Peter.


Two and a half centuries is by any standard of measurement a long time. How remarkable it is that what was operated as an inn before the Revolutionary War, fell into disrepair and could easily have been razed or lost to fire, has now returned to its roots and is thriving.

Both residents and visitors can now not only enjoy world-class dining and lodging, but also to connect the long and illustrious heritage of this historic building and benefit from the work of the craftsmen who constructed it so long ago. □



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FINE LINES: A JURIED DRAWING SHOW

By Pam Stebbins

The New Marlborough Meeting House Gallery will open its 2015 season with its first show devoted exclusively to drawing on Friday, June 19. Not only traditional drawing media such as pencil, ink, charcoal, or pastel can be used, but less traditional media such as wire are also encouraged.

Since this is a juried show, all artwork submitted for consideration will go through the jury process. The definition of the verb "jury" is "to select material as appropriate for exhibition in an art show." Over thirty artists have requested the prospectus for the show and each has been asked to submit three drawings. Unfortunately, the date for completing the jurying process is after the deadline for this newspaper, so the identity of the selected artists is unknown as of this writing.

This year's juror, Jacob Fossum, is a member of the faculty of Painting and Drawing at Bard College at Simon's Rock. Following high school and a two-year stint as a Mormon missionary in Argentina, he embarked on his college career at Utah State University. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in studio painting and drawing, and was heavily influenced by his figure drawing professor, Adrian Van Suchtelen. It was in this class that Mr. Fossum's understanding and love for drawing was

fully realized. Since then "drawing has always been an essential part of my art-making."


Mr. Fossum continued his education at Maryland Institute College of Art where he received his Masters in Fine Arts. He has lived all over the country, and often his own art reflects the curiosity that is fueled by his nomadic living. He currently resides in Hillsdale, New York.

When asked about his main criteria as juror of this show, Mr. Fossum replied that thoughtfulness is what he looks for in a drawing. The arts for him are about learning how to pay attention to and trust oneself. He went on to say that the "main challenge of jurying a show is bringing one's mindfulness to each drawing and giving every piece a fresh eye."

Fine Lines: A Juried Show of traditional and non-traditional drawings will open with a wine and cheese reception on Friday, June 19, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. People are invited to come and see the drawings, and to talk with the artists and the juror. Beginning June 20 and running through July 12, the Gallery will be open from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

The Meeting House Gallery is located on Route 57 on the New Marlborough Village Green. It is sponsored by the New Marlborough Village Association. □

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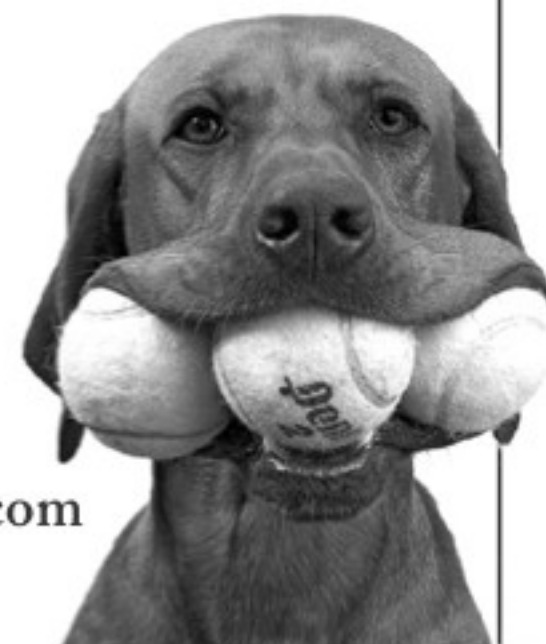
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WIRED WEST & EDUCATION

By Francoise Lartigue

I am a mother of three elementary-age children and a transplant to this area by happy choice, with a background in business, technology, and education. These factors equip me to talk about New Marlborough's need for WiredWest to become a reality in our community from an educational standpoint.

Phrases like "connectivity gap" and "digital divide" are used when discussing the state of Internet connectivity in rural areas. In January 2015 the Federal Communications Commission changed its definition of "high speed Internet access" from 4 megabits per second (mbps) to 25 mbps, due to the ever-increasing demand for data on networks. Three of our four schools connect via fiber-optic cables, with the fourth using DSL. While our students are seemingly adequately wired at school, many still do not have access to the Internet at home, or their Internet is not capable of handling the data-demand that a simple research project might place on it. Quite simply, four of the five towns in our district (Sheffield is serviced by a cable provider) lack sufficient broadband access for the 21st century. In a recent interview Chris Thompson, the Technology Coordinator for the Southern Berkshire Regional School District (SBRSD), points out that a 21st century learning environment is imperative for students to be able to compete on both a national and global scale. He points out that due to the ever-present nature of digital content, access to it must be easy and seamless, with student access at school equally as important as student access at home.

