

New Marlborough 5 Village News

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Clayton ♦ Hartsville ♦ Mill River ♦ New Marlborough ♦ Southfield

THE DONKEYS OF NEW MARLBOROUGH

Beasts that Unburden

By Kenzie Fields

Donkeys are “joy alchemists,” a Berkshire friend recently told me, describing the donkey she had just adopted. When I met Oliver, the miniature donkey owned by Emily Newman and Jeremy Stanton last December, I caught her meaning — donkeys have a self-possession, that when one is open to it, can transform the way humans feel. They lead by example to a settled, quiet joy.



Deb O’Brien, the New Marlborough town librarian, has found this to be true with Dusty, one of the two donkeys belonging to art conservator Anne O’Connor and first-grade teacher Glen Chamberlin. Many animals are objects of passionate protection and care, but donkeys evoke a particular softening in the expression as soon as the person who knows them begins to describe their nature. Deb



Deb O’Brien with Dusty.

photo by Anne O’Connor

is reverent talking about “her guy” Dusty. “He snugs me,” she says with a smile from behind the circulation desk. “I leave the shoes that I wear to the barn where they are kept in the breezeway of my house, so when I come home from work, I smell donkey. It doesn’t matter to them about who you are or what you look like,” she continues, “they are just there, ready to be with you.”

New Marlborough’s Annual Animal Report counted fourteen donkeys in town in 2022. Many of the residents I spoke with were drawn to the species as efficient companion animals for horses. Horses are herd animals and happiest with herd mates. For owners of a single horse, adding a donkey or even a pair is more economical than acquiring a second horse.

Due to the desert environment of their origin, donkeys eat very little. Emily Newman, a veterinarian and owner of Oliver, was surprised at how little the species needs to survive. “They are efficient! Their nutrition is based on sparse, dry roughage — amazing they can subsist on that stuff! Of course it’s a bit of a

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problem in lush New England, but even their movement seems so intentional, not frivolous.” They are hardy, tolerant, and have a longer life expectancy than horses. Even their emphatic way of announcing their presence wins over some owners. “I love noisy animals,” says Ms. Newman.

While extremely loyal, the affection from a donkey must sometimes be earned. “Donkeys think things through,” says Cassie Keeley, who currently cares for Bluebell and Clover, her family’s two standard donkeys. “Horses can be trained to do what they know you are asking, for the most part. But donkeys need to think for themselves.” It is this strong sense of self-preservation that has led to their perceived stubbornness. Donkeys are also incredibly strong relative to their size, making it difficult to convince them physically of an idea not their own.

At Glen and Anne’s, we watched Olive and Dusty watching us. They had a look of calm suspicion as we chatted in the shade of the run-in shed. “Wild’ may be too strong a word, but they were very fearful when we first got them,” says Glen. “Now a few years later I feel like it’s the animal I have always wanted.”

Glen envisions taking day-long hikes and camping trips



Oliver and Emily Newman photo by Kenzie Fields



Dusty and Olive photo by Kenzie Fields

with Olive and Dusty and is using positive reinforcement training to build trust and encourage their natural desire to learn. He was able to take Olive along with him during the Land Trust’s roadside trash collection in April. Then, too, there have been moments of chaos and surprise along the way. For example, the donkeys still have work to do, tolerating the veterinarian. Despite the vet’s expertise and good intentions, a visit from her sends Olive and Dusty into a panic.

Dealing with difficult behavior such as this, however, pays great rewards. “Donkeys have helped me be a better teacher,” says Glen, “by showing me the importance of building understanding by slowing down, watching, and listening.” □



But here in this field sweetened with the low mumbling of grouse and a wind that flips maple leaves silver, this donkey is perfectly still as if he’s always been here and never left, as if he’s always been this way and always will. And who would dream of letting him go? When I dirty my nails scratching his stout neck, it’s like touching the source of all those country sayings that formed my tongue as a child, as if each syllable were a hayseed that could grow into a real something of use, as if each word was once an animal we’d left behind, exhausted and in shame as we were. And now, in my fourth decade, only now can I reclaim what I didn’t even know was missing and there find myself.

From The Donkey Elegy by Nickole Brown

THE TOWN HALL PUZZLE

By Joe Poindexter

Renovate, repurpose, or build anew? The question, spurred by federal legislation requiring that public buildings be accessible to people with disabilities, has lingered over the fate of the New Marlborough Town Hall for two decades. The cost, the lack of an easy answer, has resulted in stop-gap measures but no long-term solution. Predictably, perhaps, the Select Board fell back on a tried-and-true strategy: form a committee.

The resulting Town Hall Planning Committee, which has been grappling with the problem for a year, has now decided that it is time to hear from the residents of New Marlborough. So on June 14, it will host what it calls a “Public Information & Listening Meeting” at the Fire House in Southfield to lay out its findings and solicit the views of townspeople. For those unable to make the earlier meeting, a second one will be held on June 17.

The meetings will focus on three approaches: renovate the existing town hall, purchase and renovate an existing structure elsewhere in town, or buy land and build anew. The Committee will explain research it has done on the cost and the pros and cons of each alternative.

- Existing Town Hall renovation: Cautioning that its numbers are rough estimates, the Committee puts the price of hanging onto the present Town Hall at \$3.2 million. The advantages: a lower environmental impact than building anew; retention of an anchor in Mill River; the possibility that restitution of a historic building will present grant opportunities. The disadvantages: potential cost overruns, particularly in an upgrade to current energy codes, space



constraints in the existing building, staff disruption during renovation.

- Repurposing Robin Hall, a classroom building at the former Kolburne School (Troise Emme Winery on Knight Road, for awhile a leading contender, was rejected because of higher-than-anticipated purchase and renovations costs.) Estimated cost: \$1.9 million. Other advantages: solid masonry building; surrounding space providing for outdoor activities, ample parking; potential income from leasing of lower-level space. Disadvantages: non-village location (although it is situated midway between New Marlborough village and Southfield); removal of the building from the tax rolls.
- New Construction: Estimated cost: \$3.1 million. Advantages: the opportunity to design to specific town hall needs; up-to-date energy efficiency with the accompanying potential for grant support. Disadvantages: a location that is likely to be at some distance from a village.

In a summary, drawn up in mid-January, the Committee drafted a number of prospective requirements for a new facility. Among them: The building would have seven offices, each approximately 120 square feet in size and situated where possible on an outside wall so as to receive exterior light. It would also have a conference room, a kitchen, a storage facility, at least two gender-neutral bathrooms, and a meeting room of about a thousand square feet that could also be used as a community center and for voting. The parking area would accommodate at least twenty vehicles.

Getting all this at a price the town can afford, it's not hard to imagine that the town hall conundrum will be with us for awhile. □

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April 24: Joined by Barbara Marchione, chair of the Town Hall Planning Committee (THPC), the Board approved a letter to Wayne and Mary Jane Eline to end negotiations to purchase their winery property on Knight Road. "As we have been unable to negotiate a lower purchasing price, we regret to inform you that we are not able to move forward with the purchase and sale agreement," the letter explained. It went on to state that "the cost to repurpose the existing winery building to a Town Hall will cost more than was anticipated."

Ms. Marchione asked the Board for guidance on how the committee should proceed. Tara White responded that it is for the committee to determine. There was discussion of the possibility of purchasing land on which to situate a new building, and it was agreed that, should the Elines be willing to consider a lower price, they can be invited to respond to a future Request for Proposals. **Following the resignation of Richard Long from the THPC, the Board appointed Chris Gregor, who had expressed an interest in serving, for a term effective immediately until June 30.**

Moving on to other business, the Board acknowledged a site visit to the property of Mark and Dawn Trachtenberg on Brewer Hill Road to view drainage issues brought to their attention at an earlier meeting. A remedy proposed by Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring was discussed and all, including Mr. Trachtenberg who was present, were in agreement.

After months of planning, the first phase of the Hartsville riverbank protection project is ready to proceed with work to be done this summer and completed late summer or early fall. The Board approved

the surveyor's map showing the land donation, upstream of the bridge over the Konkopot River on Hartsville-Mill River Road, where the work will occur. With the land donation approved at the May 2022 Annual Town Meeting, funding for the project has been secured by Trout Unlimited. After the Select Board approves the donation, town counsel will need to finalize transfer of the property. Then a protective fence will be erected around the work area. Next year the Board hopes to address riverbank erosion downstream of the bridge.