Broadband access is thought to be one of the greatest educational equalizers of our time. However, we have our own digital divide not only with surrounding urban and suburban areas, but also between home and school. Currently, teachers are choosing to do one of two things to combat the digital divide. Some teachers choose to only utilize technology at the lowest common home access point, which for many is dial-up or nothing. While

not using technology equalizes the situation, students are missing out on valuable and enriching activities. Lack of Internet connection outside of school creates a fundamental barrier to fully integrating technology into the curriculum. Other teachers do choose to integrate technology. However, students without adequate Internet access scramble to access the information, either by downloading the content prior to leaving school, or sitting in a car in front of a local library late into the evening so they can get their homework done. There are some who just don't do the work, creating a further marginalizing situation. Lack of an adequate high-speed Internet connection is fast-becoming the new version of being born on the wrong side of the tracks. We have children in this district who are being denied a robust educational experience because their homes are simply in a more remote part of town or their road too rural.

As the educational needs of our students become more specialized in the upper grades, we are faced with a predicament of how to offer classes or opportunities to our students. Currently, if students wish to take a more specialized course or a certain advanced placement (AP) course at Mount Everett, they must take it online. Given the intensity of these courses, access to the online course at home is a necessity. According to Chris Thompson, "there are students with keen interest that aren't able to feed their interest because they don't have internet access at home." There is a sinking feeling one gets in reading about preventable inequities that victimize a community's most vulnerable citizens – our children.

Whether you are pro-technology in education or not is no longer an argument. It is here, it is happening, and it is working. Schools and communities that have been able to fully embrace technology-rich learning have seen an increase in student engagement through interactive activities, been able to develop learner-centric education opportunities like "blended learning," expand

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educational offerings through on-line and streamed courses, increase administrative efficiencies, and utilize data more effectively to accurately track student performance. In my reading on the topic, I am quick to realize that these gains and successes come from urban and suburban areas that are adequately wired. This leads me to realize that the only thing standing in the way of all our driven students achieving such successes is being adequately wired.

I leave you with the following from a recent study the University of Texas (<http://www.ruralstrategies.org/broadband> for the complete study) offering the following data-driven comments:

“Broadband will not bring immediate economic transformation to rural America, but regions that lack broadband will be crippled.” Having access to broadband is “simply treading water or keeping up; not having it means sinking.” “Broadband can’t guarantee an economic boom of jobs to the area, but NOT having it means jobs and people leaving the area.” “Trying to attain the status quo does not mean you benefit in some immense way, it just means that you don’t end up in a dire situation.”

The expansion of this idea means that having broadband in the area might not bring in a glut of new students, but NOT having it means we lose the ones we have. Broadband is not a cure-all for students’ educational

challenges but NOT having it is an insurmountable educational challenge in and of itself. Having broadband access for our community does mean that ALL of our students will have adequate access and equal opportunity to a robust educational experience. Personally, I find this makes the decision to wire New Marlborough easier, since we are the type of community and district that has only wanted to the best for its children and citizens.

For information regarding how you can help end the digital divide in New Marlborough, please visit www.wiredwest.net □

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A First Fridays Talk by Judy Thompson

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THE BELL IN THE BELFRY

Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bell

By Barry R. Shapiro

“You’re kidding me, right?” asked Ben Harms as we finished ringing the bell at the Meeting House on April 9, 2015 to commemorate the end of the Civil War. “You’ve never climbed to the top of the belfry and seen the bell up close?”

Now, I consider myself in pretty good shape and reasonably athletic (for my Medicare-eligible body), but there was something about the climb to the top of the belfry which, to be candid, intimidated me. Maybe it was a latent fear of heights, or crawly things, or maybe I had some vision of falling and crashing through the ceiling of the venerated Meeting House, more concerned about causing a furor among its devoted admirers than any bodily harm I might endure.

I tried a variety of excuses but Ben would have none of them.

“You’ve got to go. Let’s go. Now.”

So, following my trusty Sherpa, off we went, Norgay and Hillary. Ben directed me to a small trap door, more suitable for a Hobbit, in the vestibule to the side of the Meeting House balcony. In we crawled and stood at the base of the belfry.

I looked up and couldn’t see the top, just one rather rickety-looking ladder after another, tilted at rather steep angles, ascending into the gloom, and lit only by one dim light bulb and some louvers at the top. I felt my heart rate begin to race and some sweat break out on my forehead, despite the chilly, damp weather. I’ve got to get out of this, I thought. The rain pelted the outside of the belfry.

“Ben,” I said, but before I could get another word out, off Ben went, clambering up the ladders like a fireman and swinging around the framing on each level like a gymnast. Realizing there was literally no exit, I followed, determined not to be left behind and equally determined not to fall. Visions of Kim Novak and Jimmy Stewart in Hitchcock’s *Vertigo* crept into my mind and I pushed them away, very happy that there were no windows to see falling bodies fly by.

After what seemed like an eternity, there it was: the bell which had taken on mythic proportions equal to the Holy Grail or the Ring of the Neibelung. Candidly, it was quite impressive. Massive. Very, very heavy-looking. Very regal. And supported by some framing that I trust was strong



enough to bear its elephantine load.

Ben told me that the bell was cast in bronze in 1852 by the Meneely Bell Foundry in West Troy (now Watervliet), New York. This means, of course, that since the Meeting House was constructed in 1839, the bell was somehow hoisted into the belfry of the finished structure – quite an accomplishment, since the bell weighs almost 1,000 pounds. The wooden wheel to which the bell is attached and which swings it when the rope is pulled appears to be original. The bell is over three feet tall and twenty-nine inches wide. It looks bigger. Interestingly, the Meneely Bell Foundry, established in 1826, remained family-owned and -operated until it closed in 1952.

We stood there for a few minutes and examined the bell. And then Ben said, “We need to hear it up close.” So we gave the bell a big push and were rewarded by an up close and personal gong which pushed against me like a wave at Jones Beach. It was a powerful, profound, and almost spiritual moment which exorcised all the tension which had accumulated during the climb. I was now relaxed, very glad that I had followed Ben, and didn’t want to leave. Particularly when I reminded myself that I needed to climb down the rickety stairs backwards. Happily, Ginger Rogers came to mind. Remember, I told myself, she did everything Fred Astaire did but did it backwards (and, of course, in heels.) Backwards would be easy, I told myself. And it was.

When Ben and I stepped outside the Meeting House, where David Hosford was waiting for us, I looked up, cold rain splashing on my face, and thought about the bell, my new friend, the many lives it has touched over the past 163 years, and the many lives it will touch in the future. I thought about the bell, tucked away in the gloom of the belfry, hidden from sight except for those fortunate enough to have stood next to it. I thought about the solitary inhabitant of the belfry and its invisible role in our lives. And I felt grateful that it was there and how lucky I was to be among the few who have stood in its presence, have touched it, and been touched in turn by its resonant tone.

I can’t wait to go back.

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Joyce Hackett, Southfield

To the editor:

I would like to thank all the residents who supported me in my campaign for re-election as your selectman in New Marlborough. The next three years will be no less challenging than the last three have been as we continue our quest to keep New Marlborough an affordable place to live and work.

I would like to remind all the residents that Town Meetings are not the only place that you can express what is on your mind and ask questions, make recommendations, or comment on what is happening.

Issues that face the Town are worked on all year long in both Board and Committee meetings. I encourage all residents to get involved by joining a board or committee or attending Board and Committee meetings whenever possible. This is where the work takes place and your input is always welcome.

If you would like to discuss any issues you can contact me at 229-7754 or by email at: tarabw@verizon.net.

Again, thank you for your support.

Tara White, Southfield

To the editor:

I would like to thank everyone who came to the polls and voted for me as Constable. Your support means a lot to me.

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

Edgar Zukauskas, Southfield

***There is a New Farmers Market in town at* GEDNEY FARM**

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NEIGHBORS



James Barbieri, father of Selectman **Tara White**, passed away on May 11 at Fairview Hospital at the age of eighty-two. A native of Great Barrington, he began working on the family farm and sawmill; the mill eventually became the Barbieri Lumber Company in Housatonic, which James ran with his father and brother Lawrence. In the late 1970s, he and his brother took over the company. His hobbies included breeding and racing Thoroughbred horses, bowling, the outdoors, and hunting. He and his wife, **Lynn**, would have celebrated their forty-ninth wedding anniversary on June 25. □

Compiled by Barbara Lowman: deeuell@yahoo.com

FIRST FRIDAYS RESUME

The Historical Society Series Begins with a Recognition of the Civil War

In commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War, the New Marlborough Historical Society will lead off its 2015 First Friday programs on two prominent New Marlborough families: The Canfields and the Brooks sacrificed sons to that war (and to the Revolutionary War), and both are well represented in the Huxley cemetery in Southfield. Judy Thompson has delved deeply into their history and come up with a surprising revelation or two, all of which she will reveal starting at 7:30 p.m., June 3, in the Meeting House Gallery.