The Board authorized Police Chief Graham Frank to sign a grant contract reimbursement from the Office of Grants and Research and the Municipal Police Training Committee to cover the \$3,000 salary for each of two officers during their attendance at the Bridge Academy. The Academy is otherwise free. Additionally, the Board approved submission of a grant application to cover approximately half the cost of one ballistic vest, which has a total cost of about \$1,200.

An update of Highway Department projects by Superintendent Chuck Loring included the following:

- The department crew has been removing sanders and doing associated maintenance of sanders and trucks as well as rough grading of roads.
- Mr. Loring was preparing for a scheduled bid opening for paving of a portion of Route 57. Five bids have been received and will be reviewed by the engineer.
- Mr. Loring intends to use the \$42,000 remaining in the Winter Recovery Assistance Program to apply a thin layer of asphalt to the Collins Hill section of Mill River Southfield Road.

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- Material is ordered and excavation service arranged for work on Foley Hill Road.

Despite advertising the open position since November, the Department remains down one crew member, possibly, it was surmised, because the applicant needs to have earned a commercial driver's license. The Board and Mr. Loring decided to discuss alternatives with the human resources manager and re-advertise.

Mr. Loring and Town Administrator Mari Enoch said they will prepare and submit an application for a MassWorks grant for paving Norfolk Road from the Southfield Store to Southfield Branch Road by the due date of June 2.

Ms. Enoch reported that the final, contracted price, beginning in November, for the Town's aggregated power supply is 15 cents per kilowatt hour, 6 cents higher than the current price of 9 cents but within the range Ms. Enoch was permitted to authorize.

Finally, Ms. White reported that the Winter Roads account would cover the cost of cleaning roadside debris from the March winter storm, for which John Field Tree Service has been contracted.

May 1: In a brief business meeting preceding the Annual Town Meeting, the Board awarded a contract to LB Construction for \$829,480 to install drainage on Route 57. (Neither public or press was invited to a closed executive session on April 28.)

May 8: A Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement with Construct, Inc., the non-profit owner of Cassilis Farm, remained unresolved, both as to amount and when such payments would begin. The Board's expectation was that payments would already be forthcoming; Construct's was that they would not begin until 2025 when the property was operational. As has been reported, Construct, with

private funding and a portion of the Town's ARPA money, bought Cassilis to convert it into thirteen affordable living units. Construct Housing Director June Wolfe agreed to include the matter of a PILOT on the agenda of the next Construct board meeting. Ms. Enoch suggested that Construct consider selling one of the three parcels of land on the Cassilis property, not needed for the housing project, so that it would remain taxable.

The Board authorized the Planning Board to hire Mill River resident Kenzie Fields to take minutes at Planning Board meetings, at \$50 per meeting.

Finally, Mark Carson reminded his fellow selectmen that the plans submitted by the Planning Board for riverbank reclamation in Hartsville needed their signatures.

Michele McAuley

An application for a MassWorks grant for paving Norfolk Road from the Southfield Store to Southfield Branch Road is due June 2.

May 15: As things got underway, there was a new face at the table. Beth Dean, elected to the Board just the week before, took her place beside Tara White and Bill West on the initial day of her three-year term as selectman.

The first bit of business: the election of Tara White as chair and Bill West as vice chair. Mr. West then asked the Board to consider opening each meeting with a moment of silence to honor veterans who have served in America's wars and a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. The other two selectmen saw no reason to object to this initiative and approved it.

Construct's June Wolfe was back before the Board to explain the somewhat arcane grant process in seeking state and federal money for the renovation of Cassilis Farm. The Town, under Construct's guidance, will be seeking Equal Opportunity Housing funding from the feds and a grant for under-utilized properties, as "last-piece" funding, from the state. These grant applications are to be submitted by June 2.

Construct will pay bills as they arise, then invoice the Town for the billed amounts, and the Town will recompense Construct from the pot of money created to hold grant funding. Since the Board needs to sign off on these grant applications, Ms. White wanted to know how they might thereby be obligating the Town. After an assurance from Ms. Wolfe that the Town wouldn't pay anything until it had grant money in hand, the Board voted to enter into a Rural and Small Town Grant application with Construct.

Next up was another grant application, this one to MassDOT for \$1 million to repair and repave Nor-



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folk Road from East Hill Road to Southfield Branch Road — “which is about as much distance as you can get for \$1 million,” said Ms. Enoch. As a connector road for Southfield Village and Fire and Rescue, this bit of roadway was deemed the most critical of the remaining town roads needing work.

In an update, Ms. Enoch told the Board that a seriously over-built and unnecessarily costly design to replace the bridge on Keyes Hill Road has been pulled. The project will be revisited this September and put out for bid again in September 2024.

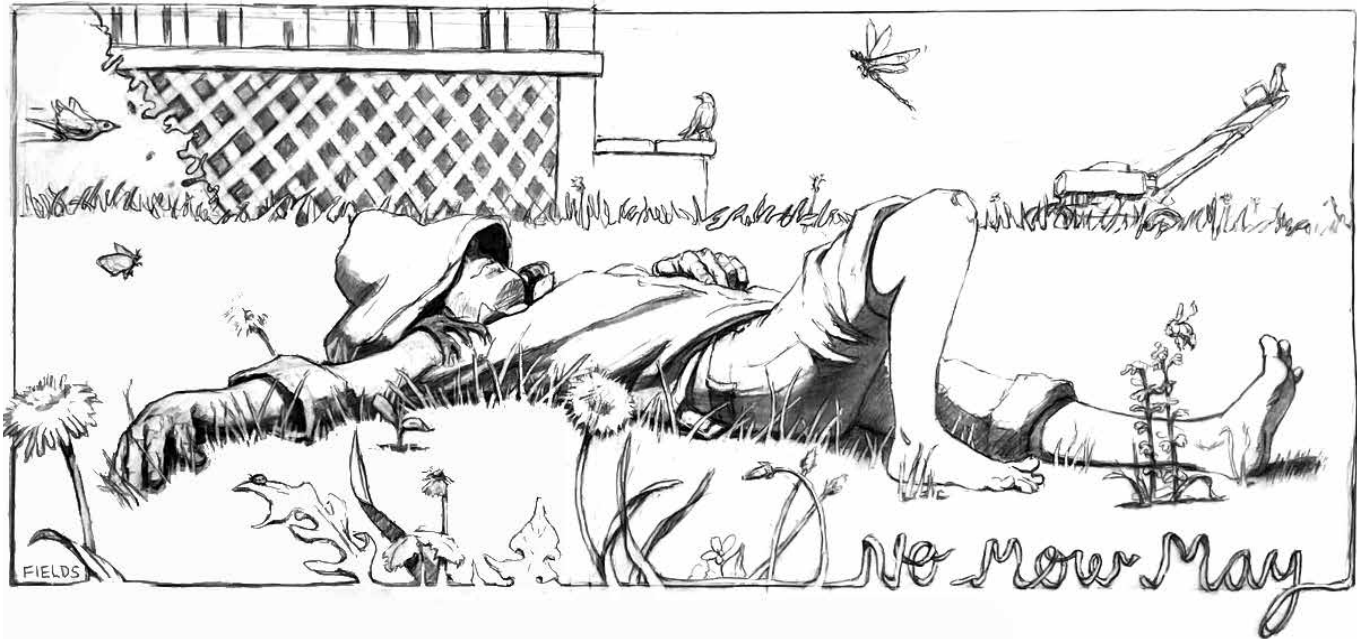
GSI mapping of town properties is moving forward. As approved at Annual Town Meeting, the project will cost \$3,000 to implement

and \$3,000 a year to maintain. Starting in late July or early August, property owners will be able to go on-line and see a precise, up-to-date mapping of their property lines.

Construct will pay bills as they arise, then invoice the Town for the billed amounts, and the Town will recompense Construct from the pot of money created to hold grant funding.

Following a request from the Police Department that \$2,502 be transferred from the Reserve Fund to pay for vehicle repairs, Ms. Dean launched her first motion, recommending that the request be forwarded to the Finance Committee. It was seconded and approved, as was her next motion, to approve the transfer of \$2,500 to the Fire Department to cover unexpected electrical maintenance costs. Ms. Dean had arrived. □

Joe Poindexter




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CONSERVATION COMMISSION

May 18: With all four Commission members — Fredy Friedman, John Schreiber, Doug Hyde, and Nanci Worthington — present, the meeting began with the acceptance of a request from Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring to continue the hearing for the Notice of Intent (NOI) for road maintenance and repairs.