Future Historical Society programs will take place July 10 (actually the second Friday of the month, so as not to conflict with July 4th festivities), August 7, and September 4 — subjects to be announced. Additionally, the Society will hold two headstone repair and cleaning days, August 22 and September 19, 10:00 a.m. to noon, at the New Marlborough village cemetery just off Branch Road. There will be a picnic lunch for all volunteers. Mark your calendars and learn an esoteric skill. □

Joe Poindexter

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Fine Lines

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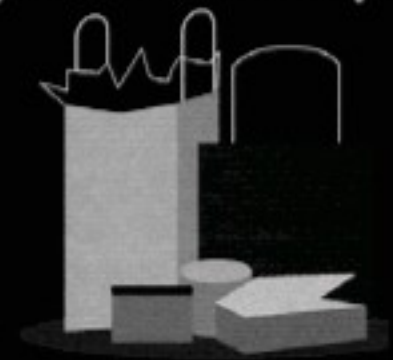
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OUR WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS

On April 22, Ian Devine, of New Marlborough villages, writes: The warm, sunny weather made short work of the last of the pond ice at Steepletop last weekend. I saw two pairs of high-strung **wood ducks** swimming about. Also, a male **common merganser** in fine breeding color — his dark head atop a bright-white body. If there was a drab female nearby, she may have been on a nest. Quite a few **turkeys** in the fields — the avian kind.

On May 7, Don Beauchamp, of Clayton, writes: On April 26, several species of **sparrow** — **Savannah, song, white-throated, and American tree** — started coming to the feeder and are still regular visitors. On May 1, a **pileated woodpecker** was on a stump 100 feet away from where I stood. Then a female **eastern towhee** came to the feeder — a first sighting for me. On May 3, the first **hummingbird** showed up. The next day, two pairs of **yellow warblers** were in the pond area. On May 6, a pair of **rose-breasted grosbeaks**, a pair of **catbirds**, and a male **Baltimore oriole**. This morning, an **eastern towhee**, male. **Hummingbirds** are already fighting for territory.

I might add that I am feeding grape jelly from a tuna can, bringing **catbirds, orioles, woodpeckers, and ants**. A **hummer** is in the apple tree, sampling blossoms as I sit here.

Also, when I was out in the garden, the **tree swallow** was screaming at me, complaining that the hole in the wren house was too small. So I made another house, with a bigger hole. When I drove away later, a face was sticking out of the hole. **Tree swallows** seem to sit inside and peek out, while a bluebird will sit on top of their house.

On May 8, Land Trust Executive Director **Martha Bryan**, of Mill River, hosted a group twelve birdwatchers on a Mothers' Day near Campbell Falls, with Amber Spring, a gifted ornithologist from Lenox. Ms. Spring's sharp eyes and profound knowledge of birds and birdsong allowed her to identify an impressive list of birds. **Don Beauchamp** kept track: **hummingbird, oriole, osprey, red-tailed hawk, chestnut-sided warbler, black and white warbler, warbling vireo**, a pair of **yellow-bellied sapsuckers, catbirds, several woodpeckers, and a yellow warbler**. Don adds that he may have missed a few.

On May 16, **Laura Endacott**, of Mill River, writes: What a week of warm sunny days will do. All the blooms seemed to pop all at once. The animals, too, were making their spring debut. **Hummingbirds** returned, but not in great numbers. Perhaps the hummers that I saw were migratory and the locals are yet to arrive? **Mergansers** floated along the Konkapot in search of fish. John Manikowski's **black vulture** returned to perch on the fence. (The dogs left some stew bones on the deck, which enticed the vulture.) Large **carpenter bees** have been staking out the house.

The **bees** had a perfect week: pollen galore. Although it's been a rough allergy week for humans, it has been perfect for pollinators.

On May 16, **Robin Tost**, of Mill River, writes: Oh yeah! Lots of new arrivals: **rose-breasted grosbeaks, an indigo bunting, tree swallows, phoebes, catbirds, hummingbirds**, and, best of all, a pair of **northern orioles** (formerly Baltimore) who love my suet feeder, which is about eighteen inches from my eyes!

Speaking of eyes, a **pileated woodpecker** nearly drove me off the road when he swooped in front of the windshield and then landed and posed in a dead tree next to the road. Probably would have been safer with aforementioned eyes closed!

On May 16, **Ed Harvey**, of Mill River, writes: I spotted this **porcupine** on the New Marlborough Monterey Road and the **great blue heron** at Thousand Acre Swamp.