Mike Parsons of Kelly, Granger, Parsons & Associates, Inc., followed by presenting a Request For Determination for his client, Kevin McCrea of 82 New Marlborough Southfield Road. At issue was a failed existing septic system. The Commission recognized that the new system results in a significant upgrade and includes capturing effluent that was dumping directly into the nearby wetlands. At the suggestion of the Commission, Mr. Parsons added the removal of a mature spruce tree to the scope of work. The permit was given a negative determination meaning no further permitting was required.

Next, a representative from Matt's Landscaping requested that a hearing for Richard Stebbins of 83 North Road for the installation of a 10,000 square foot native meadow be continued to the next meeting when all the required paperwork would be completed. The continuance was granted.

The Commission then agreed to continue the discussion and hearings for wetlands violations at Lake Windemere for property owners at 881 Stratford Lane and 35 Stratford Lane.

Shannon Boomsma of White Engineering asked for an extension of the order of conditions granted in an NOI dating back sixteen years to June 2007 for James Kimball of 1162 Clayton Mill River Road. The Commission, noting that none of its present members was serving in 2007, agreed to the extension with the condition that it be permitted to visit the site to get up to speed on current site conditions.

Finally, Dominic Meringolo, a project manager at

Solitude Lake Management, addressed the Commission on behalf of Will Regan, managing partner of CMC Berkshires at Mepal Manor, 223 Stone Manor Drive. Mr. Meringolo asked that the Commission approve the NOI that continues the aquatic management of two ponds on the Manor property for clean-up of invasive plant growth. Under the conditions that the quality of the water be inspected monthly and that an annual report of the program data be submitted to it, the permit was approved.

Ms. Worthington reported on her site visit to Idle Hour Road, where flooding from beaver activity was making a residential driveway impassable. She said that the Highway Department had responded immediately to the emergency request and installed an appropriate culvert to relieve the flooding.

The meeting was adjourned, and the next meeting was scheduled for June 15. □

Martha Bryan



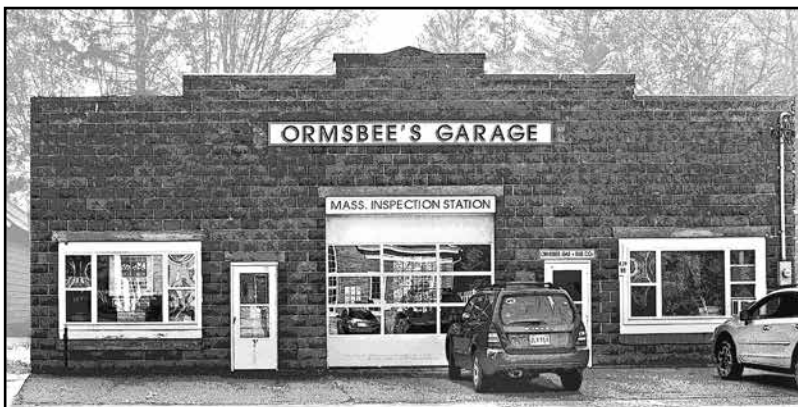
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ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WRAP-UP

From gavel to gavel, the 2023 New Marlborough Annual Town Meeting took all of sixty-two minutes, an exercise in efficiency and good citizenship. Following Moderator Barry Shapiro's introductory remarks, which touched upon the historical and civic significance of the town meeting form of government, gave kudos to Prudence Spaulding for her 67-year record in attending town meetings and also to retiring Selectman Mark Carson, saluted our fire, medical, and police personnel, as well as the folks who keep the Town offices running, he ran a quick refresher course on the "clickers" that were used to tabulate votes.

With eighty-five voters clicking their way efficiently through the warrant articles, all thirty-three articles passed, predominantly by overwhelmingly affirmative votes. The closest vote of the night was on Article 26, requesting \$82,000 from Free Cash for the purchase of 4WD pickup truck/police cruiser. After an explanation from Chief Graham Frank that the vehicle would do double duty, responding on animal control calls, and an additional, hopeful bit of information from Select Person Tara White about a \$33,000 grant possibility toward the purchase, the vote was sixty-six in favor, sixteen against.

Along the way, a number of questions were posed by citizens seeking further information or clarification on various articles, but nothing in an argumentative tone. Most questions were fielded by Tara White or Finance Committee members Doug Newman and Barbara Marchione. When the article concerning the transfer of \$25,000 from Free Cash to cover costs relating to the effort to arrive at a plan for a fully functioning Town Hall came up, Ms. Marchione took the opportunity to tell the audience that there will be two informational meetings conducted by the Town Hall Planning Committee, on Wednesday, June 14 at 7:00 p.m. and Saturday, June 17 at 10:00 a.m., both meetings to be held at the Fire House in Southfield.



Police Chief Graham Frank explaining the need for the new police vehicle



Town Moderator Barry Shapiro

By meeting's end, the townspeople had signed on to a FY24 budget that came in at \$6,447,800, and increase of 4.4 percent over FY23. With a final thank you to the New Marlborough Volunteer Fire Company for hosting, Moderator Shapiro brought down the gavel at 8:07 p.m. □

Larry Burke



The Annual Town Meeting, underway at the Southfield firehouse



Town Administrator Mari Enoch, along with Select Board members Mark Carson, Tara White, and Bill West, in a light-hearted moment

AN OCCURRENCE AT UMPACHENE FALLS PARK

The treasured place that Umpachene Falls occupies in the hearts of New Marlborough residents has been proven again by the outpouring of feelings on Maggie's List over the defacing of two picnic tables and one particularly beautiful large rock over the weekend of May 14.



A view of the rock prior to defacement . . .

On my many visits to Umpachene Falls Park over the last forty-three years, I have enjoyed not only the variable moods of the river as it courses over the ledges, but also the beauty of the geologic formations, and, in particular, the rock that was so crudely defiled with graffiti. Back in 2021, I photographed the rock which, through its beautiful striations, reveals the result of sedimentary action over millions of years. What took eons to form was desecrated in a matter of seconds by an as-yet unknown, but clearly troubled, person.



. . .And after

When I visited the rock on May 17 to photograph the damage, I found that someone or some ones in an act of tenderness had covered the wounds with evergreen branches. Further steps to heal the injuries are planned for the coming days, according to Robert Twing, who heads the Umpachene Falls Park Commission. The rock will be clean once again, minus the moss and lichen, but time will heal that too, and perhaps time will also heal the person who felt that vandalizing the jewel of our town was the right thing to do. □

Larry Burke



photos by Larry Burke

Umpachene Falls, beautiful as ever

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A CLASSROOM WITHOUT WALLS

At Secret Pasture Preschool, Nature Is the Teacher

By Robbi Hartt

Rachel Stewart was nearing the end of a year of service with AmeriCorp in northern Vermont as the leader of a farm-to-school education program in four area public schools. But then the pandemic forced her to go from in-person to remote teaching. Her parents, Linda and Joe, had just relocated to the Berkshires, selling their home in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in order to buy a fifty-seven-acre family compound on Hayes Hill with a main house and two small cabins. Zoom and Wi-Fi enabled Rachel to move into one of the cabins. “This was an amazing landing spot for all of us,” she notes of her introduction to the Berkshires. The move became permanent in 2020.

Shortly thereafter, Rachel began working with Katie Herbst on the farm at Stanton Home, a residential facility in Great Barrington for people with disabilities. At present, she serves as a part-time, first-to-eighth-grade garden teacher at Primrose Hill School, a Waldorf school in Rhinebeck, New York.

Rachel earned a degree in social work from Lesley University in Cambridge but has been working with children in various farming and educational roles since 2013. Building on jobs involving child care, farming, and cooking, and eager to find a pursuit that would combine all of her passions, she began to focus on a program that would use the land around her to



Rachel Stewart

photos courtesy of Rachel Stewart

create a warm and welcoming community rooted in kindness, creativity, and environmental stewardship. Thus, the idea for Secret Pasture Preschool began to take shape.

“It’s all come together quite nicely,” says Rachel. To prepare for this new venture, she has been taking courses with the Cedarsong Way, a program based in Washington state, where the nation’s forest school movement originated. She has completed an online foundations course and is in the process of earning teacher certification. Additionally, she has been working with the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care to get the preschool licensed. “Having the license [which was awarded May 2] is a huge relief,”

she notes, She is now starting to accept applications and enroll students.

The forest school concept, which has strong ties to the Waldorf philosophy of education, emphasizes spending time outside in all kinds of weather, becoming familiar with a single plot of land throughout the seasons. “We have a perfect, simple cabin in the woods, along with forests and a stream, stumps for outdoor seating, and a mud kitchen for mud creations,” says Rachel. The cabin, which is heated and serves as shelter in inclement weather, was fitted with a second doorway to meet a Massachusetts licensing requirement.



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Her initial class, limited to six children ages two and a half to five, will be held Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Morning sessions will run from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., afternoons from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., with children given the choice of attending a half or a full day. “I think it’s a great size to start with,” says Rachel. She remarks on the beauty of having a multi-age group where younger kids can learn from their elders. “And I feel confident in my ability to lead six children,” she adds, “because I currently have twenty-two kids by myself at Primrose Hill.” Rachel’s mother, Linda, will take over in the event Rachel needs to be absent.



Secret Pasture classrooms

The Secret Pasture curriculum will be rooted in nature immersion and child-led learning focused around the seasons, encouraging students to make their own discoveries and inquiries as they experience changes in nature. Examples of seasonal learning include apple picking, seed saving, and mushroom study in the fall; animal tracking and bird watching in the winter; foraging and maple sugar tapping in the spring; and garden tending and observation of insects in the summer. According to the Secret Pasture website, these activities will be supplemented with trail hikes, yoga, day-to-day reflection, nature arts and crafts, shelter building, storytime, tool use, forest rest, and music time.

“A big part of children’s learning is done through play,” says Rachel, adding that “unstructured free time in nature is so crucial to their development and growth.” Daily life tasks such as gardening, preparing snacks, and cleaning become opportunities for child-led learning — as does a commitment to engage the

head, hands, and heart.

Rachel plans a soft opening of her preschool in August, followed by the official school year program in September. In selecting a student body, she notes that older children “may come with some previous experience with Waldorf Schools, but transparent conversations and tours with parents of younger kids will help us see how they would do in the woods.” She expects that many of her students, sequestered during the past three years of the Covid pandemic, will feel comfortable with “a smaller class size and outdoor environment.”



The name of the school, says Rachel, was inspired by Elizabeth Lombardi, who owns a neighboring property and was, as it happens, a long-time teacher at Berkshire Waldorf School in Great Barrington. A path on the Lombardi property leads to what Elizabeth calls “a secret pasture” with a giant oak tree. And, far from objecting to a nearby preschool, Elizabeth welcomes it. “I would love to see the kids walking across my land each day,” she told Rachel, who adds, “she’s even painting a special Secret Pasture sign for us.”

“This has been a really wonderful way to connect with people in New Marlborough,” says Rachel. “I look forward to getting to know many more families once we open in the fall!” □




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NEW MARLBOROUGH MEETING HOUSE

2023 SEASON



Aug
12

Karen Allen The actor and director (*Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Animal House*, *The Perfect Storm*, *Starman*) will be interviewed about her life and career by Barry R. Shapiro.



Aug
26

Alison Larkin Hailed by *The New York Times* as 'hugely entertaining,' the internationally acclaimed writer/comedian/audiobook narrator will entertain us hugely, before the London premier of her new solo show, "Grief ... a Comedy."



Sept
2

Simone Dinnerstein The internationally renowned pianist returns by popular demand.



Sept
9

Melissa Clark and Madhur Jaffrey "Tasting the World": *New York Times* cooking legend Melissa Clark, and cookbook author, writer, and actress Madhur Jaffrey share stories and recipes.



Sept
23

Wincenc – Nikkanen – Asteriadou: Trio Calore Carol Wincenc, flute; Kurt Nikkanen (concertmaster, NYC Ballet Orchestra), violin; and Maria Asteriadou, piano, in an afternoon of stirring chamber music.



Oct
7

Simon Winchester "A Writer and a Robot Walk Into a Bar..." Acclaimed author Simon Winchester returns to New Marlborough to lead a discussion about the art of writing in the age of artificial intelligence with three distinguished figures in the literary world: Chandra Prasad, who just finished a novel about AI, Francine Prose, the author of twenty novels, and André Bernard, former publisher and Vice President of Harcourt Trade Publications.

programs subject to change

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Meeting House

GALLERY

June 23 thru July 23

Coming Together Reception June 23

July 28 thru Aug 27

Motion / Emotion Reception July 28

Sept 1 thru Oct 8

The Annual New Marlborough Artists Show
Reception September 1

READINGY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

Since 1895, the average temperature in Berkshire County has risen by 2.9° F. This may not seem like a lot, but the rise has had a profound effect on the county’s weather — beyond events such as the tree-limb-destroying two-foot snowfall in March. According to the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC), in the past two decades there has been a 55 percent increase in heavy precipitation, defined as four inches or more in a twenty-four hour period. It’s called climate change, and while national governments have been distressingly slow to develop a meaningful response, Berkshire residents can take measures to mitigate the effects.

This was the message of an April 19 meeting hosted by BRPC to describe methods of dealing with copious rainfall and the increasing challenges of heating and cooling the home. Addressing a group of two dozen residents assembled at the Fire House in Southfield, BRPC associates focused on two concerns: rain-water management and home energy efficiency.

Senior Planner Courteny Morehouse outlined a number of strategies for dealing with excessive rain water: Ms. Morehouse recommended rain barrels to redirect rain water from roof to gardens. The saved water can be used in times of drought to water gardens or even wash the car. An overflow hose can direct excess water to plantings near the house. Another strategy for controlling stormwater, she said, is a bowl-shaped rain garden, topped with mulch and located near a downspout, filled with soil that drains well, and planted with native varieties, which



Courteny Morehouse of BRPC described strategies for managing rainwater.

photo by Joe Poindexter

will better absorb both wet and dry conditions. For houses that lack a gutter system, Ms. Morehouse recommended a two-foot wide, up to ten inches deep infiltration trench, filled with stone to capture and filter storm water.

BRPC Planner Sherdyl Fernandez-Aubert took over the meeting to describe measures for improving home energy efficiency by weatherizing, upgrading insulation, and installing heat pumps. He advised starting off with an assessment from Mass Save, a free service

provided by a collaborative of state energy utilities. According to its website, Mass Save helps residents “make energy efficient upgrades by offering a wide range of services, rebates, incentives, trainings, and information.” An assessment is free; a rebate and zero-percent-interest loans for up to seven years are available for the installation of a heat pump. To schedule, contact masssave.com/williamstown.

The climate is changing. BRPC hopes that Berkshire Country residents will take measures to soften the impact. □

Joe Poindexter

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You Can Learn a Lot from Other People's Trash

By Lee Rafkin

My friend Rob and I woke up early on a recent April morning to pick up trash for a roadside cleanup expertly organized by the New Marlborough Land Trust. We met at Goodnow Preserve. Armed with work gloves, garbage bags, and bright orange safety vests, we set off on our mission to make our world a little less dirty.

Before we hit the road, I naïvely thought we lived in a “post-litter” world. But boy, was I wrong. You can learn a lot about people from the garbage they throw out on the side of the road. What we salvaged that day was so much more than trash. It was an anthropological record of how we live, what we value, and what our vices are.

By far, the biggest category of garbage we picked up that day were discarded bottles, cans, and small “nips” of beer, soft drinks, and hard liquor. Among litter bugs, Bud Light is the beer of choice, followed closely by Coors Light, Natural Light, and other inexpensive domestic brands (though Mexican Corona made an impressive late-game appearance.)

We retrieved a large collection of Coke cans, usually the full-sugar version, a fair number of water bottles, and many nips of Smirnoff Vodka and Fireball Cinnamon (with the delightful motto, “Tastes Like Heaven. Burns Like Hell”). We could have mixed up a delicious cocktail from our roadside finds, but alas, it was only ten o'clock in the morning.

Other treasures included empty cigarette packages (Marlboro and Newport,) discarded cookie and candy wrappers (chocolate is the number one flavor,) chip bags (Doritos wins hands down,) fast food cups, bags, wrappers, and containers (mostly from McDonalds,) and countless Dunkin' Donuts white coffee cups (many marked “light and sweet.”) Some of our finds surprised us: a car bumper, a random shoe, a paperback novel, and a discarded toilet and PVC pipes (thank you, Mr. Plumber!)

Pretty much all the trash we collected had been thrown out the windows of moving cars or trucks. Sometimes, the garbage was left directly on the side of the road. Other times, it was tossed more skillfully with gusto, deep into the woods.

Who litters – and why? These questions got me thinking, so I did a little research. According to Keep America Beautiful, Inc., men aged eighteen to thirty-four are not only the most prolific litterers, but they are also doing it intentionally. In one study of this age group, almost one out of every five “observed disposals” in public places was litter, and it was intentional 81 percent of the time. Not surprisingly, the same study found that heavily littered areas beget even more litter and that litterers are people who enjoy public spaces as much as the next person but feel no sense of ownership, accountability, or responsibility for maintaining the roadways, parks, and beaches they frequent.