On May 17, **Gil Eisner**, of Southfield, writes: Two weeks ago, just after first light, in bed barely awake, I heard noises on the lawn that came into focus as clucking. I got out of bed to have a look. Big surprise under the window. But oops! No camera. Then I realized that my iPhone, my alarm clock, was a camera. I switched to video and opened the door. They moved away. I made a gobble sound to see what they'd do. They erupted in gobbles like, "Did you hear that... what was that... was that Turkish?" I did a dog "woof." They went airborne. That was that. So what should I call this — a tumult of Toms? Or what?

□ Compiled by Jon Swan, joncswan@gmail.com

photo by Ed Harvey



photo by Gil Eisner



photo by Ed Harvey



UPCOMING: *Events Calendar June and July*

June 1: Alcoholics Anonymous meets in open discussion format every Monday at 7:30 p.m., Southfield Church

June 5: The Brooks and the Canfields, a First Fridays talk by Judy Thompson, 7:30 p.m., Meeting House Gallery, sponsored by the New Marlborough Historical Society; all welcome

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 27: Annual Meeting, New Marlborough Historical Society, 10:00 a.m., in the upstairs main room of the Meeting House

July 10: Pocket Lighting Devices; Ed Klausmeyer will draw from his rare collection to describe the origin of 19th century portable lamps that showed the way long before the invention of the flashlight; 7:30 p.m. at the Meeting House Gallery; sponsored by the New Marlborough Historical Society; all welcome

July 18: Hike Haystack Mountain, with the New Marlborough Land Trust; meet at 10:00 a.m. at parking area for Haystack Mountain Park, about a quarter mile in from entrance on Route 272, just north of Norfolk; parking is limited, so please carpool if possible; all welcome

July 24: Idols and Icons, Paintings and Sculpture, an invitational show presented by the Gallery Committee of the New Marlborough Village Association; opening 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.; on exhibit thereafter 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Friday, Saturday, and Sunday until August 23

July 25: A String Quartet at the Southfield Church, by special invitation, gifted musicians from the Norfolk Music Festival will perform at 4:00 p.m.; free (contributions welcome) and open to the public



photos by Larry Burke

Left: On May 16th a cast of twenty three students in grades five through nine delivered a delightful performance of *Shrek*. The imaginative costumes by Kenzie Fields of Mill River helped the actors bring their quirky characters to life. Mill River's Angus Kerr delivered a hilarious portrayal of Lord Farquaad. Here is is opening to Gingy played by Ben Salzmann of Sheffield. Right: Olivia Marchione and Mary Shalaby of Mill River shared the role of the lovely Fiona with Sophia Zah-Greenspan of Monterey. Musical director Courtney English stands ready to lead them through their beautifully sung performance. The combination of their excellent harmony and the fanciful costumes created a magical moment in the play.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

By Jane Burke

How did a small high school like Mount Everett produce a world-class robotics team? It comes down to the philosophy of technology coordinator and current team advisor Paul O'Brien: "It takes a village to raise a child." For decades, Southern Berkshire Regional School District leaders have invited community partners like Flying Cloud Institute into their village. That is how in 2004 the Institute was able to introduce students and teachers to robotics through the purchase of LEGO Robotics Kits and a summer training with robotics specialists from Tufts Engineering School. Mr. O'Brien gave an enthusiastic thumbs-up for the project.

Another thing about this village is that it celebrates student initiative and encourages independent study. In 2005, after attending the Tufts summer training, Lindy Marcel of Mill River designed an independent study project that allowed her to teach robotics in classrooms at Undermountain Elementary School. She and Katherine McSpirtt of Mill River helped start the initial First Lego League (FLL) team for grades four through eight. In 2006, although she was only a junior in high school, she organized and ran a summer robotics program for elementary school students. At this program Lindy inspired eight-year-old Samantha Swartz who became the star of the young FLL team, and later the student founder of today's championship team. Her independent study project in freshman year with classmate Demitri Casivant focused on establishing the First Technology Challenge (FTC), the high school version of the robotics competition. They wrote a grant application to the Eagle Fund for equipment and led the team over the next three years. At every step they were cheered on by Mr. O'Brien and his technology assistant, Chris Thompson. The team was the only one in Berkshire County but was powered forward by the enthusiasm of these two mentors.

Over the past three years the team has gained strength with a quartet of key members who began as freshman and built their expertise in strategy and engineering, again using independent study time and the support of the village around them. Jake Christinat from New Marlborough is one of the key members who has the role of driver, operating the robot at competitions. Costa Casivant, younger brother of Demitri, is his driving partner. Costa also is an engineer-builder with Ben Webb of Sheffield. Max Lowenstein has been the chief programmer. Younger members of the team Michaela Loring and Jordan Chretien, both of New Marlborough, will be stepping into bigger roles next year as the seniors graduate.

This year the village opened wider than ever for the students, with parents and supporters cheering the team

through their wins at the Western Mass Regionals and the East Coast Regionals. It was with the generous support of the community that the team was able to then go to the For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) World Championship in St. Louis, where they met others from the United States and around the world.

In a telephone interview, Michaela Loring, explained:

"When the nine members of the Higgs Bots team set off for our twenty-hour bus ride to the First Technology Challenge World Championship in St. Louis, six of us had just arrived back on a red-eye flight from a music competition in Los Angeles. We were already exhausted, so we slept most of the way there.

"The four-day competition was held at Union Station. We were there with the best 126 teams out of the 2,500 world-wide who had competed during the year. Each team was given a 'pit' to decorate, promote their team, and store their robots. I was in charge of the media, our twitter account, and our poster display in the pit.

"The competition area accommodated four teams: two setups, so two allied teams competed at each setup. In the timed trials, no team has time to complete all the tasks. On the day of the competition, teams are randomly paired in alliances with another team so they can split up the jobs to accomplish the maximum number of required tasks. (In one round we were paired with a Russian team which made for a challenge in communication.) Over the course of the day all teams rotated through multiple trials with multiple alliances.

"A high point of our experience was meeting scientist Steve Mrenna of the Fermi National Accelerator Lab. Dr. Mrenna is part of the team that helped confirm the existence of the Higgs Boson, aka The God Particle, which gives elementary particles mass. The team derives its name (Higgs Bots) from the Higgs Boson.

"We did have time to look around St Louis. We went to the arch and explored the sites. The trip was great. We are really grateful for donations that were pretty amazing. The Mill River Store and the Southfield Church helped a lot. We needed \$7,500 to cover costs but we got almost \$15,000, so now we are all set for new equipment next year.

"I'm excited for next season, because after years of being the only team in Berkshire County, we have been doing demonstrations around the county and have gotten other schools interested. Now there are nine teams locally so we can have scrimmages right near home. Maybe we can even form a Berkshire County League!" □

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

April 4	1:50 p.m.	Downed electrical wires burning on Route 57	April 24	9:16 a.m.	Brewer Branch Road resident reports a horse loose in his yard; Sheffield owner contacted
	2:59 p.m.	Resident reports downed wires on Hadsell St.		11:30 a.m.	Patrolman Kyle Kemp addresses pre-schoolers at Berkshire School Daycare on what policemen do
April 9	7:49 a.m.	Large tree limb reported blocking the Route 183 end of East Hill Road		1:45 p.m.	Cross Road to Canaan Valley Road resident complains that garbage left outdoors by his neighbor was dragged onto his property by a bear
April 10	11:23 p.m.	Dodge Caravan stuck in mud near the Connecticut border	April 25	1:47 p.m.	Hill Heights Road resident reports out-of-control brush fire
April 11	7:46 p.m.	Acura sedan stuck in mud while trying to turn around at the end of paved road near York Lake		2:07 p.m.	Vehicle stuck in mud on Hatchery Road
April 12	12:58 p.m.	Norfolk Road resident reports out-of-control brush fire		2:30 p.m.	Two black trash bags left near a bin in the center of Hartsville, reportedly left by an elderly male driving a Mercedes SUV, are revealed to contain kids' toys
April 14	7:04 p.m.	Lawrence Ave. (on Lake Buel) resident reports hearing a gun shot	April 26	7:23 p.m.	Brewer Branch Road resident reports clothing and a number of golf clubs discarded near the bridge to Umpachene Falls
April 15	3:54 p.m.	Residents asked to extinguish brush fires; the day was "red-flagged" as too dry for burning	April 28	11:46 a.m.	Resident reports a roll-over motor vehicle accident on Konkapot Road
April 18	12:39 p.m.	Norfolk Road resident reports a phone scam from a fictitious cleaning business	April 29	11:48 a.m.	Out-of-control brush fire on Hayes Hill Road
April 20	11:11 a.m.	Mill River Southfield Road resident reports that a horse saddle lent to a contractor last summer had not been returned; contractor told to return the saddle within one week		1:00 p.m.	Transfer station personnel request patrol of the transfer station to curb recent trespassing
April 21	2:00 p.m.	Fisherman reports smelling diesel fuel near Umpachene Falls	April 30	1:13 p.m.	Clayton Mill River Road resident requests assistance in deterring trespasser who has threatened to let loose horses being pastured on her property
	6:51 p.m.	New Marlborough Sandisfield Road resident reports a coyote in back yard			
April 23	10:09 p.m.	Rhoades & Bailey Road resident reports a pitbull-shepherd mix on her property; has a collar but cannot be approached			