We humans create over 350 million tons of plastic waste every year, but plastic isn't even the worst of it. It's cigarette filters, which don't biodegrade. According to a 2020 National Litter Study, a staggering 10 billion cigarette butts are thrown to the ground every year. Cigarette filters are routinely the number one most-collected item in the Ocean Conservancy's annual International Coastal Cleanup.

Littering is a complex subject and I'm not sure what the ultimate solution is. But I am pretty certain of one thing: If every adult in America spent two mornings a year picking up trash from the side of the road, they'd think and act differently. I know I do. □

Lee Rafkin is a marketing consultant and Covid nomad who moved full-time to his weekend house in 2020. He lives with his wife, Keri, and dog, Lily, on Konkapot Road, which is relatively litter-free.

Upcoming: Events Calendar for June and July

June 3: Vocalis Youth Choir, directed by Julie Bickford, Southfield Church, 7:00 p.m., free, contributions thankfully accepted

June 10: Oakes & Smith, guitar and vocalist presenting their own brand of folk, Southfield Church, 7:00 p.m., free, contributions thankfully accepted

June 14 and 17: New Town Hall Public Information and Listening Sessions, for an update on the findings of the Town Hall Planning Committee; 7:00 p.m. on the 14th and 10:00 a.m. on the 17th, both meetings at the Fire House in Southfield

June 17: The Southfield Church Community Choir, with pianist Manon Hutton-DeWys, Southfield Church, 7:00 p.m., free, contributions thankfully accepted

June 20: Wellness Clinic, a free check-up available from the Southern Berkshire Health Collaborative, 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. at the Town Hall

June 23: Coming Together, the season's first show at the New Marlborough Meeting House Gallery, opening reception 5:00 p.m., artwork on display 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays until July 23

June 24: Rhythm and Blues with Wanda Houston and Robert Kelly, Southfield Church, 7:00 p.m., free, contributions thankfully accepted

July 18: Wellness Clinic, a free check-up available from the Southern Berkshire Health Collaborative, 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. at the Town Hall

July 28: Motion/Emotion, the Meeting House Gallery's second art show, opening reception at 5:00 p.m., on view Fridays to Sundays, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., until August 20



NEW MARLBOROUGH LAND TRUST

Earth Day Roadside Cleanup: On April 22, some forty of your friends and neighbors gathered at the Goodnow Preserve to choose one or two of New Marlborough's many roads and begin removing litter that some think is okay to discard from their moving vehicles. It was cloudy, a bit breezy but comfortable, not too hot, and best of all, no bugs.

We picked up trash for about two hours and then gathered again to drop off our findings and discuss the most popular beers in town, Corona and Budweiser, plus a surprising new player in town, Bud Light Orange. Someone found a toilet just discarded on the side of the road, and tires always seem to turn up on a dirt road in the middle of nowhere.

Paul Hess was our transfer station guy, making two trips with our accumulation of roughly forty bags. Peter and Meredith from the Old Inn on the Green hosted us for a fabulous lunch of burgers, hotdogs, salads, and chips — and the best cookies in the world. It was lovely to see old friends, make some new ones, and find out how everyone survived the winter and the March snowstorm.

Wild Weed Walk: Our next scheduled event takes place at Steepletop, Saturday, July 8, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Wander the land and learn about the many wild edible and medicinal plants that grow all around us. It's a veritable smorgasbord out there just waiting to nourish and heal us. □

Silvia Eggenberger, Executive Director



NEIGHBORS



There's a new resident on Hotchkiss Road! Parents **Manon Hutton-DeWys** and **Donald McClelland** announced the arrival of **William Edward Torbjorn McClelland** on May 1 at Berkshire Medical Center, weighing in at 8 lbs. 5.6 oz. His big brother **Robert** (almost three years old) is looking forward to his new playmate at home.

And another arrival: On April 13, two groups of very pregnant cows from **Tom Brazie's The Farm** New Marlborough bulldozed their pasture fences and were hanging out on Route 57 in Hartsville. **The Farm's staff** repaired one of the fences, and the Route 57 cows were quickly returned to their pasture. The "Hartsville 4," thanks to an extensive neighborhood effort to calm the cows and warn oncoming traffic, were returned to their pasture in a parade up Route 57 led by a police escort. And upon returning to her pasture, this cow promptly lay down and gave birth to this calf. □

Compiled by Barbara Lowman:
deeuell@yahoo.com



photos by Manon Hutton-DeWys

William McClelland is greeted on May 1 by father Donald and brother Robert



photo by Honora Fedzell

In this case, it really did take a village!



William on May 4

WELLNESS CHECKUPS

In a program that began in February, the Southern Berkshire Public Health Collaborative has been making regular visits to the Town Hall to give New Marlborough residents a report card on the state of their health. On the third Tuesday of each month, from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m., nurses will offer blood pressure, pulse rate, and oxygen-level readings, and provide wellness topic handouts. Flu and Pfizer bivalent boosters are also being offered. While supplies last, the collaborative is offering a \$75 gift card to anyone who receives a Covid booster vaccine. □



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OUR WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS

On May 1, **Ritch Holben** sent along the following report, with dramatic photos, on the visit to his home in Southfield by a very determined bear: “I was just reading the Wildlife Neighbors article in the May NM5VN and was especially drawn to the bear photos. We had a rather unusual (at least for us) visit from the Southfield Bear on Saturday night, raiding the trash.

“In itself, the raid wasn’t so interesting, as it has happened in the past. The difference this time is that he chose not to open and use



photos by Ritch Holben

Two views of a what a bear will do for a little trash

the window like last time (we’ve learned to keep it locked now), but that he decided to just rip a hole right through the wood siding and make his own doorway! I did not know a bear would do this! We aren’t quite sure what to do at this point ... how do you bear-proof a wall?

“Unfortunately, we did not see it, or get pix of the culprit, but I did take a few of the aftermath, both his new drive-thru, and his picnic detritus on the lawn.”

In mid-May, as the blossoms opened on the apple trees, a more welcome visitor arrived – a **Baltimore oriole** – to feast on the blossoms and perhaps the tiny insects within. □

Compiled by Larry Burke; send your wildlife sightings to him at larryjburke@gmail.com



photo by Larry Burke

A Baltimore oriole amid apple blossoms

Thank You to Our Contributors:

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RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Charleston, South Carolina is known for hospitality and great food, and no trip to Charleston is complete without savoring a meal of shrimp and grits, which might be served for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. It's on almost every menu. I was inspired to make this mainstay of Southern cuisine when we returned from a recent four-day trip to that beautiful city. It's best to use wild caught shrimp. Enjoy!

Marjorie Shapiro



photo by Barry Shapiro

Shrimp and Grits

Serves: 4 Time: about 45 minutes

Ingredients

The Grits

- 1 cup grits (Bob's Red Mill Creamy White Corn Grits recommended, although classic polenta will do as well)
- ¼ tsp salt
- 8 oz grated cheddar cheese
- 4 tbsp unsalted butter

The Shrimp

- 2 slices of bacon
- 4 tbsp unsalted butter
- ¾ cup yellow onion, chopped
- ¾ cup organic green bell pepper, seeded and cut into 1" pieces
- 2 medium garlic gloves, minced or grated
- 1 cup fresh cherry tomatoes, cut into halves or quarters
- ½ tsp dried thyme
- 1½ pounds wild caught shrimp in their shells
- 1 cup shrimp stock (you'll make this from the shrimp shells; it's easy!)
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 2 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- Tabasco (to taste, but likely just a few drops)
- Salt
- 3 tbsp chopped fresh parsley

Directions

- Prepare the grits by boiling 4 cups of water, whisking the grits slowly into the water, reducing the heat to low, covering and letting cook for 20 minutes or so until the grits are creamy. Whisk often during this process.
- When the grits are ready, shut the heat off and add the salt, cheese, and butter. Stir well. Keep warm.
- Fry the bacon until crisp, drain, and then break into 1" pieces.
- Peel the shrimp — unless you were able to find a fishmonger willing to do it for you (keep the shells!).
- Put the shrimp shells in a small saucepan with 2 cups of water and boil until reduced by about half. Strain and discard the shrimp shells.
- Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium heat.
- Add the onion, green pepper, and garlic.
- Sauté until soft, which should take about 3-4 minutes.
- Add the tomatoes and any accumulated juice. Stir.
- Add the thyme and stir.
- Cook for about 3 minutes until the tomatoes begin to soften and release some of their juice.
- Add the bacon pieces and stir.
- Add about ½ cup of the delicious shrimp stock and cook for about 3 minutes.
- Add the tomato paste. Stir to incorporate.
- Add the cream, Worcestershire sauce and Tabasco (if desired). Stir.
- Add the shrimp and stir constantly until they turn pink about 2 minutes. Don't cook them any longer once they turn pink!
- Add salt, if needed.
- Put the grits in the center of each plate, spoon the shrimp mixture on top, garnish with parsley and imagine you're sitting on a verandah in Charleston, enjoying a real Southern dish.



MAILBOX

To the Editor,

I am writing in response to Louise Yohalem's letter in the May issue of the *5 Village News* regarding the potential merging of Southern Berkshire Regional School District (SBRSD) and Berkshire Hills Regional School District into a single 8-town Regional School District. Contrary to Mrs. Yohalem's assertion about a lack of information, the Southern Berkshire Regional School District School Committee has five representatives on the 8-Town Regional Planning Board, and the committee discusses the issues at every meeting. It has held two Community Conversations about the concept of a merged district, and community members were invited join us — in person or via Zoom — to ask questions, express their concerns and/or express their support. The SBRSD SC members do their best to answer all questions to the best of their ability; however, there are still some questions that do not have solid, straightforward answers. The Planning Board was told from the outset to expect three to five years of planning. I encourage those who are curious to learn more to visit the 8 Town Regional District School Planning Board's website: 8towns.org.

The Southern Berkshire representatives to the 8-Town planning board have always put student interests at the forefront. Not only does Mount Everett offer classes to accommodate students at different levels, but they also have an incredible partnership with Bard College at Simon's Rock, and we are now identified as Mount Everett Early College High School. Every student can earn free college credits. The vocational program includes Career Pathways Program, which is a combination of course work and work-based internships. I encourage you to visit www.SBRSD.org to view the details of these amazing learning prospects!

Although we are a small district, SBRSD is not lacking in extra-curricular offerings so important to students. Students can enroll in Garden Club, Science Club, book clubs, robotics, marching and concert bands, chorus, participate in theatre productions, and be a part of the incredible Fall Festival of Shakespeare. Students can play soccer, baseball, softball, tennis, volleyball, run cross country and track, ski, or be a Mount Everett cheerleader and support their classmates. Students also have the chance to play hockey, lacrosse, and football on cooperative teams with other school districts. Uniquely, middle school students can be involved in these programs alongside the older students, who mentor and encourage them.

A correction is needed regarding school choice numbers. The total number of students that chose to go to another district is 144, out of which 126 went to Berkshire Hills; 83 students chose to come to SBRSD, of which 39 are from Berkshire Hills. This information is as of October 1, 2022. From interviews with parents who choice out, the reason for this varies. The majority of them say that it is the location, and that the school/district is closer to their work or home and it is more convenient/suitable for the working parents, and some families moved out of state.

Assessments do go up for every school every year due to inflation and teacher contracts. However, as chair of the finance subcommittee, I can assure you they are not as high as other towns in neighboring districts. A quick comparison from FY23: SBRSD increased by 3.82 percent; BHRSD had a 5.76 percent increase; Lenox went up 4.3 percent; and Lee increased by 4.7 percent. While the overall increase of the District's Operating Budget was 3.99 percent for FY24, our superintendent has worked hard to keep these minimal, and since 2017 increases on average have been 2.72 percent. Dr. Regulbuto is an advocate for rural aid/funding, something that is chronically low due to the wealth of our towns.

The claim made that "we will offer fewer and fewer services" at SBRSD is an assumption, not a fact. SBRSD has always been a small, close-knit school district. As a graduate of Mount Everett in 1995, I never once felt that I had missed out on anything academically, emotionally, or socially. Having small class sizes made the high school more blended! Students from various grades intermingled, making friends with their classmates of all ages. Bigger is not always better. Bigger does not always mean more opportunities – I believe that smaller can be MORE; smaller means you don't slip through the cracks; it means having more one-on-one time and the ability to develop long lasting relationships with staff and teachers.

I truly believe that we have a gem of a district and look forward to seeing my girls and their peers continue to thrive in their journey at SBRSD.

Respectfully,

Sarah Mather Pollock

Southfield Resident and School Committee Member

A MONTH OF MUSIC

A Seventh Season of Concerts at the Southfield Church

By Robbi Hartt

After a successful return last summer, Music at the Southfield Church announces its seventh season this June. Curated by Robert Olsen, it celebrates outstanding musical artists from our local region. This year's series — concerts take place at 7:00 p.m. each of the four Saturdays in June — is structured around "the voice."

Vocalis Youth Choir, directed by Julie Bickford, will kick off the series on June 3. Vocalis — the name is derived from the Latin for "having a voice" — is based on the belief that developing one's voice is an important part of growing up and learning about oneself. "The mission of the Vocalis Youth Choir is to educate young people in the art of choral music while providing opportunities for personal and creative growth, youth leadership, and community engagement," Ms. Bickford states. The younger group, Senior Choir, focuses on proper vocal technique, developing music literacy and sight-reading skills, and such other skills as listening and blending that are critical for ensemble work. Encore, the higher-level vocal ensemble of the Vocalis Youth Choir, is structured for treble singers ages fourteen to eighteen and a more challenging and diverse repertoire in three and four parts.

"What began as a mission statement to create a choir that held community involvement in as high regard as performance and music education has grown into a strong choir of fifteen, filled with kids who possess not only strong voices but curious minds," says Ms. Bickford. This season's repertoire is focused on Celtic music and includes Eric Martin on fiddle, Jon Suters on guitar, and Matthew Schneider on bass — creating an opening concert that is sure to lift your spirits.

Husband-and-wife folk duo **Oakes & Smith** (Katherine Oakes on vocals and Robert Oakes on vocals and guitar) will present "Original Folk Art Song in Close-Voice Harmony" on June 10. Known for a "soulful sense of wonder," they share music that celebrates love, creativity, mystery, and natural beauty. That may come from spending time in the Berkshires, which the duo describes as "a peaceful place filled with natural and cultural beauty."

Their debut album "First Flight" (which has been compared to the music of Simon & Garfunkel, Cat Stevens, and Joan Baez) placed them firmly on the indie and folk scene nearly a decade ago. Since that time, the duo has performed at a number of venues, including



The Guthrie Center, Infinity Music Hall, Kripalu, and Canyon Ranch. In addition to singing, Katherine works as an art teacher and Robert as Director of Communications at The Rectory School in Pomfret, Connecticut. Robert also leads ghost tours at Edith Wharton's The Mount, Ventfort Hall, and the Church on the Hill in Lenox.

The Southfield Church Community Choir (including many singers from last December's Lessons & Carols service) will present "Songs for a Shining Night"

on June 17, featuring the music assembled by its conductor, Robert Olsen, of Irving Berlin, Eric Whitacre, John Rutter, and others. The program will begin with Morten Lauridsen's "Sure On This Shining Night" and include "Hymn for These Times" by Jay Rogers, "Turn the World Around" by Harry Belafonte, and "Homeward Bound" by Marta Keen. Manon Hutton-DeWys returns on the piano to ensure a memorable event.

Wanda Houston and Robert Kelly will be closing the season on June 24 with "An Evening with the American Songbook." Known to many as "The Diva of Berkshire County," Wanda Houston is not only the lead vocalist for Heth, Bradley & Houston, the Wanda Houston Band, and Big & Bigger but also lends her talent to a number of regional projects. Following years performing on stages with Patti Austin, Joe Cocker, Celine Dion, and others, she received a scholarship to study opera and launched a career in musical theater. This led to roles in *Sisterella!*, *A Good Swift Kick*, and *A Streetcar Named Desire* and performances in such local venues as The Colonial Theater, Infinity Hall, and The Mahaiwe.

Robert Kelly, a lifelong student of jazz, ragtime, and classical music, studied at Berklee College of Music and traveled globally as a pianist with the United States Coast Guard Band. Widely known as a performer, accompanist, arranger, and teacher, he has performed with Roberta Flack, Cheryl Bentyne, and jazz pianists Dick Hyman and Dave McKenna. In addition, he hosts the popular weekly "Berkshire Sings!" at Berkshire South Regional Community Center, encouraging singers of all ages and experience to find their voice.

The series is offered to New Marlborough and surrounding communities with joy, a free-will offering basket, and a scoop of High Lawn Farm ice cream on the lawn outside the church after each concert. □

A BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE

By Ellen Sweet

As of this writing (May 22), the coming weekend will be celebrated not only for Memorial Day but for the completion of the Norfolk bridge reconstruction, all the more dear to the hearts of Southfield residents for its absence of three months. Andrew Mier, who is overseeing the project for New England Infrastructure, estimated “with some confidence” that the bridge will be open to traffic by then. That the crew is just now pounding in the posts for the safety guardrails that lead off each end of the bridge lends credence to Mr. Mier’s prediction. After that, all that remains to be done is the yellow line down the middle and the landscaping at either end. Yes, it’s finally time for Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring to put those detour signs in storage.