FIRE AND RESCUE

April 5	10:43 a.m.	Cagney Hill Road Medical Call	April 19	12:36 a.m.	East Hill Road CO Alarm
April 8	12:54 p.m.	Clayton Mill River Road Medical Call	April 19		Mutual Aid to Monterey Stand by for Structure Fire
April 10	10:38 p.m.	Canaan Valley Road Medical Call	April 25	1:45 p.m.	Hill Heights Road Brush Fire
April 12	1:00 p.m.	Norfolk Road Brush Fire	April 27	1:49 p.m.	Mutual Aid to Norfolk Brush Fire
April 12	1:33 p.m.	Canaan Southfield Road Brush Fire	April 28	11:47 a.m.	Konkapot Road MVA
April 13	11:38 a.m.	Farmview Drive Brush Fire	April 29	11:49 a.m.	Hayes Hill Road Brush Fire
April 15	4:07 p.m.	Hartsville New Marlborough Road Brush Fire	April 30	1:01 p.m.	Mutual Aid to Sheffield Stand by for Brush Fire
April 15		Clayton Mill River Road Medical Call			
April 18	4:31 p.m.	Norfolk Road Structure Fire			

Please mark your calendars for the annual Pig Roast on Saturday, August 15. We hope to see you there!

THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS!

Margaret Phillips; Kerry Tatlock & Michael Carmona; Howard & Patricia Nourse; and Edith Macguire

NEWS FROM THE LAND TRUST



When the spring season finally exploded, the Land Trust urged the community to shake off their winter boots and get out to experience some of our town's special natural resources. In addition to a hike around the Bidwell House in Monterey, the Land Trust hosted two birding walks

this past month, one with Berkshire Natural Resources Council at Steepletop Reserve and the other near Campbell Falls with guide, Amber Spring. For the novice birder as well as the one who is working on their birding "life list," each outing offered the pleasure of experiencing the buzz of spring bird activity, whether in the special sighting of the black-throated green warbler or the more familiar red-wing blackbird.

The Land Trust prepared the Crosby Mill site on Hayes Hill Road, anticipating the arrival of the four goats who will be "employed" this summer to graze the site and clear the area of invasive plant growth. The fencing is complete, and a community team is being arranged who will assure adequate water is available for the goats. The Land Trust will schedule an informational workshop for the community this summer, hosted by the owner of the goats. Join us on July 18 for a hike up Haystack Mountain! (see NM5VN calendar)

Martha Bryan



Photo by Martha Bryan

Land Trust birders, early morning on Mother's Day at Campbell Falls. So much to see, not sure where to look!

SCHOOL DISTRICT SELECTS NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

On May 15, in a letter to district staff and parents, Southern Berkshire Regional School District Superintendent David Hastings announced the appointment of Stacy Burgess as the new elementary school principal, effective July 1. The selection process was conducted by a search committee comprised of parents and teachers from three of the elementary schools and headed by Mount Everett Principal Glen Devoti. Five applicants were interviewed, and two were recommended to Mr. Hastings; he then invited members of the district leadership team to interview the candidates. Following that, he visited both candidates in their schools, checked references, and ultimately selected Ms. Burgess. He introduced her in his letter to staff and parents as follows:

"Currently, Ms. Burgess {hereafter referred to as Stacy} is the Assistant Principal at the West Street Elementary School in the Southbridge, Massachusetts, School District. She was previously the Assistant Principal at the Quarry Hill Community School in the Munson School District. Prior to entering the field of education administration, Stacy served as an elementary school teacher for a dozen years, teaching second and third grade at Quarry Hill, Special Education at Quarry Hill, and third grade at the Dryden Memorial School. While at Quarry Hill, Stacy was named "Best Teacher in Pioneer Valley" by the *MassLive/Springfield Republican*.

"Stacy is a fourth-year doctoral student (Leadership and Supervision) at American International College,

and has completed all of her coursework. Her Master's in Education was awarded in 2007 from Western New England College. She received her Bachelor's in Education from the University of Massachusetts in 2001. Stacy attended Springfield Technical Community College (Associate of Arts) prior to attending the University of Massachusetts. Stacy lives in Ludlow with her husband and two children.