Mr. Meir and his crew worked on all three of the New Marlborough bridges targeted for reconstruction, and he is pleased that this last one, which is the tallest, longest and widest, posed few problems. “Everything has run smoothly so far,” he says, “knock on wood.” Crew members showed up in all kinds of weather, including the unexpected March snowstorm, when they had to shovel through huge drifts. They also worked under cramped conditions: anyone driving by will have noticed that they had a relatively small amount of space on both sides



A month ago, the new span awaited connection ramps to Norfolk Road.

photo by Larry Burke



Ellen Sweet and Ari Kapiwaara, the bridge’s closest neighbors, happily assist in an impromptu opening ceremony.

photo by Tracy Zdziarski

of the river to house their machinery and materials.

New Marlborough residents will remember the old bridge, built in 1939, with its noisy metal grating, and think good riddance. At least this resident, whose proximity to the Umpachene River, makes her family the unofficial bridge keepers, looks forward to the smooth, quiet, safe passage of cars and Berkshire Springs water trucks. According to Mr. Mier, the new bridge, with its asphalt deck, will be able to carry a much heavier load than the old one.

A key factor in cutting down the time — the original estimate for completion was mid-July — was that the crew was able to use the old but extremely solid concrete abutments and central concrete pier, as well as take advantage of new developments in bridge building, like precast concrete slabs for the deck and approaches.

After ten years of single-lane traffic, the new bridge looks impressive. It has two thirteen-foot travel lanes and, at ninety-two feet, it is three feet longer than the old bridge. Mr. Meir estimates that it shouldn’t have to be replaced for another seventy to one hundred years. More good news: according to MassDOT, the entire three-bridge project was funded with 80 percent federal and 20 percent state funds. □

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THE LOG

Police Department (selected entries)

- Apr. 5 10:20 a.m. A Mill River resident reports an elaborate scam in which a caller, purporting to be a relative, requests \$40,000 to cover the costs of "a motor vehicle accident" in which he supposedly had been involved.
- 1:21 p.m. A caller reports low-hanging utility wires at her Hartsville Mill River Road property.
- Apr. 6 9:00 a.m. A Hartsville resident reports that his Jack Russell terrier has been missing since the previous evening.
- Apr. 7 7:43 p.m. A Southfield resident reports an unintended outdoor fire at the site of a three-days-ago burn that had not been properly extinguished.
- Apr. 8 5:01 p.m. A Hartsville resident is told to extinguish an outdoor burn that had been ignited without a permit.
- Apr. 9 12:06 p.m. An officer assists in a court-ordered evacuation from a Southfield residence.
- 4:50 p.m. A Mill River resident asks for assistance in barring in-laws from entering the property.
- 9:12 p.m. An officer investigates an alleged incidence of trespassing at a Southfield residence.
- Apr. 10 12:32 p.m. An officer assists a Southfield resident who has locked himself out of his vehicle.
- 1:13 p.m. A caller reports a trespasser on her New Marlborough village residence in violation of a protection order.
- Apr. 12 7:10 p.m. A caller reports a cow loose on Hartsville New Marlborough Road.
- Apr. 13 10:29 a.m. An officer assists in rounding up four cows loose on Arroyo Way.
- 12:19 p.m. A driver stopped on Hartsville New Marlborough Road is taken into custody when it is determined that his vehicle is unregistered and uninsured.
- Apr. 18 4:48 p.m. An officer assists a driver whose vehicle has become disabled on County Road.
- Apr. 20 5:02 p.m. An officer removes an injured bird from the backyard of a Clayton residence.
- 7:47 p.m. A caller reports that a dozen cows are loose on the front lawn of her Clayton residence.
- Apr. 21 2:30 p.m. Visitors to Umpachene Falls Park complain of a male watching them from the woods near the falls.
- Apr. 25 10:35 a.m. A caller reports a black lab running loose in Southfield village.
- Apr. 26 2:03 p.m. A New Marlborough village resident reports an attempted scam.
- Apr. 27 11:19 p.m. An officer assists in securing a tow for a vehicle disabled by a collision with a deer on South Sandisfield Road.

Graham Frank, Chief of Police



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FIRE AND RESCUE

April 1	2:43 p.m.	Hartsville New Marlborough Road CO Alarm	April 17	12:50 a.m.	Mutual Aid to Great Barrington Medical Call
April 4	1:58 p.m.	Brewer Hill Road Medical Call	April 21	9:54 p.m.	Mutual Aid to Sandisfield Medi- cal Call
April 7	7:46 p.m.	New Marlborough Southfield Road Outside Burn	April 26	10:46 p.m.	Clayton Mill River Road Medical Call
April 9	12:29 p.m.	East Hill Road Fire Alarm	April 28	1:01 p.m.	Hartsville New Marlborough Road Medical Call
April 10	9:51 p.m.	Knight Road Outside Burn	April 29	4:29 p.m.	Leffingwell Road Medical Call
April 11	12:32 p.m.	Canaan Southfield Road Medical Call	Calls for April: 13; calls year to date: 56 (24 fewer than year to date last year)		
April 14	8:33 a.m.	Hartsville New Marlborough Road Medical Call	<i>Fire Company President David Smith</i>		
April 14	9:16 p.m.	Cross Road to Canaan Valley Road Outside Burn			



RABIES CLINIC

Members of the New Marlborough Volunteer Fire Company, in partnership with Bilmar Veterinary Services in Great Barrington, will hold a rabies clinic from 10:00 a.m. to noon on Saturday, July 15, at the New Marlborough Fire Station on Norfolk Road in Southfield. Town Clerk Kathy Chretien will be on hand to issue dog licenses for pet owners who still need to acquire them.

Massachusetts law requires all dogs and cats to be vaccinated against rabies. We ask that dogs be on a leash and that cats be in a carrier. If possible, please bring proof of previous rabies vaccination, which will allow us to extend the vaccination length from one year to three years.

The cost at the clinic is \$10 per vaccination, with proceeds going to support the Thomas Crawford New Marlborough Emergency Services Scholarship. For more information, please contact Fire Company President David Smith at (413) 229-0291 or Bilmar's Windyann Merrill at (413) 528-1180.

Fire Company President David Smith

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THE SCHOOL REPORT

ASSEMBLING A MARCHING BAND

By Jane Burke

For those who attended the Memorial Day ceremonies in New Marlborough and marveled at the proficiency of the Mount Everett marching band, here are a few of the secrets of band leader Courtney English:

“Third graders start learning to play the recorder with music teacher Elizabeth Perry, which gives them a good foundation to what it’s like to play a wind instrument. At the end of their fourth-grade year, we have an ‘instrument petting zoo’ where the students can try all of the instruments to see that they can make a sound on them. Then together, we choose one that we think will be a good fit. I save percussion for later in fifth grade, or even sixth grade. Marching band starts in seventh grade. They need a couple years of basics first. It’s also the first time they have music five days a week.

“One of the things I like to do before a parade, is march the band around the outside of the school, so the elementary students can run to the classroom windows to applaud with excitement. It makes the older kids feel good, and I’m also secretly recruiting these younger students years before it’s time for them to join the band.

“The administration builds a schedule that allows time for music alongside academics. Parents and teach-

ers also support music as important. It’s important that students feel successful. They learn that it’s challenging but totally obtainable with time and effort. At

the younger ages, it’s most important that it’s fun. The music room is a safe place to be vulnerable and learn that it’s okay to make mistakes. We learn how to recover and keep going because no one, and no performance, is perfect. And most importantly, we learn about being good human beings to ourselves and with each other. When we can be kind and supportive, when we listen and understand, we can play well as an ensemble. Many look forward to the trips we take in middle school and high school.”

The pandemic presented a huge challenge to the band, which shrank from sixty-five players pre-pandemic to just thirty-six today. But Ms. English is optimistic about the future. Every fifth grader signed up for band this year, with the school supplying instruments for students who cannot afford

to rent or buy their own. The performance schedule hasn’t slowed a bit. In May, two concerts were followed by Memorial Day parades in three towns. This month, the band will compete in a middle school festival in Connecticut and follow up with three concerts on the Mount Everett campus. Finally, Ms. English will say goodbye to her graduating seniors at a luncheon that is typically a tearful farewell.