"In speaking to teachers in Southbridge, I heard over and over that Stacy helps teachers to improve their teaching skills by providing supportive and useful feedback. It is clear that she was able to successfully establish and maintain positive relationships with her staff and students. At the same time, teachers report that her organizational abilities help staff members to work in a calm and secure environment. Stacy has worked with teachers to establish systems designed to improve learning. Her current school has put in innovative practices to encourage parents to become more involved with their children's education, such as 'bring your parents to lunch' days, 'literacy nights', or parent group meetings. The day I visited, the cafeteria was full of students and their parents having lunch together. She has been active in staff training and professional development."

At the beginning of the school year, the *5 Village News* will welcome and interview Ms. Burgess so that she can introduce herself to one of her new communities.

Barbara Lowman

NEW ACQUISITIONS AT THE LIBRARY

Adult Fiction

At the Water's Edge, by Sara Gruen
The Whites, by Harry Brandt
Early Warning, by Jane Smiley
The Last Bookaneer, by Matthew Pearl
The Secret Life of Violet Grant, by Beatriz Williams

Adult Nonfiction

*Truly Madly Pizza: One Incredibly Easy Crust, Countless Inspired Combinations
 & Other Tidbits To Make Pizza a Nightly Affair*, by Suzanne Lenzer
Superfood Smoothies: 100 Delicious, Energizing & Nutrient-Dense Recipes, by Julie Morris

Children's Fiction

Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt,
 by Kate Messner
You Nest Here With Me, by Jane Yolen
Wild About Us!, by Karen Beaumont
Sam and Dave Dig a Hole, by Mac Barnett
Last of the Sandwalkers, by Jay Hosler

Children's Nonfiction

A Nest Is Noisy, by Dianna Hutts Aston
Draw What You See: The Life and Art of Benny Andrews,
 by Kathleen Benson
Trapped!: A Whale's Rescue, by Robert Burleigh
Handle With Care: An Unusual Butterfly Journey,
 by Loree Griffin Burns
Egg: Nature's Perfect Package, by Steve Jenkins

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.

The Library will close at 7:00 p.m.
 on Friday, June 5 -
 there will be no knitting.

NO KNITTING??!!

NO.

WHITE ELEPHANT GROWS!



Photo by David Lowman

This handmade Appalachian dulcimer is one of the items to be offered in the silent auction at Elihu Burritt Day, August 15. The auction is for unusual or more valuable items than standard white elephant fare. If you have such a treasure, please bring it or just come on one of the collection dates to notify a Cultural Council member.

The collection of items for the New Marlborough Cultural Council's white elephant sale is off to a flying start. The next collection date is June 13, with subsequent dates of July 11, August 1, and August 8. They are all held on Saturdays at the Levine/Olenbush barn across from Town Hall in Mill River, from 10:00 a.m. until noon. Please do NOT leave items outside the barn at any other time! If you cannot come to one of the collections, please call Barbara Lowman at 229-2369 or Ned MacDowell at 229-2637. A Cultural Council member will be happy to pick up your contributions at your convenience. Remember: Proceeds from the white elephant sale and silent auction all support Cultural Council grants for arts and sciences programs for New Marlborough residents of all ages. □

Barbara Lowman

(413) 229-2544
 Free Estimates

Roofing
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 Decks
 Porches
 Sheet Rocking
 Flooring
 Additions
 Odd Jobs

Herbert W. Eichstedt III
 Jason W. Eichstedt

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)

NAME _____

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CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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
the Town Hall in Mill River
for July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016
FEE IS \$105, AFTER AUGUST 15, \$125

CAN BE PAID BY MAIL,
PLEASE ENCLOSE A SELF-ADDRESSED
STAMPED ENVELOPE

New Marlborough Highway Department

Located on Mill River-Southfield Rd.
Hours: Monday - Friday 7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
PO Box 99, Mill River, MA 01244
(413) 229-8165

We welcome advertisements from businesses owned by New Marlborough residents.

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

NM5VN Editorial Team

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

The next issue will be dated July, 2015.

All copy must be submitted no later than June 15.

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

PO Box 243, Southfield, MA 01259

5villagenews@gmail.com

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SERVICE SECTOR 6/15

- ♦ **Benchmark Real Estate:** Nancy Kalodner, Broker/Owner. Offering New Marlborough the finest professional real estate services since 1979. Call 528-9595
- ♦ **Berkshire Environmental Research Center (BERC):** Thomas Coote. Lake & pond management, wetland delineation, ecological research, rare/invasive species assessment. 413-644-4509. tcoote@simons-rock.edu
- ♦ **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.