It IS rocket science: One Mount Everett High School team is reaching for new heights. Under the supervision of Chris Thompson, director of technology at Southern Berkshire Regional School District, the school’s rocket team is the only one in Berkshire County to participate in two competitions, one in rocketry and the other in aerial drones.


“During this year students were building and field testing a rocket that met the specifications laid out by the National Association of Rocketry,” explained Mr. Thompson. Over time, the team’s rockets attained heights of up to 1,019 feet. On March 31, the team,



The Mount Everett Marching Band participated in the Lee Founders Day celebration, where they had the honor of being the final band in the parade.



Young flutists in rehearsal

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attempting to qualify for the Association's national competition, launched three rocket flights, with a goal of taking an egg to an elevation of 850 feet, bringing it safely back to Earth without breaking, all within forty-two seconds. In somewhat windy conditions, the first flight went to 869 feet but was aloft for more than 55 seconds. After adjusting the parachute, two more flights returned within the time window but failed to reach an altitude of 850 feet. The team just missed qualification.

Meanwhile, on March 18, the new middle school drone team competed at the Southern New England Championship in Winsted, Connecticut, and came



Team members give State Representative Smitty Pignatelli a lesson controlling a drone.

home with the Judges Award for best interview, a second-place finish in the autonomous flight category, and a semi-final finish overall. These accomplishments led to an invitation, one of sixty-two teams on the East Coast and the only one from Massachusetts, to the REC Aerial Drone East Regional Championship in West Virginia on May 19 and 20. Coach Thompson was delighted with the strong show-

ing of his team, which placed fourteenth out of sixty-two teams. One of the competitors said, "It was an all-team effort. We are a tight-knit, fun group. It was really special to do so well together." □

UPDATE

THE QUESTION OF CONSOLIDATION

As select boards in the eight towns in the Southern Berkshire and Berkshire Hill Regional School Districts (Alford, Egremont, Monterey, New Marlborough, and Sheffield; Great Barrington, Stockbridge, and West Stockbridge) await a definitive recommendation from the 8-Town Planning Board, the *5 Village News* asked Planning Board Chair Lucy Prashker to elucidate key considerations on the issue of district consolidation.

"In April 2022, the RSDPB recommended merging the two districts into a single preK-12 district," responded Ms. Prashker, "maintaining the existing elementary and middle schools as they are, but creating a new merged 9-12 high school to be built on the Great Barrington campus. That is the model currently being developed for consideration."

Here, brief summaries of Ms. Prashker's responses to other questions:

Where would a unified high school be located? In Great Barrington, likely on the current site where Monument Mountain sits. It is more centrally located than Mount Everett in Sheffield, which in any case would not be big enough to hold the combined current enrollment and grade structures of the two high schools. Also, the Great Barrington project has been accepted into feasibility by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA), which means that likely more than 50 percent of the cost of construction will be paid by the state.

What will it cost to build? Based on information cur-

rently available, our research team estimated the construction cost of a new high school, accommodating 700 students from all eight towns, at approximately \$100 million. A recent letter from MSBA put combined enrollment at 620 — 485 from Berkshire Hills, 135 from Mount Everett — which could translate into lower construction costs. Actual construction costs could also be higher than currently projected.

What about travel times to a Great Barrington high School? We engaged an independent consultant to study the possibilities and determined that with the addition of a few vehicles and greater use of vans, we could reduce the bus time significantly for the vast majority of all students.

What will become of the Mount Everett collaboration with Simon's Rock? We expect that early college programming, along with innovation and career-vocational pathways, would continue to be available in a merged high school. (*While a limited number of college courses could be available to a new high school, the state has said that the Mount Everett Early College High School is not transferrable. Ed.*)

How would a unified district be governed? The Planning Board agreed on a school committee of eleven, with three members from Great Barrington, two from Sheffield, and one each from Alford, New Marlborough, Monterey, Egremont, West Stockbridge, and Stockbridge, with all members elected district-wide at biennial elections. □

Joe Poindexter

THE NEW MARLBOROUGH PUBLIC LIBRARY

New Aquisitions

Adult Fiction

Breathe the Sky, by Chandra Prasad
On Borrowed Wings, by Chandra Prasad
Vera Wong's Unsolicited Advice for Murderers, by Jesse Q. Sutanto
Kunstlers in Paradise, by Cathleen Schine
Hang the Moon, by Jeannette Walls
The Last Remains, by Elly Griffiths
Murder Under a Red Moon, by Harini Nagendra
Portrait of an Unknown Lady, by Maria Gainza

Adult Nonfiction

Breath: the New Science of a Lost Art, by James Nestor
A Wing and a Prayer: the Race to Save Our Vanishing Birds, by Anders & Beverly Gyllenhaal
Wildscape: Trilling Chipmunks, Beckoning Blooms,
Salty Butterflies, and Other Sensory Wonders of Nature, by Nancy Lawson

Children's Fiction

The One and Only Ruby, by Katherine Applegate
TumTum & Nutmeg, by Emily Bearn
Rain, by Cynthia Rylant
At the Drop of a Cat, by Elise Fontenaille
When Clouds Touch Us, by Thanhha Lai

Children's Nonfiction

Yoshi, Sea Turtle Genius: a True Story About an Amazing Swimmer, by Lynne Cox



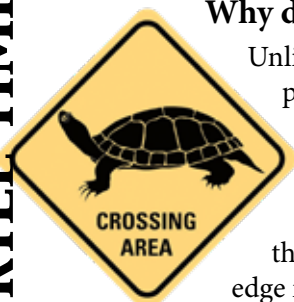
New Marlborough Library's New Revolving Art Exhibit



The New Marlborough Library is excited to introduce our revolving art exhibit, each month featuring the works of local artists. The shows will run for one month with an opening reception on the first Sunday of the show from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. with light refreshments. Works of various media are welcome. If you are interested in participating, please contact our Library Art Committee for all inquiries and an application at caryn@carynking.com



IT'S TURTLE TIME



Why did the turtle cross the road?

Unlike the chicken, turtles aren't just trying to get to the other side, but actually have someplace to go. During the early summer, many female turtles cross roads bearing eggs, moving toward familiar nesting areas.

What's the right way to help a turtle cross a road?

Excessive handling can disrupt their normal behavior. If there's no oncoming traffic, let the turtle cross the road without help. If you must pick up a turtle, gently grasp the shell edge near the mid-point of the body with two hands. Some turtles empty their bladder when lifted off the ground, so be careful not to drop it if it suddenly does. Maintain direction of travel.

Always move a turtle in the same direction it was traveling when you saw it. Place the turtle well off the road (not on the roadside), so if startled by the experience, the turtle does not get disoriented and accidentally go back into the roadway, or freeze and get run over. Turtles should always be moved across roadways in as direct a line as possible. You might be tempted to "help" the turtle by moving it to a wooded area or water body, but the correct solution is to quickly move the turtle the shortest distance possible.

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

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Town Administrator: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Planning Board: May - August, 2nd Wednesday at 6:00 p.m.
 September - April, 2nd and 4th Wednesdays
Board of Health: First Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.
Conservation Commission: Last Saturday of the month at 9:00 a.m.
Board of Assessors: Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Fire Department training: Every Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. at the fire station
Building Inspector: By appointment only; call 413-229-0277
First Responders: Meeting/training: First and third Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. at the fire station
Cultural Council: Second Thursday at 4:15 p.m. at the library
Post Office: Mill River (413) 229-8582
 Window hours: Monday - Friday 11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
 Saturday 9:00 - 11:30 a.m.
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 Window hours: Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
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Town Treasurer: Monday & Tuesday 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Tax Collector: Monday 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Tues. and Thurs. 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Selectmen's Administrative Secretary: Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Animal Control Officer: Graham Frank, (413) 229-8161
Town Clerk: 229-8278; 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. weekdays; Saturday by appointment
Town Hall: 229-8116
Police: Business office: 229-8161

Transfer Station Hours:

Wednesday: 9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.
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We welcome advertisements from businesses owned by New Marlborough residents.

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

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Joe Poindexter, issue editor; Diane Barth, designer; Martha Bryan, Jane Burke, Larry Burke, Robbi Hartt, Isabella Kemp, Barbara Lowman, Michele McAuley, Steven Nester, Peter Schuyten, Barry Shapiro, Marjorie Shapiro, Rachel Perera Weingeist.

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New Marlborough 5 Village News

appears monthly,
 also online at

www.nm5vn.org

The next issue will be dated July 2023.

All copy must be submitted no later than June 17.
 For advertising, contact Barbara Lowman, tel: 229-2369
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